

Interviewer: What is your name?

Mr. Ball: R.V. Ball a very simple name that was given to me by an uncle who was 11 years old at the time.

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Mr. Ball: In Lexington, Texas.

Interviewer: When?

Mr. Ball: June 25, 1924.

Interviewer: Is Texas where you were raised?

Mr. Ball: I left, my family left there when I was about 5 years old and moved to a little community out in West Central Texas, Junction. That has about a 2500 population now so it's sort of out in the country.

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. Ball: What did they do? My father was a mechanic at one time but early in my life he went into a ranching operation. But the depression hit in the 1930s, 1933 and for a few years we had very little money but we were living out in the country and we had lots of deer and lots of wild turkey lots of squirrels and lots of garden to raise and we lived off the land. Then he bought a dairy operation in this little town of Junction. And I heard him tell a gentleman one day that when he went in the dairy business he had 25 cows a little car to deliver milk with a sack of feed in the barn and a dime in his pocket. So from that you know we went to work as a family and made it fine.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Mr. Ball: Just one sister.

Interviewer: Where did you go to school, how far did you go?

Mr. Ball: I went to school in Junction, Texas we probably lived about a mile or mile and a half. Well I went to school in Ingram at one time and traveled threw the woods and across the creek probably walked about a mile back and forth then when we moved back to Junction from the ranch moved out to the dairy operation we lived about somewhere between and miles and two miles from the school and I walked most of the time of that. And there was a stream that I had to cross and wade, sometimes in the wintertime it's real cold but it's not that bad you know that far south into Texas.

Interviewer: How long did you go to school? Did you graduate high school?

Mr. Ball: Yeh

Interviewer: What was your school like?

Mr. Ball: Very standard reading, writing, arithmetic a little bit of literature and I took one or two extra math courses and that sort of thing in high school. Went on to college at Texas Tech University and was there as a freshman on December 7, 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Went home for the summer time of the freshman year came back for the sophomore year and I believe in November I volunteered for the Air Force because you know if you volunteered you could pick for the service what you wanted to do sooner or later I was at the age where I was going to get drafted. So I volunteered for that. And before that year was out I was called up and went to Sheppard Field, Texas for basic training. We had 90 days there of marching and being chewed out by sergeants and doing KP you know and that sort of thing. Eight miles double time packs in the morning and bed and drill sand bits in the afternoon and KP at night. But from there because I was not a college graduate before the war started all the pilots in the Air Force were college graduates but I not a college graduate. They sent me to Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee for what they call college training detachment. Because of the scheduling deal at that time they were bringing training groups in and running them through the system and another group come in behind them just like

Interviewer: Almost like livestock.

Mr. Ball: Yeh, that's right. The scheduler part, that schools were supposed to be six months long but to get the schedule started right we were the first class that went to a college training system so we were there six weeks. From there I went to primary flight training in Lafayette, Louisiana. From there I went to basic flight training in Morgan, Missouri. From there I went to advanced in Scotguard, Arkansas. From there I went to Avon Park, Florida for transition to B17s, this is one of them here (pointing to a picture on the wall) and one we finished we were shipped as a crew, we made a crew in Avon Park, and then we were shipped to England. And I believe in August I flew my first combat mission over Germany.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Mr. Ball: 1944, I got a log book here. Well we were there for a short of time we were shipped over in perhaps in late June in July but flew the first combat mission the 24th of August 1944. And I've got all 35 of them here if you want me to read them.

Interviewer: Well can you tell me about your first combat mission?

Mr. Ball: The first one, the first one I flew as the tail gunner in the lead aircraft of our group. We had had a little bit of an accident during some of our flight training our training to lead to theater and it slip the crew up a little bit I think a bunch of the pilots. He made a low approach because he came in under the shadows of a cloud and he messed up his depth perception and he instead of hitting the runway he hit the fence just before he got to the runway, he cleared the fence. But they split us up you know let him fly with another pilot a few weeks for two or three missions and then put us back together. But the first mission was not so bad I really don't remember a whole lot about it except that one of the planes in the group we were flying either 12 or 13 planes in formation one of them did not come back with formation I don't know if he was actually shot down over the target, I knew he was hit because I saw it happen and he fell out of the formation. They were all pretty much the same in a sense. This was somewhat late in the war in so far as the because this was after D-Day when I started so the German air force had been

pretty well shot up and we did not see much fighter activity unless we went into a triangle which involved Berlin, Laxington and one other city as part of the rear valley deal. They'd pull their fighters back to protect the center of Germany and the big industrial complexes which were in River Valley. Our major problem that was had was of course anti aircraft fire. The 88 mm gun of the German army was very good and they used that 88 anti aircraft fire. You always came home with holes in the airplane. The fewest we ever had was six a little run we made over Holland when they dropped some parachute troops and glider troops into that area those were the people that got caught in the Battle of Bastogne. The most we ever had was 65 and I don't remember which mission that was. Twenty five or thirty we had our bombardier who sat in the seat right up in the front of the airplane one time he was knocked off the seat b a piece of scrap metal hit in the arm here. It made a little small wound I can take a pin and do as much damage in his arm he had on a heavy coat and a flight jacket you know but anyway he had a little drop of blood I think that came out he applied for a purple heart and they wouldn't give it to him so he went to one of the stores beside the base and bought him one. One of the there are two things I remember very vividly. One was a trip we were going in to the Berlin area. We went out of England out of the North Sea and came in to the continent just sort of at the end of Denmark it's up toward Norway and Sweden and here's the Baltic Sea over here. It was in the winter time and it was a very cold day the sea way a beautiful blue and the sky and here's Norway and Sweden and Denmark and there's Germany and here's Poland and on out below is Russia and you look like you can see forever. It was I don't know how to describe it but to me it was about the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. And I just thought and here we are messing this up with this dam war. You know but it's the German air force pilots the fighter pilots were very good. We had one attack we were sitting around Berlin actually to bring them up we were going to Czechoslovakia but we went in and went by Berlin and turned south and they came up we were the second group in the 8th air force they came in high you know we saw them high several hundred of them they came the got in front and came in out of the sun so they blind you you can't see them then they came through the group in front of us. They shot several planes down I saw them then they went underneath and attacked the group behind us you know they were going like this with fifteen hundred airplanes in a group. Well we had as many as fifteen hundred bombers in a group at times it's a thousand fighter escorts. We won this war because of our factories our production we had so much in the way of equipment so many planes my goodness that had to be the major reason we won the war.

Interviewer: You're outnumbering them?

Mr. Ball: Yes, just plain outnumbering just simply burring them planes and tanks and guns. But back to the story, there were attacking the group in the front, one place just like that little one here did not go underneath it came dead straight at us he was playing a game of chicken trying to break formation. And nobody moved I mean you're sitting here and I'm sitting there and I was not flying the airplane at that time, we pilots alternated back and forth as far as flying, altitude that altitude requires a lot of your concentration so we'd rest each other. So my thought was not who's gonna break this thing. He's coming at probable at 250 miles and hours and we're maybe 200 miles and hour so we got a four or five hundred miles and hour closure. He get's to the point I think he is either going to have to this or do this and he doesn't he puts it up on its edge and goes between our wingtips. And when he went by I was looking him in the eye and he was looking at me. I had a lot of respect for him. We had a lot of respect

for the German air force. They were gentlemen in a sense that you have a gentleman in a war. You could surrender if your plane was in trouble you had a fire on board or something like that you if you dropped your wheels and turned towards a neutral country such as Sweden or Denmark something like that they would not attack you, you could go. Sometimes they would put a couple of fighters on each wingtip you know fly escort. One plane didn't follow the rules he had a fire and he dropped his wheels and turned towards Switzerland he went into a cloud bank while he was in the cloud bank he put the fire out so if he would have just pulled his wheels up when he got out of the cloud, there was two firers sitting beside of his wingtips he told his gunners to shoot them down so they did. The next time that group flew they shot down every plane in that group but one. They did that, the German air force did that about three or four time. They had a reputation they were named the bloody hundreds that was their nickname because they had been just literally destroyed by the German air force so you know I mean they broke the rules. Those are my stories. I don't know anything much else to say about it. You go on with your questions.

Interviewer: Well of your other missions how many missions did you flew?

Mr. Ball: Thirty-five

Interviewer: Thirty-Five is there any other ones you remember?

Mr. Ball: All of the rest of them were pretty much the same routine all the time I mean you go in the procedure was to go to a particular point you would take off climb out and, the navigators of course got us through all of this sort of thing, you would climb out across a particular point and you were supposed to cross this town in England or this check point in England at a particular time and that was putting everybody in line and the formations were probably two minutes apart. And they depart the English coast that way. We would go pretty well inland before the fighters would ever take off they of course would catch us pretty quick. And they would come in above us you know when they came in we would see them up above us and if there were any and if we had no attacks from fighters actually I only went through a few, two or three, three I think where there were heavy fighter attacks. That doesn't mean there weren't others up and down the line somewhere. But then if that was over with well we'd continue on and go to what we call an IP initial point and you'd pass over that and it was so many miles to the target from there on actually we threw a switch and a bomateer took control of flying the plane direction of the plane through his bomb sight and he would change his bomb sight and he had a sight with a sight which was gyroscope mounted and he had cross hairs which moved and he would get it to where it would stay on the target and then the bomb sight would put the plane where it needed to be based on ground speed and wind direction and that sort of thing you know to hit the target. Now it wasn't all that accurate it was the most accurate system there was in the world at that time. But still what we did was carpet bombing in other words we'd drop BB 13 planes in a group you know and when the pattern hit the ground you know you'd probably be as big as this corner we didn't cause many conflicts you know. Cover a half acre or maybe an acre or two. That was the fighters once we had dropped the bombs and started home then we're free to do their thing and they loved to go find trains and trucks and all of that kind of stuff where they could go shoot them up.

Interviewer: For target practice.

Mr. Ball: For target practice. But they did and they I saw them a number of times you know blow a locomotive up they would see a moving train moving somewhere they would shoot that engine and blow that mortar up. So the Germans moved most of their stuff at night especially their trucks. And they did have a good highway system actually our interstate system was an idea that was brought by Eisenhower because of the German highway system. They built it to move military stuff you know. But they hit the trucks under the trees in the day time. So our jet jockeys little boys and little friends we called them little fighter planes they would get down and hit that interstate and get so low they could see under the trees so they could find the trucks.

Interviewer: Did you ever have to jump out?

Mr. Ball: Nope.

Interviewer: Did you ever have some scary landings?

Mr. Ball: Not too bad. We had, well we had one onetime I was not flying with my regular crew. We had an engine shot out and came home that way and I never did know when I was in the co-pilot seat and I wasn't a pilot anyway when I was with a guy you know he wasn't going to give that up. But he made an approach to the field and he didn't like it so he decided to go around and luckily there was a valley at the end of the runway because we went out and we went down in the valley and finally got enough speed to come up and come around you know and land. And he got called before a bunch of colonels on that deal because he wasn't supposed to do that not on that many engines you know. We still had of course quit a bit of weight onboard with the men and the bombs were gone but we had a lot of ammunition and stuff like that. I had just about forgotten about that. But beyond that it was pretty much the same all of the time. You'd get up about 2:30 or 3 o'clock in the morning and go down and have breakfast go to a briefing and when you'd all get in there they'd give the navigators one and the pilots they had a big map up on the wall they'd pull the curtain up on it and show you the route in tell you where you were going and what you were going to do and what time you were supposed to take off start engine at a certain time get in line take off at a certain time and fly to the initial point and make a bomb run and drop the bombs and come back home. And every target that we ever approached except one which was in Holland because there was troops stationed out they were hidden out in the woods so they knew where they were and we did that mission from about 12 thousand feet. And got those six holes in the airplane probably from ground fire it might have been rifle bullets I don't know.

How long were you there?

I flew the last mission the 18th of December of 44 from there I went to a base where they were training radar navigators and bombardiers for that theatre they would come over there and they would give them about 30 days of flying around the country you know we did that a lot of it at night. And finished that up just had gotten that tour over and were set up where we could come home and the war ended so about a week after it ended we were at Dehill De France which had been converted into a troop ship coming back to the states. When we left it was sort of an interesting this Queen Elizabeth was Queen

Mary was sitting there in dock we left before she did and we got to New York she was there she passed us. We had a bunch of Canadians on the trip with us. They had been soldiers and they brought back when they opened up there suit cases and trunks and all of that kind of stuff they had ransacked houses or buildings or something they had some art they had some silver ware and I don't know. You know we had all this looting in Iran and we had it in Germany too by some of the troops that were our not their folks but some of the Canadians. Of course a lot of our GIs brought back souvenirs you know lugers and swords and all them kind of things you have, military paraphernalia a lot of them picked some of that stuff up.

Interviewer: Did the Canadians get to keep the art and stuff?

Mr. Ball: I don't know. When they got home they might have taken it away from them I don't know. I don't think they had anything that was all that big but they had picked up some stuff. You go through a town that is abandoned you know and sleep there and see this stuff lying around it would be pretty tempting to take it.

Interviewer: Where did you usually sleep when you were in Europe?

Mr. Ball: In the barracks we had a beautiful bed just about like this and it had what you called biscuits three of them I think was filled up with straw like this you know and during the night they would spread apart and your hips would hang down. And it was very cold and we had coke fuel for our stoves but coke is very hard to start so you had to have shovels of coal to get the coal burning to get the coke to burn so it would take about two ours sometimes to warm the barracks up. We usually hoped that it would burn all night and it was a cold winter the sinuous freeze you know on the white cliffs of Dover there for a few days where it washed up the surf was freezing.

Interviewer: So you were still in England that's where your barracks were?

Mr. Ball: Yes Kemble in England oh yeh there was an U.S. air force airport within a five miles radius of every spot there in East England when we started taking off there was just airplanes everywhere. Everybody had to follow a pattern or you're going to run into each other.

Interviewer: Because barracks had to be bigger than all the pup tents that the other people had.

Mr. Ball: Oh yeh, we went several times in support of troops and that was our favorite mission of course you know we knew what the situation was. We had hot meals and a warm place to sleep and I sometimes think of it as a gentleman's war since we were fighting at a distance we never saw any dead bodies I saw men shot out of the sky I saw an airplane get hit in the middle and it burned in two in about 30 seconds and the ball of turf fell out of it and this guy was trapped in there you know he had 27,000 feet to fall. It's strange it was kind of like being two people one of you I don't remember any severe fright you know I never was in position where I did not know exactly what was going on in the airplane all of the time I mean if the oil pressure fell in the engine I knew it. So I was totally in control of myself but it was like her this guy over here is a little bit scared and this guy over here is doing what has to be done. I think that's a part of military training. I think they are the best schools in the world I really do I

think every young man ought to have some of that. My biggest disappointment with the present age is we seem to have such low ethics you know. We I just wondered if you were going to show any of this to any college students I would like to tell them a few things. Well from my 50 plus years of experience in this country when I was over I left home when I was about 18 years old going to school I was back that summer, I went to the military, I came back and went back to school, I took a job, I got married. I left home when I was 18 you might say and I never was back. And which is neither here nor there but I heard on the radio today a lot of young men are 30 years old they get a college degree and they go back home to live and they get a job somewhere. I don't follow that I mean you're a man it's time for you to do on your own. But what I wanted to say really about it the system works the system that we have works the capitalistic system works now it has from traits or some people really don't understand capitalism is build and destroy. As an example which is easy to understand we don't have any we don't have any buggy manufactures anymore you see new products come along and replace old products and that business is no longer needed. One of the reasons that I think we are so successful is that we destroy old businesses and bad businesses faster than any other economy we don't pass law to try to keep them I believe we are beginning to try that. But you know it has to work that way. I hear people wanting to punish greedy corporations there's no such thing. A corporation is an entity without emotions or anything else I mean it's neither good nor bad. The people that run it may be total rascals. And the stockholders who are actually the owners of the company may be totally innocent of anything wrong in fact they don't have anything to do with it. So you can punish the officers and the people who mess things up but if you try to punish the corporation and fine them what you're doing is affecting the stockholders. And they didn't cause the problem so I hate to see that sort of problem going around. Warren Buffet said that anybody that is against the United States in the last 250 years has lost. And I think that's true and reason that's true is because we are free and we don't have control of jobs and what people can do for a living and therefore if some bright young man has an idea to build something in the garage that makes him a multi millionaire the whole country benefits. To tax a corporation is to tax either its stockholders its workers either the stockholders get less of a dividend or less of a profit or workers have to be laid off to make up for the difference so all the time people want to tax the corporation corporations don't pay taxes they collect from their customers so they are a funnel for it they just collect it and pass it on. In this state this past year this past two years we have had the biggest fight of an income tax. I want you to name me one tax that does not come out of somebody's income in some way. If you want to build roads you tax gasoline which the guy that buys gasoline pays for it he has to take that out of that's the only place you get it nobody can print money but the United States government. Legally so if you impose a tax it comes from somebody's income it just depends on who you want to strike.

Interviewer: It's usually always the consumer.

Mr. Ball: Sure and that's the mass market you know and what they're doing is hiding you know you can make a corporation out a bad guy and you can tax him and all that kind of stuff and people will vote for you. But there's, I would to cuss a little but, foolishness going on in the political arena and some confusion and misleading kind of statements you know which are accepted by a lot of people. So for the

young people there's no limit, the only limit to what you can do in this economy is yourself that's your limiting factor.

Interviewer: Well do you think the WWII generation that WWII was better times because people were united and not so much distention?

Mr. Ball: Yes, absolutely. The country was much more unified at that time. The men went to work and the women went to the factory. And they built planes and tanks and all sorts of things. Rosie the Riveter have you heard that song and seen that add lately on television? That was WWII and the country was very unified. And we were attacked at Pearl Harbor and we were attacked on 9/11 there was no doubt they went after the twin towers a world wide business center in that building there were many of the companies that are in brokerage business you know home of the New York Stock Exchange and all that stuff all the computers and everything else there fortunately they had a back up and it took them about 3 or 4 days to hook up the cable and get the market back operating. That market there was people from 70 different countries killed in that building because they had business offices in those buildings so that wasn't an accident that that was picked out. They intended to shut down the New York Stock Exchange and the whole works that's what they thought might be a result of that. And that we would have had several years of mighty big problems before we would have got over that the country would have survived but it would have been a tuff time. We probably would have had a world class recession I mean depression problem instead of recession. Because it would have locked everything up if they hadn't have had the backups and they would have get that things going again.

Interviewer: Kind of like old insurance policies?

Mr. Ball: Yeh they had when I heard were they hit us I said man I hope you know they did have they had another complete set of stuff ready to go with all of the information in it. They had well if you've worked with a computer at all you know how to back up stuff on a little hard disk. But they had the records.

Interviewer: Were you promoted during your service time?

Mr. Ball: I was yes I was an air force cadet then I was a second lieutenant then I was a first lieutenant. I got several metals but so did a thousand other people.

Interviewer: Did you deserve your metals you think?

Mr. Ball: Well the rules said I did. You got a distinguished flying something you know and then every five missions every seven or five missions or something you know you got a button to go on it.

Interviewer: Maybe a little incentive for some?

Mr. Ball: Well no I don't think it made anybody want to go on a combat mission. Everybody was glad when it was over with. Our combat losses were at two percent per mission you see. You fly 30 and multiply that by 2 and see how many what the deal is. About two thirds of the guys don't come home. Readers Digest had a I don't know if it was Readers National Geographic some magazine a year or two back had a story on the air war over Europe but I think they told about how many men I have forgotten

if it was 20,000 or 200,00, 200,000 seems awful strong to me but I wouldn't be surprised what 200,000 men died in the air war in Germany over Europe.

Interviewer: Was that from both all sides?

Mr. Ball: All sides yeh. Cause we had planes coming out of Africa you know. The Russians had some of it planes over Germany but not very much they didn't get involved in the air war. Of course the British the British fighter pilots man they did a job.

Interviewer: Would you say they were probably the best?

Mr. Ball: Oh yeh, we had some pilots as good and Germany had some pilots as good you know. The English of courser had maximum, I'm searching for a word, reason really to put it all on the line. Because I visited in London a lot of times you know and it was thoroughly bombed out in a lot of places. And it was totally blacked out you know you there was traffic moving light that was about the only thing somewhat but the stop signs the stop lights were covered and just had them slits you know you could see if they were red or green or whatever. Taxi cabs and the Double Decker buses were about the only things that were in the streets. They were severely rationed of course this country was rationed too. There weren't any new cars built or anything else for a long time. But we were told that if you visited an English home and quit often troops were invited to go you know some of the air force men they'd go by the mess hall and get one of these ten cans of food to take it with you because they really didn't have enough money they didn't have enough food to feed you and you needed to take them something. And I was in a home a couple of times.

Interviewer: What would you say was your most memorable moment in WWII?

Mr. Ball: Well I guess I could say maybe the first mission I flew or the last mission I flew. Or the time over the I remember the time over the Baltic Sea and the beauty of earth and that sort of thing. Well it was a religious experience I think a lot of that was involved in it. Because it was an appreciation of what had made and at the same time a disappointment we were doing what we were doing.

Interviewer: Sometimes you don't have choices in that situation.

Mr. Ball: Yeh that's right. I a lot of that stays with you I mean the sense of being a part of a group and that sort of thing and it comes forward now. When I saw President Bush step out of behind that screen from behind those troops when he went to Bagdad you know I teared up just about like he did. That jumping up and cheering that was not programmed or they were not told to do that that was spontaneous on their part. So that's a it's surprising how much emotion you bring with it how some of it still seems as fresh as it was back then. I see old codgers like me talking now about the attach on Wake Island not long ago they had some runs on that on one of the stations they had these guys had some little cannons they could fire about 5,000 yards or some such thing and the Japanese were coming in fixing to land on that island they held their fire you know until they just got right up on them. And just shot them to pieces with little ole guns and won the battle.

Interviewer: Were you involved in any famous battles?

Mr. Ball: Well the whole war I guess. We had of course each mission we had was battle but there was no thing like that I mean we did a little bombing shortly after D-Day and helped the troops break out from the coast. And we did a little bombing ahead of the paratroopers and the gliders going in to Pinehoven and Holland and that group got caught in the battle of Bastogne you know. But as far as a battle is concerned we had some air battles three or four that I was in. Onetime a P51 we had a German Mr. Smith that I believe had us picked as a target he was on a pursuit curve and I was sitting there waiting for him to get a little closer and before I tried to do something with the airplane so he would miss us and his right wing flew off. And then I saw the P51 that was on his tail he had missed it you know he didn't quit catch him and we got him so I'm very thankful for little friends. That's what we called them little friends. Another thing they carried wind tanks all the time and if bandits were announced which you would hear the call over the radio you know bandits in area such and such and those would drop those things because they used that fuel first and they didn't they couldn't engage in combat with those wing tanks underneath and they called bandits one day and there was about a hundred of them right up over our heads and here come these tanks floating falling down through our formation. It was a surprise but the airplane flying through the air creates a pressure system around the wings you know when air comes up over the hull and I doubt seriously if the tanks would have hit very many planes it probably would shed them off. We tried a time or two you know boys do silly things overlap the wings and see if you could touch them together just little bits you know. We could get them overlapping and when you started down it would be a point where you couldn't force it. This guy over here he would either go down or you'd come up one or the other you know there's no air pressure between the plane but it just wouldn't do it.

Interviewer: Well if you had there might have been problems too.

Mr. Ball: Well no we wouldn't have hit it that hard. And in basic training no primary yeh basic training flying formation and one of the instructors we were flying the lead thing you know and there's two and one on each side of us three in a row. One of the instructors was playing so he was having his wing tape over ours and we would circling like that you know he was flying along and we were flying like this. He would get up and speed up just a tiny bit and then drop back. Rotate that wing tip around our wing tip and one of them flew under the bridge down in Texas one of them did a loop around the bridge. I forgot where that was.

Interviewer: Kind of hot dogs of the air.

Mr. Ball: Yeh hot dogs some hot dogs.

Interviewer: What unit were you in?

Mr. Ball: 379Funnel group.

Interviewer: Do ya'll have reunions?

Mr. Ball: No, I have seen one of the crew members since I came back. Lavagear he came through my hometown of Jefferson and saw my name our family name on a barber shop and stopped and inquired

about where I was. And that cousin didn't know where I was living but he gave him my mother's phone number and he called her and she told him how to get in touch with me. And he called me he lived over in North Carolina and we had reason to go over that way about a year later so we went over and visited with him, he was good. They actually invited him to become a lead fly the lead ship you know lead formation he told them he thought he would stay with the bunch he came over with.

Interviewer: Did you stay in service?

Mr. Ball: Did I stay, no. I had no particular reason to want to stay in the service I considered becoming an immersion pilot but there were about 10,000 of us getting out of the armed forces at the same time and I had met a girl here in Nashville while I was there for six weeks. And we corresponded the whole time and ended up getting married I guess that's what I had on my mind.

Interviewer: Was any of your group wounded or killed?

Mr. Ball: Yeh I wouldn't remember any names. We lost you know we had some bunks that were empty a few times after we went on a mission in our barracks. We lost I don't know losing an entire group was fairly common really. But there were so many of us over there. There were a lot times it was pretty rare you know in the 35 missions you know I don't remember how many but seemed like it was only a few times but 2% losses over a period of time is you know adds up.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Mr. Ball: No, I think I've talked too much already.