

Interviewer: What's your full name and where were you born?

Harrison: My name is Bruce Harrison I was born in Milan Tennessee in 1923.

Interviewer: And what branch did you serve in?

Harrison: I served in the US Army Air Core. It was at that time the air force was a branch of the US Army.

Interviewer: What was your unit assignment inside the air core?

Harrison: Well I ended up I was pilot on a B17 bomber in the 8th air force in England.

Interviewer: Okay what were your parent's names?

Harrison: My father's name was Caldwell Harrison and my mother's name was Nell Fuqua Harrison.

Interviewer: And what were their occupations?

Harrison: My father was a banker he was at the Farmer's People's Bank in Milam.

Interviewer: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Harrison: I have one brother who is deceased he was older than I and I have a sister that's two years older than I that is still living. She lives in a Littleton Colorado.

Interviewer: How far did you make it through school?

Harrison: Well at the time that the war started when I went into service I was in college and I had a year and a half of college before I got into the air force. And then I went back to college when the war was over and got a degree at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Interviewer: Do you have any memories of the great depression?

Harrison: Oh a little bit. I was it didn't affect me too much we weren't rich we had just enough. We had as much anybody and no more than a lot of people and nobody had too much. It was a good time I had a fun time growing up.

Interviewer: Did it hurt your father's bank at all?

Harrison: Not well the when they had what they call the bank holiday in 1932 I believe it was when all the banks were closed for a short period of time and some of the banks failed but his survived it.

Interviewer: So your family really didn't go through any hardships or shortages during that time.

Harrison: I didn't realize it if they had any hardship not on my part there was not any hardship.

Interviewer: Okay were you old enough to have a job before you went into the service?

Harrison: Oh yeah I worked in the especially during the summer. We used to have tomato crop was a big deal around here and they packed tomatoes they packed sheds all over town and most of the kids worked in the pack sheds and for usually for one month to two months' time. And of course I did that for several summers and then I worked in some when I went to college in summertime I waited tables for a little bit.

Interviewer: How much did picking the tomatoes and packing them get you?

Harrison: We didn't we just the farmers picked them and brought them into the pack sheds and you had ladies that were packing these boxes. Our job was to unload the tomato crates off of the wagons and stack them up for the people to pack them. And they put them in crates and then they were loaded into freight cars and shipped to market.

Interviewer: Now what did it pay?

Harrison: I think I started off at a dime an hour. I ended up \$15 a week I think was the most money I made.

Interviewer: How much did your waiting tables' job

Harrison: This was for my free board during the summer time when I went to summer school.

Interviewer: I see. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor how seriously did you take the threat of Japan and Germany?

Harrison: Well I don't think I took it too seriously. I was 16, 17, 18 years old at the time and when Pearl Harbor happened I was in college Davidson College in North Carolina. And as you know it was on a Sunday I had been to church and came back and somebody told us what was on the radio so we turned it on and heard about it. Of course you immediately think about what it's going to do to you and how it's going to affect your future. And everybody was talking about that.

Interviewer: When you were at home did your dad get the newspaper?

Harrison: Oh yeah had the radio and the newspaper.

Interviewer: Did you get most of your news from those sources?

Harrison: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you listen to FDR's speech on the 8th of December after

Harrison: Yeah

Interviewer: After the attack. What was your impression of that speech?

Harrison: I was very much impressed with it and thought he did a tremendous job with it. I think it was a speech that aroused the whole country.

Interviewer: How was your general view of FDR as the president?

Harrison: I had a very high regard for him. I think he was a tremendous person and he did a I think he did an incredible job and did the job that needed to be done for our country at the time.

Interviewer: As you were sitting, going back to that Sunday when you heard about it, would you ever have guessed that war would happen in the United States that someone would attack us?

Harrison: No I never had given it any thought really that it would really affect us. And at that age sometimes you're a little bit naive.

Interviewer: When did you realize that you were going to either have to join the service or be drafted? Was it when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

Harrison: Well no not right at that time it was probably several months later. I ended up joining what they call some kind of reserve I can't remember what they called it now. But anyway we were supposed to remain in school for it. Of course originally they said until you finish school but everybody knew it wouldn't last that long. So I joined this reserve in 1942 and then I was called into active duty in January of 1943.

Interviewer: Did you get to choose which branch or did they assign you?

Harrison: Well I chose the air force the reserve unit that I got into.

Interviewer: Why did you choose the air force any particular reason?

Harrison: I always thought I wanted to fly. That was the glamorous thing to do.

Interviewer: When did you enlist?

Harrison: When did I enlist?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Harrison: I believe it was in the fall of 1942 that's when I got into this reserve. And then we were called into active duty in 1943 in January.

Interviewer: What induction center did they send you to?

Harrison: I reported to Miami Beach Florida and there I was inducted into the army and spent oh about a month or so there in basic training.

Interviewer: So that was your basic training facility too?

Harrison: Right

Interviewer: Okay when you went to Miami Beach do you remember them giving you any tests?

Harrison: Oh we took all kinds of test when we went in and I suppose during the time after we left Miami Beach, I don't know whether this is what you want or not. They had inducted a whole lot of people into the service at that time and they didn't really have places for everybody to start into the actual flight training. So we were sent to a little college in Pennsylvania Slipper Rock State Teachers College in Slippery Rock Pennsylvania. And we stayed there about oh about two or three months and we did drill and this kind of thing. Went and took some classes and it was a real interesting experience there.

Interviewer: What kind of drills did you participate in?

Harrison: Oh just close order drill with and of course we went in school a big part of the time and this was good for us.

Interviewer: Did you receive any other like specialized training besides flight school?

Harrison: No well of course when you say flight school there's a lot that goes with it. Ground school and navigation and meteorology and mechanics and a whole lot other than just actually learning to fly.

Interviewer: Do you think any of your jobs that you had had your unloading of tomatoes and you're waiting tables had anything to do with

Harrison: No I don't think so it just taught you how to work and do what you're supposed to do.

Interviewer: When you were there in Miami Beach and Slippery Rock Pennsylvania what was your impression of your fellow recruits?

Harrison: Of what?

Interviewer: Your fellow recruits?

Harrison: Most of them were college students just like I was. There was very few from our college but I remember there was a big bunch from the University of Michigan and a lot from Duke University and they were all pretty nice people.

Interviewer: Was that the first time you had been a far distance from home?

Harrison: Well of course I had been away in school my last year of high school I went to prep school in Chattanooga and then a year and a half there at Davidson. I had been away from home all that time so it wasn't a new thing.

Interviewer: After your training after your time at Slippery Rock what kind of unit did they put you in?

Harrison: Well from there we were sent to Nashville Tennessee to what they call a classification center. And there is where we really took a lot of physical tests and mental and psychological test and all. And this is the place where they determined where they would send you to pilot training or navigational training or navigational training you know to be a navigator or bombardier or a pilot. And so everybody was wondering what they was gonna be classified at. And they used these test I suppose all these other things to determine where you'd go.

Interviewer: And you tested to be a pilot?

Harrison: Right

Interviewer: Okay you were talking about that you did some drills in Pennsylvania did you participate in any other maneuvers stateside?

Harrison: What

Interviewer: Maneuvers stateside did you participate in any other than the ones you did in Pennsylvania?

Harrison: No we didn't do anything there but go to school. We took a little bit of flight training I think in a Piper Cub got about seven or eight hours just to familiarize you with flying. Some of us had never done any flying before.

Interviewer: What was your impression the first time you flew?

Harrison: Oh I was enjoyed it. I liked it from the start.

Interviewer: Looking back on it how well do you think the training prepared you for the job that you had ahead of you?

Harrison: Well that wasn't that much training really. That didn't really prepare us really for anything. The things when we really got into any kind of training was when we left this classification center in Nashville. We went to I was assigned to Maxwell Field Alabama at Montgomery which was what they called preflight training. And it was very intent physical and mental and it was real good training there.

Interviewer: So how well do you feel that your work at Maxwell prepared you then?

Harrison: Well I think it did what it was supposed to do. It got us ready to learn to fly.

Interviewer: What were the living conditions like in all the places you were moving?

Harrison: Well they were all good. At this college we lived in regular college dormitories and ate in the college dining room. At Maxwell field of course this was a permanent air force base it was old base and the quarters were real good. Two or three to a room and it was a nice facility.

Interviewer: Okay after your preflight training at Maxwell Air Force Base where did you go from there?

Harrison: I was assigned to a primary flight school in Chester Illinois. It's right on the Mississippi River and we flew from we did our primary training there. We flew it was a Steerman airplane a biplane twin two wing airplane. Real fine airplane to learn to fly in hard to fly but it was good.

Interviewer: How long were you there?

Harrison: We were there two months I believe. I was there in the fall this was in fall of 1943 and we were there that's where you learned to solo and learned to do acrobatics and all kinds of maneuvers in small airplanes.

Interviewer: Where did they take you from there?

Harrison: Then from there I went to Maura Missouri for what they call basic training basic flight training. And there it was a little larger airplane and you learn to navigate a little more and we did some night flying there learned to night fly. And did a little bit of cross country flying it was just a little more experience in a little bigger airplane. And then from there from that point they decided who would go into multi engine aircraft or who would go into single engine aircraft or the fighter aircraft or the bomber. And I was sent to the multi-engine training I went to a base in Stuttgart Arkansas and there we took what they called advanced flying. You learned to fly this twin engine airplane and you learned to handle that. And you did night flying and you learned some instrument flying and that's where when you finished that that's when you get your wings and we were commissioned as second lieutenants.

Interviewer: Okay how long were you in Arkansas how long did the advances training

Harrison: That was about two months all of these three phases of flying were around two months or maybe a week or two more but roughly that.

Interviewer: Okay you graduated from the advanced flight training school and you were commissioned as a second lieutenant. What kind of division were you placed in?

Harrison: Well from there I was sent to Sebring Florida where we trained to fly B17s the four engine bombers. And this was real good experience and we learned to fly these planes and did a lot of maneuvers and formation flying and learned really learned how to work them.

Interviewer: What happened after that?

Harrison: After that I was sent to MacDill Field in Tampa Florida for more B17 training and we formed a crew. And at this base and we trained as a crew of course each plane we had a pilot and a copilot and a navigator and a bombardier, flight engineer, a radio operator, a ball turret gun, two waist gunners and a tail gunner. And we trained as a crew there and flew gunnery missions and cross country and formation flying and all kinds of training for that.

Interviewer: Then what was the next step?

Harrison: Then the next step we of course we got about 30 days leave after that. And after that I reported to Savanna Georgia picked up a new airplane a new B17 that we were to fly over to England.

Interviewer: The crew stayed intact?

Harrison: Yeah the crew stayed intact. The crew went all off and then we got back together at Savanna. And we flew to first to New Hampshire and then up to Goose bay Labrador which was a jumping off place to go overseas. And we flew form Goose bay to Iceland and spent two or three days in Iceland mainly waiting for the weather to clear. The weather was terrible when we got there and it was terrible for a day or two and I remember well when we left it was about a 75 mile an hour wind blowing and

trying to taxi one of those B17s in 75 mile an hour wind was a whole lot of hard work. Anyway we left there and flew to Scotland where we left the plane that we flew over it was to be modified converted for combat use. And then I was assigned to our crew was assigned to the 457th bomb group in England which was this was part of the 8th air force. And we took a little bit of training there getting familiar with the operations of the plane then we started flying combat missions.

Interviewer: When you arrived in England did they put you in temporary or permanent barracks?

Harrison: We didn't stay at this place in Scotland but maybe a couple of days. And then we were assigned to this base with the 457th bomb group and we had permanent quarters then.

Interviewer: How soon after arriving in England did you fly your first combat mission?

Harrison: Oh it was probably oh I can't remember maybe two or three or four weeks it wasn't too long. I started flying not too long after I got there.

Interviewer: What kind of specific training did they give you? You said they gave you more training when you got there.

Harrison: Well just operational procedures of the base and contacting the tower forming your groups and how you more or less just getting familiar with the way they operated. It wasn't really more training it was more familiarity kind of thing.

Interviewer: What was your impression of your officers and NCOs of the 8th air force division?

Harrison: They was very good most of the people were very competent and very knowledgeable. The ground crews that kept the planes going were extremely competent. And you didn't have to worry about whether your plane was gonna be ready or not they would have it ready. They did a good job.

Interviewer: Besides the plane did you train with any other type of arms or equipment?

Harrison: Not really we always carried a 45 automatic I wasn't very proficient in shooting it. They was a hard gun to shoot but that was about the only arms that we carried.

Interviewer: Do you remember your first mission over there pretty well?

Harrison: Yeah I remember it real well I remember all of them real well. Most of mine were fairly short they were not too deep into Germany most of them were around what they call the Rural Valley around Colon and ___ north and the cities around there. Of course the main thing I the hardest thing to get used to was what they called the flack the German anti-aircraft artillery. And this flack sometimes would be so thick it looked like you could get out and walk on it. It was pretty deadly those people could shoot those 88s pretty good.

Interviewer: How scary was it the first time they fired on you?

Harrison: Well you are so busy trying to keep up and keep in your formation that you don't have time to get scared. You're scared you're nervous and tense but you've got a job to do and you're busy trying to get that done.

Interviewer: Do you think it was harder on you as the pilot?

Harrison: Was it what?

Interviewer: Being shot at was it

Harrison: Oh yeah you think about it all the time. You wore these black vests and you had all the plating on the back of your seat. The main problem was getting your aircraft shot up. And then of course at that time we didn't see many enemy fighters, later on they did, but at that time we didn't see many.

Interviewer: So did you worry about your crew a lot?

Harrison: Well you had to worry about the whole thing everybody is worrying about each other and you're trying to get the job done and do what you're supposed to do. You don't have time to worry about people individually but you do.

Interviewer: How close was your crew?

Harrison: Pretty close we like I say we had been training together for two or three months so we were fairly close. We wasn't there long enough to really get I was shot down on my sixth mission. This was we wasn't there too long.

Interviewer: Which mission stands out most in your mind would it be the last one?

Harrison: It would be the last one yeah. This was a mission that was the longest one that we had flown. And they had told us in briefing that morning that if you were ever going to see fighter German fighters you would probably see them today. And we did they were out in great numbers. At that time the Germans were short on gasoline or fuel for their aircraft and they didn't fly a whole lot. They'd make a quick pass then leave but this time they were out in force. That was what we ran into a pretty good bunch of them and they actually ended up our group was 36 planes and they actually ended up knocked down 18 out of 36 so we had a bad day. This was November the 2nd 1944.

Interviewer: What was that mission where were you flying to?

Harrison: It was to, if you hadn't asked me I could have told you, it was to it was in the vicinity of Colon not Colon but well. It was in the central part of Germany anyway it was the longest mission that we had been on before.

Interviewer: Walk me through that mission what happened to your plane and?

Harrison: Well we had two engines that was shot out. And the adorn controls was shot out and we were on fire. Couldn't get the fire put out and we had two engines out and we was of course losing altitude. And it was hard to keep the plane stable and that was when I made the decision for the crew to bail out. We had one boy that was hurt and they got him out put him in a shoot and you know got him out of the plane. Everybody got out and I was the last one to leave and I walked back into the Bombay it was still open and jumped down through the Bombay. First time I'd ever opened used the parachute. Somebody asked me said have you ever had training to do it I said no you don't need any training when the time comes you make it work.

Interviewer: Where did you land after you jumped out of the plane?

Harrison: I landed it was real funny I was going down and the aircraft was spinning down and it crashed. And I was afraid for a little bit I was gonna fall into it while it was burning but I didn't I landed on a little hillside close to it. And just shortly after I landed a bunch of people it was civilians they surrounded me pretty quickly wasn't any use in me trying to resist them they were all armed. And so I was taken to this little town put in the jail there.

Interviewer: What happened there?

Harrison: I joined a couple more of the crew that was close by and we were sent to this well we went through Frankfurt and then to this interrogation center. And there they put everybody into a little 4 by 6 cell it just had a cot in it. There was a window up high you couldn't see out but it was just to give a little bit of light. And we stayed there I guess we were there maybe a week and they'd take you out periodically and take you into this room and interrogation. They ask you all kinds of questions about your unit and where you were from and all this. And these people were good at their business they knew more about us than almost as much as we knew about ourselves. They were just trying to find information about our unit and anything they could about us. They knew most of anything we did anyway so it wasn't any big problem. We stayed there oh about a week I guess and then I was sent to a prisoner of war camp over in the eastern part of Germany. It was over close to the Polish border it was starlight roof number three. And it was supposed to have been for air force prisoners of war and the one I was in was for officers only and enlisted men were sent to a different camp. We stayed there this was in the winter in 1944 and we stayed there until oh I believe it was sometime in January. And the Russians were at that time advancing towards us and they decided to get us out of there. So they herded us all out and we marched in the snow for about four or five days and slept in barns or wherever at night. And we were on the road I guess for a week or ten days and we got to a place with rails and they put us on these railcars they called the French called them 40s and 8s they were made for forty men or eight horses. And they were not very good accommodations we were on those for four or five days. And went down to the southern part of Germany a camp there close to Mossberg Germany and this was a camp I later found out there were over 10,000 prisoner of war in this camp United States, British and other nations I think. But anyway the conditions there were pretty grim they we didn't have any physical mistreatment. But we didn't have enough to eat and it was kind of dirty and packed into these small barracks and had no if you took a bath it was in cold water. It wasn't too pleasant but it wasn't all that bad we survived anyway.

Interviewer: Is that the camp you were liberated from?

Harrison: Yeah we were liberated by General Patton 5th army. And we heard the artillery and the fighting all around the camp and we didn't know what was going on. We knew they were getting close in a place like that you can hear rumors of everything in the world and believe what you want to or make up your own which a lot of people did. But anyway they just before they got took this little town all of the German guards and everything just left. We were just left completely alone and then the Americans came in and liberated us. General Patton himself came into our camp and he was a real impressive figure.

Interviewer: Did you get to meet him?

Harrison: I didn't meet him but I was probably 15, 20 feet away from him. He had his twin pearl handle revolvers and he was a real colorful figure looked good to us anyway.

Interviewer: What was your general impression of the German soldiers that you got to see close up and stuff?

Harrison: Well we didn't have much contact with German soldiers just these guards. They were most of them were fairly decent people they didn't mistreat us. Our number one older guard that we had he had a son that lived in the United States and he was you know a little bit sympathetic to us. But they didn't mistreat us in fact probably at that time didn't have a whole lot more than we did in the way of food. This was at the end of the war this was in May of 1944.

Interviewer: Were you still a second lieutenant at that time or had you been promoted?

Harrison: Did I what?

Interviewer: Were you still a second lieutenant?

Harrison: Yeah I never was promoted when they liberated us they took us back to France. Went back to France to a base in there went to a place near Reams France and we stayed there for a few days. And kindly recuperated and they gave us physical exams and kindly get acclimated to living like human beings again and then we went to Lahar on the French coast and put on a hospital ship. It was a converted liner and it was real nice the quarters weren't too good but they had an officer's dining room that was real nice. They had waiters and white table cloths and something we hadn't seen in a long time the food was real good to us. And we came back to the states on the ship.

Interviewer: How long was the time period between when you landed in Scotland and when your plane was shot down?

Harrison: We got there in September 1944 and I was shot down on November 2nd of 1944. And then we were liberated I believe it was April the 29th when we were liberated from the prison camp in Germany. I was there roughly six months.

Interviewer: What got you through your time in the POW camp?

Harrison: Well if you're talking about being a Christian or not I was a Christian. I was converted when I was about 13 years old. I like a lot of people when I went off to school kind of strayed away from my rearing and my but it was always in the back of my mind that the Lord was with me and I could depend on him and this was never far from my mind. I can remember so well the when we were liberated at this camp like I told you the German guards before they left we didn't know whether they were gonna just execute all of us or what was gonna happen to us. I can remember standing by this fence outside fence and praying and I remember this peace came over me and just impressed on me that everything was gonna be alright so. It was a real reassuring feeling and of course it turned out that way.

Interviewer: What are some of the memories that you remember from all of the different camps where they moved you and relocated?

Harrison: Well the first camp we were in was a permanent camp that had been there for a good while. And they had a little bit better facilities they had a little auditorium every now and then they would play music usually classical music and you would go and listen to that. And it was awfully cold at that time and of course you didn't have a whole lot of heat particularly in this place where you'd go to listen to this music there was no heat there and you'd get awfully cold. But we had amply heat in our little barracks and we received Red Cross parcels for a while and they were a real God send. I was in a room I think there were 12 of us in there and four or five of them were British. And one or two of these boys had been in prison camps since the Battle of Dunkirk which was way back. So they had been in prison for five years or more. One of them named Robby he was the cook and he rationed out the food to everybody and he was a real good boy. Of course the Germans supplemented those Red Cross parcels to some extent if it hadn't been for them we would have really been hungry. I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the Red Cross.

Interviewer: What were in those parcels usually?

Harrison: Oh they had canned meat and eggs and all canned stuff and had some chocolate bars. And this was the real delight the chocolate bar.

Interviewer: Would people switch?

Harrison: Huh

Interviewer: Would they trade?

Harrison: Oh yeah we would only get one package for the room when we were getting them see. So they had to be parceled out among us so you'd get a little bit of this and a little bit of that. That's what this fellow names Robbie he was the one that parceled all of this out he did a good job of it kept everyone happy.

Interviewer: What was your impression of those British soldiers?

Harrison: They were real nice people the ones that I knew. That was about the only contact I had with British soldiers but these were British airmen and they were real nice people. I thoroughly enjoyed them.

Interviewer: they liberated you you said they sent you to France they sent you to Southern France then you got on the boat and that boat took you home?

Harrison: Yeah we sailed on that boat as well I remember it took us about oh eight or nine days I can't remember for sure but. We landed in Boston and from there they put us on a troop train and I ended up in Memphis and then got a train from Memphis home got home in May of 1945. Then after that of course I had about 30 days leave at home and then I again reported to Miami Beach for reclassification or reassignment actually. And so I was probably would have gone in to B29 training they were using more B29s then and about that time, this was in August, and the war was over so they gave us the choice of being reassigned to B29s or going home. And I said well I believe I'll just go home if you don't care. So that ended my

Interviewer: How was the trip over on the boat was it pretty calm?

Harrison: It was real good it was I thoroughly enjoyed the trip home. We were in close quarters sleeping but it was at one time a pretty nice luxury liner. They had a nice as I said they had a nice dining room where the officers met and the food was good at least we thought it was good at the time.

Interviewer: Did you get sea sick?

Harrison: Oh no I didn't get sea sick. Sea sickness is a whole lot like air sickness.

Interviewer: Did you get airsick any?

Harrison: No I did not but that was a in our primary flight training this was a thing that worlds of people would get sick some of them would get over it and some of them couldn't. Some of them washed out training because they couldn't keep from I knew this one fellow he'd get sick every time he went up. Then after he was sick he would be alright he could fly on good but he'd get sick every time. They finally had to wash him out he just couldn't take it.

Interviewer: Did you receive any special medals or anything for being a POW?

Harrison: I received an air medal which was they presented it to my mother and father while I was in Germany. And it was an award it was kind of an automatic thing after you completed six missions they gave you an air medal. Six more they gave you a star on the air medal so you know it wasn't any particular big deal to get that for me. It was just a matter of putting in the time more or less.

Interviewer: They didn't allow you to send any mail from the POW camp did they?

Harrison: We could write these letters but they never did ever get any of my mail. I think maybe they got one letter but I never did receive any from them. They were supposed to be able to send mail to us but I never received any from them.

Interviewer: So they were really happy to see you home.

Harrison: Oh yeah well for you know after they got this telegram of missing in action first this was hard for them because they didn't know what had happened. And I assume it was probably three or four weeks before they really knew and then they told them I was a prisoner of war in Germany. It was a pretty good experience.

Interviewer: Looking back on it did you ever realize when you were flying missions what a role that your plane and your squadron played in the overall war effort or did you just see it as your mission?

Harrison: Well you know you are a part of an overall thing. It was real interesting to watch the various groups form in to you'd take off and your group would form a formation then your formation would join another group. One day I something was wrong with our airplane and we didn't fly and I flew in the weather plane they had they would send up a weather plane and he'd check the weather ahead of the crew. And seeing we were flying above these formations of all the groups and it was really pretty to see all these groups forming and the vapor trail. It was a real sight to see all the number of airplanes all in line.

Interviewer: You said on your sixth mission was the only time you encountered fighter pilots right?

Harrison: Yeah

Interviewer: What was your impression of them?

Harrison: Well they were tough. These were they were good they hit us pretty hard. I can remember one place in front of me his wing was shot off and you know going down and burning and on fire and that kind of thing. You could hear a lot of course all of the gun fire of our guns and they were buzzing pretty good they were good.

Interviewer: Did you have a fighter escort that day?

Harrison: It was a strange thing we were supposed to have fighter escort and for some reason I never did know why but our group got away from the line of groups that were going to the target for some reason we were sitting out by ourselves. And we didn't have any fighter escort at the time and that's why they hit us so hard as I told you we lost 18 out of 36 planes. And ended up we was supposed to be I had a friend that I graduated from high school he was a P51 pilot and after the war was over I got to talking to him. And he was flying escort cover on that particular mission and I said I wish you'd have been there where I was. H remembered it being pretty rough.

Interviewer: What's your overall view now of your time in the service?

Harrison: Well it's one of those things you wouldn't take anything for having done but you wouldn't want to go through it again you know. My experience was good I always try to look on the bright side of everything. Of course as time goes on you remember the good things and forget a lot of the bad things and I guess that's part of the way it's supposed to be.

Interviewer: Do you think your experiences in the military prepared you for civilian life after you got out?

Harrison: Oh I think so you learned discipline and you learned how to get along with people. Anytime you learn those things its good training for you. I was good experience even though it was bad in a lot of ways.

Tape ended