

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ROY ALLEN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Philip G. Solomon
Date: December 23, 1987

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RA - Roy Allen [interviewee]

PS - Philip G. Solomon [interviewer]

Date: December 23, 1987

Tape one, side one:

PS: This is Phil Solomon, interviewing Mr. Roy Allen. The date is December 23rd, 1987. Mr. Allen, where in Europe, and in what unit, were you serving prior to your capture?

RA: I was based in England, with the 8th Air Force. I was a pilot in the 457th Bomb Group. And I had been shot down and lived with the French underground. And I was captured by a, the Gestapo through the intervention of a Belgian girl who betrayed me to them. And the incentive for her to betray me was for 20,000 francs, which at that time the exchange was worth \$400.

PS: Do you remember the approximate date of your capture?

RA: Yes, approximately the 1st of August, 1944.

PS: '44. Prior to this time, had you witnessed any examples of German cruelty or atrocities against soldiers or civilians?

RA: I don't know how to classify them, if they are atrocities as such. But, you could feel and see the strain of, in this case, the French people, living in what was an occup-, their country being occupied by an enemy, and not such a sympathetic enemy. And I don't guess enemies are never sympathetic, but...

PS: Yeah, well, I suppose that living as you were in the underground, you really weren't exposed to German Gestapo, until the time of your capture. So probably you would not have been in really a position to see what was going on, or do you think possibly you were?

RA: I would say the things that I could see, because where I first was hiding out, or being hidden out by the French resistance, was out in a town called Jouy, a town, it was a hamlet, Jouy-le-Chatelle, which is approximately 45 kilometers southeast of Paris, farm country essentially. And when the French, or the, well, I beg your pardon, when the German troops would come through to go to the Western Front, they would commandeer anything they wanted from a farmhouse, be it horses or carts, oxen, food, wine, the normal things I guess that advancing armies do in occupied countries.

PS: At the time of your capture, had you heard any rumors or reports of the mass murder of Jews and political prisoners in Germany?

RA: Never heard anything like that, except we knew that, and I was told by the French people that I mingled with, that they knew there were camps where some of their people were taken, mainly Frenchmen were, oh, taken to work camps. But they were referred to as work camps.

PS: Then you had not heard of the existence of concentration camps up to the time of your capture. Do you recall, Mr. Allen, where you were first taken after your capture?

RA: Where I was taken after I was captured?

PS: Yes, the prison camp you...

RA: I was immediately taken to Gestapo headquarters in Paris. And I was interrogated there and spent the night there. And then the next day I was transferred to Fresnes Penitentiary in Paris.

PS: To your knowledge, the people, the French underground who shielded you during that period, do you know if they suffered as a result of aiding--your, keeping you from capture?

RA: I know that the Belgian girl was taken by the French resistance and killed, because when, after the signing at Reims, I went, I got in contact with my main protector, who was a French institutress, a school teacher, at Jouy, and they had in their clandestine way followed my passage after I left. I might mention this, the French people that I was with did not want me to leave, because, they said, "We never know who will betray you." Because the way the underground worked was, that if you and I were in the same underground, and we were let's say passing an Allied airman from one to the other, I didn't really know where you came from, and you didn't know, really know where I was going, and you can understand the reason for that. If one of us was captured they could torture us to death literally and, but there wasn't much we could say of factual information. So it was, so the chain would be broken if one was captured. Now why was I saying this? Well, that was why they didn't want me to leave.

PS: I see.

RA: Because they, even though I, they transfer you to one in the so-called same underground, we really cannot trust one another. And the other way that was brought home to us was before we would leave on a mission, our intelligence would give us different advice depending on what country we, or countries, we were apt to be shot down over. For instance, if we were going directly into France and back, with no diversion or a route up through Belgium or wherever, we would be advised to take a side arm and if we were shot down and not captured, that we shouldn't, should not be prepared to try to shoot our way to freedom, but rather wait for a single individual to be searching for us, or calling for us. And in fact be prepared to hand over the sidearm to the individual, because the odds were that he was working for the resistance, which was working for the Allied effort. On the other hand, if we were going to a country like, we would, might be shot down over Poland, or Germany, we were advised to take a sidearm, be prepared to shoot your way to freedom, because the odds are that some of the civilians would have had damage and killing done by American bombers and they would not feel very friendly toward you and would be ready to pitchfork you at a moment's notice. [tape off then on] After spending approximately six weeks in Jouy, six men came for me, each, all with bicycles and one for

me, intending to get me into Paris, where they would, where I could be lost, so to speak, in the crowd and be safer than in a little village. We got into Paris through what they used as a ruse. I was given a French passport. My name was Louis Rué. At that point I was--Cherbourg had been bombed--and I was categorized as a refugee from Cherbourg, was a mason by trade, and was deaf and dumb. When we got on the, eventually got on a train, to get into Paris, the, my status to the French guards who came through and examined everybody's papers, were that I was a Frenchman and I was their prisoner. And I had all French clothes. I had no military identification, because if they did search me, the, you would have obviously put the French people at risk, pawning me, trying to pawn me off as a French citizen. They also gave me a heavy burlap bag to carry. And, what I, and the bag was never investigated, but I will tell you that there was dried meat and some small arms in the bottom of the, underneath the meat. So that if they had investigated, they would have seen the dried meat. Well, I lived with the, these six men by the way were these, they were the French Secret Police. And I lived with them in a flat up on the fifth floor, down near Vincennes, near the zoo. And they engaged in what I saw was some small sabotage. For instance, they, they killed a Frenchman who was what we called a collaborator. And the way you can get the book on a Frenchman if he's a collaborator is whether or not he's driving a car. Because the restraints on petrol and movement of the French people being restrained for those reasons, allowed just, believe it or not, veterinarians had a priority for petrol, for driving their cars, and German personnel, and of course if you were a collaborator, you know, that's the only way you could have been driving a car. And of course once they saw you driving a car, too often, then they would follow you and see what your--yes, your behavior was. Well, from there I was taken to the hospital because I was, they took me to a German-occupied hospital because my back was killing me with pain and I had received, believe it or not, six different doctors came and gave me a shot of morphine, six days in a row. And I was upset about this after. I said, "Hey, I can't, I can't continue to take this morphine." I said, "Turn me over to the Germans." So, believe it or not, they carried me down these five flights, because they didn't have electricity to run elevators. They just dumped me in a hospital in Paris where I was given a catheter procedure because the estimate of the doctor apparently was that I had either a blood clot or had loosened some salts in the urinary tract and that was blocking my, the urinary tract and this was their way of relieving that. And it was in the hospital that I got, apparently I got discovered, because after I was in there, I was in there seven days all told, and after I, after about the fifth day, a girl with a ledger came in, speaking French to me like she was like, "Who are you in this room?" And I, of course at this time I can't speak anything, because I'm not supposed to, I'm supposed to be mute. But on the seventh day, two men came for me, with an extra bicycle and we went to an apartment where I was to be rigged up, and was rigged up to make the overland trip to the Pyrénées. And I was given French clothes, hobnail shoes, French money, French cigarettes, and of course I, as I said before, I was not allowed to keep dog tags or any military identification. But in the process I, as I

mentioned before, one of the links in this chain of underground people was this Belgian girl. And we were, at this point, when I was introduced to her, we were now going to leave Paris. And we got on the Metro, which is the subway in Europe. And we came out of the exit at the subway, and I can still see the building with the *Academie de Music* on it. So it was in that area. And we went around the corner and up a little side street to a typical French curb side café and she waltzed me up to a table where two men and she just disappeared. And this one obviously German civilian pulled out his pistol and stuck it in my neck and said, "I'm sorry you're our prisoner," and ushered me into a car. And we made our way to Gestapo headquarters. At Gestapo headquarters I was interviewed or interrogated, and of course again I'm maintaining I'm military personnel, and you got what you might call a typical movie scene where there was pounding on the table and the words were, "Ah! *Alles, alles militaire, nicht saboteur, nicht spy, ah, militaire.*" ["Ah' everything, everything is military, not saboteur, not spy - military"] [chuckling] And I'm, I was just dumb enough to say, "Yes, that's right, milit-..."

PS: [chuckling]

RA: [chuckling] And I said, it's kinda goofy as I look back, but I said, "And I want to make a formal request for a military interrogation!" Well, they, I guess I, what, the kind of luck that was with me was, it was getting near the end of the war and they probably didn't feel too secure. And maybe their minds was on other things, but they sent me down in the basement where there was a common cell for many prisoners. And there I met some other GIs in uniform. And in about, well I, we stayed at that, oh, oh we were taken out of the Gestapo headquarters the next day and we were all taken to Fresnes Prison, in Paris, which is a walled penitentiary. We were there approximately a week when I was called down. I was ushered down by a guard and I really thought I was gonna be executed because they were executing people in the yard every day. But as luck would have it, I was ushered into a cell that was made up into an office. And there sat a *Luftwaffe* officer. And he treated me very respectfully, very casually, devil may care attitude, and had ushered me into a chair, threw a pack of Camels at me. I said, "I'm sorry, I don't smoke." He said, "Oh take them, give them to your friends. Do what you will with them." Okay, so I took them and they, I will say they became a good piece of trading bait for food later. But however, we were there not too long after that. And the entire prison was evacuated and that was really a mess, because 99 and nine-tenths of the prisoners were civilians, a lot of whom were women. Not predominantly, but there were, eventually wound up to be two, two, forty and eight freight cars full of women. So, we got on what was the last train, the last convoy of prisoners that got out of Paris. And we were five days on that train, part of which our car was naked. And we, and that's, that's another scene that is humorous, because it's a little tragic. Ninety-two men in one forty and eight, all naked, with nothing but cans of sardines and the equivalent of a large pretzel can as a toilet. And we were naked because we managed to get six prisoners out of our car, escaped. Whatever has become of them, I don't know, but we did get six out. A patch in the floor, of the car. The cars, you may not realize,

made a lot of stops, because it was not given priority on the main tracks and we were sidelined, you know, sidetracked I should say, many times, which would give somebody a chance to get out of a train while it was stopped, had stopped, or just before it would start up is really when the escapes were made. This, the fifth night, we, or day, we wind up in Weimar, and somebody says, it was a Frenchman on the car who spoke a variety of languages including English, and he said, "Ah, my, I think we're going to Buchenwald." And none of us had ever, what's Buchenwald? But we soon found out once we got in there. And we were immediately stripped of our clothes, everything. We were, you heard about the rooms, the big large communal shower rooms where you could either get showered with water or showered with gas, and we were in one of those. And we were showered with water. And then ushered into another room where we all stood on little stools and had every hair on our body clipped off, except our eyelashes and eyebrows. And the purpose of this was two-fold. It was advertised by the Germans as pest control, bug, or lice control, which probably it was. It did have some effect that way. But it also was terribly demoralizing. And if you ever want to laugh at yourself, look at yourself some day with all the hair taken off you and if you happen to have any in the first place, you look like a, you look like a chicken hanging in a kosher [both chuckling] kosher delicatessen. We were then issued, shall I go on?

PS: Yeah.

RA: Okay. We were then issued two garments. I got a t-shirt and a pair of what, you know, denim pants. No shoes. This transport of prisoners was given two blankets for three men, and we did not have shelter for 21 days. And the system was that each night a different fellow of the three which had been inside the, between the other two bodies, are we running out of tape?

PS: No.

RA: And on the 21st night, it was raining very hard. And it was cold. And we were ushered into a, what they call a Block. And in that Block were over 700 Hungarian Magyar Gypsy boys, between the ages of eight and twelve. And as you may have seen pictures of the, I'll call it this warehousing of prisoners, the shelves of men like four or five high shelves of men, these kids were draped all over there like, over those shelves like monkeys. They were ushered out, to make room for us. And they were all killed, and [pause] they did have a crematorium at Buchenwald. They did have a scaffold where, like for about ten, twelve people could be, I will say, choked, not hung, because there was no trap doors. You were just, you had a noose put around your neck, and you were just drawn up to suffocate. And the way I know this, and the way I saw this is that at Buchenwald there was a rocket factory. V, V-1, V-2, I forget the rockets that were coming across the channel of, do you remember if they were V-2s or V-...

PS: V, V-2s, because...

RA: V-2s?

PS: The buzz bombs...

RA: Buzz bombs, yeah.

PS: That was the buzz bombs.

RA: Yeah, well part of the, there was, that, part of that operation was being done at Buchenwald believe it or not. And as I may have said previously and I'll repeat it, Buchenwald was both a work camp and a killer camp. So, I got access to the second floor of the factory and could look over into the courtyard so to speak, of the crematorium. And as you may have heard or don't find it difficult to believe, there were dead, partially dead people put down the chute into the crematorium. As far as what we ate at Buchenwald, we were up at five o'clock, five thirty. We got a, big bowl of a small *gammel* [phonetic] of ersatz soup, which was like broth. By that I mean it had very little or no solids in it. And that was all you got. And that, I would say that cup was like the size of a, a giant sized mug. Then we got fed once again at five thirty at night, where we got another *gammel* [phonetic], which was the shape and size of an ordinary soup dish. And we got a ladle of what was almost always barley soup. And of course I must tell you there was very little barley in it. Now that w-, oh, and we also got a ration of black bread. And I would say the ration was approximately an inch to an inch-and-a-quarter thick. So needless to say, everybody lost weight, and as you, as the pictures that you've seen of survivors, or those who didn't survive, they were nothing more than skin and bones. There was an awful lot of dysentery in the camp because it was in the water. We were told never to drink the water. [pause] Do you want to take a break there? [tape off then on]

PS: Mr. Allen, when you were interned at Buchenwald, you were there as a military prisoner of war?

RA: No, I was there as a spy and a saboteur, because I had no military identification at all. I was in French clothes. I had French papers when I was taken to Gestapo headquarters. However, there were military people there. For instance, a plane shot down in the vicinity of Weimar or Buchenwald where there would be parachuters, they would be encaptured, American Allied soldiers and officers captured, and for want of a better place to put them they'd throw them in Buchenwald, because they didn't have any *Stalag* maybe, you know, there was no *Stalag* near there. So, they would be thrown in there for the want of a better place to put them. So, you saw, there were a total of 80 some American military people in Buchenwald, but very few of which had uniforms or were caught in uniforms. Some had been caught the same way I had, through the underground. And that's the way most of them were...

PS: So, while you were at Buchenwald, you were, you actually lived with and were treated as a, as the other inmates as a...

RA: Oh sure.

PS: Concentration camp...

RA: Like everybody else.

PS: Not military.

RA: No, like everybody else. The only, there is, there was a--I must, okay, there were also two thousand Danish policemen interned, which car-, at Buchenwald, which carries a little different so-called treatment. Namely, they were allowed to write letters and get letters from home. They were allowed to get parcels, food parcels, from home. And-

Tape one, side two:

RA: And the Danish policemen at times when they were able to would share some of their food, which was biscuits and cheese and *patés*. But through that, I must mention that two years ago, September, they had their 40th observance of their liberation from the camp. And the Danish people, the Danish government, got in touch with some Canadian prisoners, ex-prisoners of Buchenwald, to invite them to come to Copenhagen and participate in the observance. And there were two Americans who went. The Canadians got, through some system of communications through the various, what, the ex-POW asso-, all the various military associations, got in touch with me and Bill Powell. And I, the two of us and our wives, along with the Canadians, participated in Copenhagen, with the French government, not the French government, c'mon, Danish government. And I want to mention this, that the Canadian Air Force took us all over there free. That is, the air fare, the, or the, they had the transportation. The, some of the representatives of the Danish police met us at the airport. We were, we participated in a State dinner with the, I guess she's the Queen over there, who was the principal speaker. And all in all, they treated us very very nice. And they even offered in a tactful way, to pay anyone's way for any expenses they would incur if any of us didn't have the means to come over with our own finances. And, because they said they had a fund for such a situation. They made it clear to us that we didn't realize at the time, 40 years ago, that we were great morale builders for them. They felt a lot more comforted, I guess, that we were there and they noticed maybe, I don't know, our attitude. And they found us to be beneficial in that respect. Now, I got off the subject, didn't I?

PS: While, at Buchenwald, would you say that the treatment that you received at the hands of the prison guards was any different from the treatment shown the inmates as, of concentration camps? No respect as an officer of the...

RA: No respect...

PS: You had no status as a prisoner of war or as an officer of the United States Air Force. No status whatsoever.

RA: No, no status, no.

PS: Were you aware at the time of, the ratio of inmates? You mentioned the Hungarian Gypsies and others. Do you have any idea at all of the ratios, political prisoners, nationalities, Jews, as inmates?

RA: I have no official way to document this, but the word was that the predominance of, predominant percentage of people were political prisoners. At that point in the war, I think the French were, had the highest population. There was a Jewish cell on the, in the corner of the camp. And as far as I know, they were not treated any differently and the ones that I happened to witness being killed, were, at my time being there, were Russian soldiers. They brought in a transport of Russian soldiers, and I was told that, "Oh they, they'll, they can kill them and because they did not come under the rules of the Geneva

Conference as far as the agreed upon treatment of military prisoners." So they were hung up and killed. Now, I must mention that I did get out of Buchenwald before it was liberated, and what happened after I left, I can't attest to of course. But, the rumor is, and that I have to call a rumor is that there was some extensive killing and there was gonna be more. But there were, evidently there was fear that reciprocity would be taken because the Allies were coming too close to overtaking the camp.

PS: While there, were you able to make any contact at all with pris-, with prisoners of war who were at Buchenwald at that time?

RA: You're calling them prisoners of war. Now, they're not prisoners of war as defined, but you mean other prisoners.

PS: Prisoners.

RA: Yeah.

PS: Well, now, no, I, actually...

RA: [unclear]

PS: Were there, let me ask you this then, there were some who were there at Buchenwald who were there with military status as prisoners of war?

RA: Right.

PS: Yeah. Were you able to make any contact with...

RA: Yeah. We...

PS: With them?

RA: Yeah, we were together. Like the Americans were all in the...

PS: Oh, there were Americans there also.

RA: Yes, the Jews had their places. All the Poles were in their area. And the French were in their blocks. There were, to my knowledge there was not a lot of intermingling of nationalities in the one block.

PS: Were you forced into labor as were the inmates of the...

RA: No. I, there was a bombing. I was not forced to work, no. Neither were any of the other people around me, be they the Americans, Canadians. But there was a fire, there was a bombing raid on the V-2 factory by the Americans. It was a daylight raid. And I must say it was a very good raid in so far as the pinpoint bombing. And like all, after most every kind of a bombing raid there's fire. And they came, some of the German guards came to our block because, you know, they said, "You come and help put out the fire." You know. "You have training." They thought we were trained people. So I, some of our fellows went. I didn't go. And I, you know, I said, "I'm not gonna put out that fire. And furthermore, I don't have shoes!" So, nobody, none of our people got hurt doing that. But, that was the only extent that I can think of of any kind of work. Now, I had mentioned earlier to you, Phil, that there was ersatz money in the camp, and I never had any. And the reason I didn't, see, I never went on a work detail. And I wasn't assigned to any kind of work. So on the one hand, while I ate and slept and was clothed and was exposed to the whims of the *Lagerschutz* like everybody else, I was not imposed upon to do any labor. I might mention,

I just used the term *Lagerschutz*, which for the, that means camp police. One of the many things that made concentration camp so, oh, inhumane, so bizarre, was the multiplicity of types of peoples. For instance, I said that the main body, and of course you must realize that, we're talking about a given point in time. You know, things could have been different at a different point in time. But at this point, the main body of inmates at Buchenwald were political prisoners. But if you think about Hitler's ambitions with regard to the establishment of a true Aryan race, one of the aspects of achieving this was to get rid of all the possible people that could have offsprings that were not subject to producing a true Aryan. Uh, for instance, at Buchenwald, the *Lager-schutz*, yeah, well, so, in this effort, Hitler emptied all of his asylums. The *Lagerschutz* was made up mainly of what had been criminally insane German prisoners, so they were Germans, but they were criminally insane prior, and still were, prior, but that's what was their, they had been in institutions prior to going into Buchenwald. So, the environment was, they'd hit you in the mouth or hit you with a stick, a club, and then tell you what they wanted. So that made the environment pretty hostile. Also, there were, any person with an infirmity, you know, if you had club foot, if you had one leg, if you had an incurable disease, if you were just old and senile, this was all part of the prison, the body of prisoners. And they were doomed for execution, or just dying. And dying was just such a normal course of events that every day we, there was several of us, would go, walk along the street so to sp-, not the street, but the, you know, the road inside the camps, the camp, and look and see if we recognize anybody in the pile. We saw people killed. I saw the people killed with needles. They would be injected in the back and they would very well know they were going to be dead by morning. And after the, the *Kapo*, they call him, who was a guy who walked around with boots and a white jacket and a red cross on his arm, would insert the needle and leave, then every one of his nationality would collect around him and I guess get some last wishes or whatever. But, we saw a, I saw young kids, older men, I saw some of this because I got sick and I was put in a block, a sick block, or a block for sick people, who could not stand with the *Appell*, meaning you c-, we had an *Appell* every morning and for those of you who, that's a gathering on the parade grounds of all the inmates to be counted. We had one every morning and every night. And one night we had one that went on for three hours. This evening *Appell*, they were dictating or orating warnings in five different languages, which took, you know, three hours, discouraging any of us from trying to escape. So, at this time I didn't have shoes or stockings, and it was cold, and there was snow. So I c-, I got pneumonia. I was diagnosed by a French doctor, who was a prisoner, had no, all he was allowed to do was come in and pat you on the head, but he told me I had pneumonia and pleurisy. And I eventually developed dropsy. And, which meant I could hardly, I couldn't stand up or walk. And dropsy, for those who are uninitiated, is most often caused I understand by malnutrition. And it was manifested by the swelling around the ankles and the general weakness. So I had a time to stay in the sick bay. And I saw the, they had a big bath tub. It looked like a water trough for horses. That was that large. And they would,

people who, let's say would, if you'll excuse the expression, would be better off dead, were dunked in this water, this cold water, and wrapped in a rubber blanket, and two able-bodied looking, I presume Polish prisoners would come in with a litter that consisted of two pipes and chicken wire. And they would just proceed to lift up these puny bodies and put three on a litter at a time and take them out and throw them on a pile. They, most often they would do this water dunking at night, and then of course the next morning, usually the inmate was dead, or almost dead. [pause]

PS: Were there gas chambers in operation in Buchenwald at that time?

RA: At no time did I know of a gas chamber being operated at Buchenwald at that point in time.

PS: Most of the bodies were disposed of in the ovens, in the crematorium?

RA: Right.

PS: While at Buchenwald, being, having no status as an officer in the United States Air Force, and no status as a prisoner of war, I would imagine that you were then denied the privilege of communicating with your family? Mail? Packages? Anything of that nature.

RA: Right.

PS: Is that correct?

RA: Right. My wife didn't know I was alive until six, seven months after I went down.

PS: Can you recall approximately the date that you were taken from Buchenwald, and where you were taken from there?

RA: Yeah, let me think a minute now. The [tape off then on] well, to my knowledge, I was the last American to get out of Buchenwald. And the reason I didn't go with the others who had already gone was because I was sick and couldn't walk. And I was taken approximately a week before Christmas. I was taken to *Stalag Luft III*, at Sagen. And it was there that we were allowed, well they had different, three different compounds- the American Compound, the British Compound, the Canadian Compound. And, because of the, Christmas was coming up, they were allowing calling from one compound to another. And my bombardier, yes, my bombardier, Joe Brusse, had already been a prisoner since the day we were shot down. And he, by that time, being in a, the *Stalag Lu-*, *Stalag*, had been communicating with home and he called over to find out if there was a guy named Roy Allen over in this compound, the other compound. And, because he happened to be with the, I forget, the British or the Canadians. And that's when I learned that my wife had had a boy, and everything was fine at home. Then, no... [noise]

PS: At that point, had your status changed at all, from a spy and saboteur?

RA: Yes, yes. [pause] My status by then had changed from a spy and saboteur to military personnel, by virtue of the *Luftwaffe* officer who interrogated me at Fresnes Prison. Now, I must tell you how our conversation went. The requirements for a, for military personnel when they're captured are to give nothing more than name, rank, and

serial number. Now these are the rules established by the Geneva Conference. As would, well of course, the routine of an intelligence officer was first to be disarming. I had mentioned that he had tossed the cigarettes to me and then he wanted to know why our president had gotten us into the war and why do we take a stand against Germany? And, this is again is to throw you off the track so to speak, rather than to be hostile. Because, they want to get information. Well, it so happened that when I gave him my name, rank and serial number, he knew when I was shot down, and he also knew that I had been flying deputy lead that day. [laughs] And he said, "You're a, you're a, yeah," and he knew what post, he knew my outfit. I guess the, you see, they capture the, they get the numbers off the airplanes that fall, or that are shot down. And then somebody in England can tell them where those numbers, you know, what field they come from, and who the post commander is of that field, that air base, I should say. So he said to me, "Oh yeah, your commanding officer was Colonel Luper. And he does very well on his raid. When he leads a raid, he's been very successful. I must say that." But he said, "Of course we'll get him." [chuckles] Well, the fact of the matter is, he, unbeknownst to me, he had been shot down some time after me. But, well, he terminated the interview or interrogation, and I am a little bit concerned. Because I know what I haven't said to him. And I said, "Sir, may I ask you a question?" And he said, "Sure." I said, "Will you tell me whether you are going to regard me as military personnel or spy and saboteur?" And he looked me right in the eye and he said, "Where is the escape hatch for the pilot of a B-17?" And I told him. And he said, "Yeah," he said, "But I cannot do anything for you until these papers clear in Berlin." So it was, they got clearance I guess from Berlin and then they sent someone for me, a single, a sergeant, a German sergeant came for me at Buchenwald and took me to *Stalag Luft III*.

PS: As a prisoner, then, at this *Stalag*, would you say that your treatment at the hands of the prison personnel were very different from your treatment while at Buchenwald?

RA: Yeah. Oh, sure.

PS: And then you were treated as an officer...

RA: Yes.

PS: Of the Air Force.

RA: Yes.

PS: All right...

RA: Except for food. Except, I will tell you this. I personally got what they call [pause] now, what'd they call it? I can't think of the term now. [tape off then on] At *Stalag III*, when they, you know, the commanding officers took one look at me and they immediately had me get a physical, and put me on what was termed invalid rations. And...

PS: Pardon me. Not to interrupt, but would you say that your condition then was due to the fact that you had been in Buchenwald as a concentration camp inmate?

RA: Well sure.

PS: Yeah.

RA: Oh, no question about it. The 21 days and nights of exposure, the rain and cold and some snow, and the lack of nourishment and the disease that pervaded the place. There was no things like toilet tissue, and you weren't allowed to drink the water and that had dysentery in it. And I guess the general demoralization and, you know, then you see, when you see other people being killed, you see other people dying, you see inhumanity, man's inhumanity to man, it's, it doesn't help your morale. And you need your morale to keep your health.

PS: Would you say that your treatment, and the treatment of other prisoners you saw there at *Stalag* III, would you say that the Germans were adhering reasonably well to the terms and agreements of the Geneva Convention?

RA: You're talking about the *Stalags* now.

PS: *Stalags*.

RA: Yeah. Well, there, I guess yes and no. As far as any physical abuse, there was no physical abuse. Camaraderie with the German prison guards, there was a touch of that. I would say there was, the only I call it mistreatment, was, we were not getting the Red Cross parcels that we were supposed to be getting. And again this is just a rumor. I couldn't prove it or disprove it. But, we were told when we eventually marched down to Moosburg which happened to be the distribution point for Red Cross parcels that the warehouse was loaded with them. But they were evidently keeping them, you know, the suspicion was or the rumor was that the Germans were keeping the Red Cross parcels for themselves.

PS: Personally. To your knowledge, Roy, were there any Jewish prisoners of war in the *Stalag* III?

RA: Yes.

PS: Were they treated, as far as you know, were they treated any differently than the other prisoners?

RA: No, not in the *Stalag*. They were not treated any differently. At *Stalag* III, at that point in time.

PS: While a prisoner there...

RA: If you excuse me, just remember, I'm talking in the context of the war winding down, with the Germans taking the worst of it. So, how they were behaving prior to that I don't know.

PS: By this time we're speaking of probably early spring of 1945 I guess, were we, are we not?

RA: Yeah. I was on the march when Roosevelt died. I was...

PS: That was April...

RA: I was on the march from, that was April, yes, on the march to Moosburg.

PS: The, Germany surrendered May the 9th, I believe, 1945. And I believe the death of Roosevelt was early April. So this was probably then just that one month before the end of the war.

RA: Right.

PS: While a prisoner, of course you were eyewitness to atrocities at Buchenwald, but then, while a prisoner of war in *Stalag III*, were you aware, did you hear anything about additional Nazi atrocities against humanity, other concentration camps?

RA: Yes, by this time I'm the only fellow, you know, in my, yeah, in my, let's say the people I was quartered with, who knew about Buchenwald. And you know, there was no end to the questions they would ask me. And then of course word got by that there were places like Dachau, and Auschwitz, and if you're, and we knew that oh certain, for instance members of a, Jewish members of an air crew would have two sets of dog tags. They would have their Christian dog tags and their Jewish dog tags. And there were also some Jewish guys that said, "Hey, I'm a Jew, and that's what I'm gonna wear." So, but we were not aware, if your question is, were we really aware of what Dachau and Auschwitz was, no. Not really.

PS: Can you recall the approximate date, and by whom, you were liberated? The Americans, Brit-

Tape two, side one:

RA: I was liberated by Patton's 14th Armor, at Moosburg, and it was just a few days before the end of the war in Germany and I might, I do recall now that the commandant of our camp wanted to make a formal surrender to the American troops, who might come on the scene, I guess Patton. And the SS wouldn't allow them to do it. And the SS participated in the killing of some of their, of the, of these German *Luftwaffe* personnel who were in charge of the prison camp. And well after, I didn't, I walked out of the camp, because I was very anxious to know what might have happened to my French benefactors. And I made my own way back to Paris, to, and talked to several of my, several of the people who were in the French underground. And I, that's when I found out that the Belgian girl had been taken by them, and executed, and none of the people that I had been involved with, well that's not quite true, there were, but not, my, the original people who found me in the forest and put me in the hands of the underground were never hurt.

PS: Can you describe your general physical and mental condition at the time of liberation?

RA: I, my physical condition was a little bit, pretty low. I had pain in the base of my back. I guess you'd call it kidney pain. The cathetering procedure in the hospital in Paris was not effective. When I, and I, my feet were bad, because I had gotten frozen feet at Buchenwald, and subsequently on the march from Sagen to Nürnberg, which was in the winter time. Which I still doctor for and whatever, whatever doctoring you can do for frozen feet. My mental condition was, it was okay, I guess, for the situation. I got the, well the worst, I guess my mental condition changed, because when I, when we docked at Hoboken, I was bullhorned off the ship. And my two brothers were there, on the dock to meet me, and to tell me that I was to go home. My mother had died when the, I was in the middle of the ocean, and they were, because she had been dead for five days now, they wanted to get me home in a hurry so she could be buried. Now that was just around the first of June, and I got a 30 day leave and I got 60 and then I got 90. And in the meantime, I was going to civilian doctors for my ailments. And I had since learned that because I was a pilot, that they did not want to dismiss or muster out pilots because they didn't know how the war in Japan was going to evolve and they wanted to keep all multi-engine pilots on duty for possible B-29 service. But that mean that 90 days expired before I got back into the hands of the military, which was, I eventually got separated in Miami, Florida. You want more?

PS: For a number of years after the war there were various television series, American television, that pictured the life of American prisoners of war...

RA: Hogan's Heroes.

PS: In Ger-, yeah, in German camps as constantly harassing their German captors, leading a very happy existence, depicting the German captors as blubbering idiots. It was all done in humor, but, now my own feeling was that there were probably many

people that believed this to be at least partially true. Did you yourself have any resentment when you saw those, you undoubtedly saw some of the, some of those shows. Did you have any resentment at that?

RA: Am I on? No, I don't think I resented it in the light that, hey, I want the public to realize that we suffered more than Hogan's Heroes will de-, is portraying. But I, to me it was just simply an exaggeration, and that's what you call whatever, poetic license and movie stuff.

PS: Before we close, Roy, do you have anything at all to add to your testimony? Any after thoughts that you just want to add?

RA: Well I, what has just come to mind is, back at Buchenwald there was, the wife of the commandant was Ilse Koch. And some of, some people may have heard of her referred to as "The Beast of Buchenwald." You may also have heard or will hear that she became pregnant and an American, as a prisoner, in an American maintained prison--and she did in fact engage in sadistic behavior on the prisoners, in the camp.

PS: One final question, did your experience of fighting in the war, of being a bomber pilot, and being a prisoner have any effect on your feeling about being a part of the war, and fighting and defeating Germany?

RA: Well, the effect I have, you know, since the war, you know, I've met many other fellows who were in the war, and for whatever reason, I don't share some of the kinds of guilt that they share, or they have evidently been suffering through for years. For instance, there are those fellows who became prisoners and feel guilty just because they were captured and they couldn't do all that they were expected to do as an able bodied soldier. There are also some victims of the war, I guess I'll call them, who just cannot get over the effects of seeing mass killing by anyone and everyone at times, and it's never been able, they've never been able to shake the memories. I, I guess I should be, I am pleased to say that I don't wittingly have any of that guilt. I feel as though the purpose for the war, World War II, had every, if there is, if there is any excuse for having a war, a World War, I think the presence of the likes of a Hitler is, merits, all the opposition you can give to a man or a regime like the Nazi regime, and to do everything you can to oppose it or annihilate it. And obviously, there's only one way you can do that, and that's through a shooting war. Negotiation won't do it. And if negotiation would have done it, there would have been no need for this killing. But I would also like to, having said that, would like to add that I sure hope that there wouldn't be any more evidence of the kind of genocide that Hitler perpetrated. But unfortunately, there has been more, and I presume there will be more.

PS: Yes, unfortunately. We thank you very, very much for your valuable testimony. Thank you.