

Ron it's a pleasure to be here in my own church and to have some friends to come in from out of state that are the sons of Charles Pat Murphy come in to visit. James Murphy is his son along with Charles. About two years ago I had mission that I wanted to see done and I realized that I had not honored my father who had been in the service. And I had a great desire to understand what he went through as a waste gunner and a V24 Liberator over in the European Theatre. And the more I looked into it the more I found out from him like most veterans he didn't want to talk about the war. But he would when I got older he would answer questions that I might impose on him. And we got talking and I got to doing research and my goal was to find since dad had gone already gone my goal was to find somebody that was in the 93<sup>rd</sup> bombing group and 329<sup>th</sup> bombing squadron because dad was in the 329<sup>th</sup> bombing squadron. I got the lead through going to a website of the 93 bombardment group and they put me in touch with a man in California who was a copilot whose relative was copilot in Captain Murphy's B24 Thunderbird. And he said there is a man that is still alive who flew a B24 bomber and he flew it he flew it out of the training occurred in the United States and then went over there to the European Theatre. But he flew in the 329<sup>th</sup> bombing squadron and I asked him for the number and his address and I called a dear friend of mine who is the Assistant DA in Lewisburg. And I said Eddie I've got this name of a man his ship was named the Thunderbird and he had a he was a pilot of that ship and he now lives down there in Lewisburg and he's still alive. Would you please go by his apartment and see if you cannot find him for me I want to talk to him. So within twenty minutes I got the telephone call and I was on the telephone with Pat Murphy. Boy did I find a gem when I found Pat. I mean he and I and I hadn't told him this anytime I don't have my father here I've often felt like he's very close to me in that regard. And that's what I wanted to do I wanted to find somebody that knew the experiences in WWII that he knew from the perspective of a WWII B24 pilot. Let me say just a little bit I'm going to jump ahead. I'm going to cover I'm going to start with them going the 93<sup>rd</sup> bombing group going from Fort Myers Florida in 1942. Dad was enlisted in February 1942 got all of his training they flew up to and crossed the North Atlantic and landed in Scotland up in Prestwick I'm sorry Scotland. They went on from there when landed in Prestwick they noticed that there was one airplane out of the 329<sup>th</sup> bombing squadron that they didn't know what happened to them. They were lost somehow they got or something malfunctioned in the plane and that whole squadron was lost going over there. And they never really found out what exactly did happen. But the more I looked into it and the more research I did I told Pat I wanted to meet and we sat up an arrangement to go meet. I went to Lewisburg went to his home there where he was staying and officially introduced himself to me and at that point it was nine hours had passed and I was still there talking. Because it was so fascinating and I got to see what he was awarded and his metals and all of that. Let me tell you let me start with him leaving the service and I'm going to let you know he completed 26 and was credited with 26 combat missions flying a B24. One of the things that he impresses upon me was he had a way of maneuvering a plane and none of his crew received any kind of none of them got killed. And they came away basically up until the time of Belsey bombing raid over there they were intact his whole crew was intact which is an amazing feat in and of itself. My dad only flew seven missions because in six of the seven missions that he flew he flew with Pat Murphy. Not in the same aircraft but in a different aircraft with the 329<sup>th</sup>. Dad was wounded three times he was awarded the Purple Heart with a cluster and was also the recipient of the Silver Star. He flew 26 of 30 missions that I told you about. At the end of his career in that he got out of the service he went after verifying that he had received 26 missions he was sent home to Rockwell New York. He reported to

Miami Florida also and he went to an airbase in Columbus Ohio for the six weeks completion of the flying organization training in the P17. Of course he was a B24 pilot and he also helped train new pilots. In July or August of 1944 he was promoted to Captain and put in charge of the standardization board. In May or June of 1945 he went to Denver Colorado the United Flight Training with the PC3s. Then he went to Chicago Illinois to copilot out of there with the PC3. He was enrolled at the University of Chicago where he was had an interest in history but a burning desire to be an attorney. Because he was going to follow in the same footsteps of his father himself when he went to the University of Ole Miss. Completing his degree at Ole Miss and wound up graduating from Ole Miss Law School. He reported to Kirkland Air Force Base in New Mexico where he was in the JAG division where he tried court marshals. And that is his connection here at Fort Campbell. In early 1952 he got orders to report to Brew Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas for flight training in a B29 bomber. He went to Smoke Hill Air Force base then on to Kansas and overseas for assignment in the Korean War. In late 1952 or early 1953 he got his orders to go to Japan and was operating out of an air force base there and served as a B29 pilot and the squadron operations officer. At the end of the hostilities Pat was asked if he would like to be assigned to the strategic air command and due to some person feelings about that he declined to do that. But he went on to teach ROTC as an instructor at the University of California and was an instructor there in Political Science a year ago. But I have found a new friend in Pat Murphy he is here this week staying with myself and his son is staying at our home. And I appreciate you asking us or having an opportunity to introduce my new friend to you. So at this time I'm going to ask him to come forward I've told him what the program is about. WWII from the eyes of a B24 pilot and I'm going to have him come on and then at the end when we got through I'm going to probably have to nudge him a little bit to let me ask him questions. But if you have any questions for him please ask the questions and I know he will answer then and I may have to help him a little bit. Pat Murphy

Mr. Murphy: Greetings gentlemen this is the first time since I was born, born in 1919, this is the very first time I have ever been honored for what happened during for what I did during WWII. Let me kind of tell you the back ground of WWII. Back in 1940 I was in college and we were looking around very interested in world affairs. Hitler was concurring all of Europe and then the Japanese had invaded China and they had gotten down to the South East corner of the Asia Community. Next they were just about to jump over to Australia. Australia was the only country between and the Japanese. Hitler had concurred all of Europe during those early years up to 1940 and 41 he had concurred all of Europe except England. England was separated from Europe by 20 miles of boarder between England the English Shore and Europe the European. England in 1939 it was worse here and 40 was just about as bad was not being attacked by Hitler with the ground forces but he was sending his air force over to England dropping bombs all over the place. Every night they dropped bombs if they couldn't see to drop them they dropped bombs anywhere killed woman and children all kinds of things. When we got to England that city had just been bombed to pieces. It was devastating to see that country but we were keeping up with it some what especially college age. I was 19, 20 and it was obvious that we were going to war the thing that helped us out was a few senators not very many who were what we called passengers. They said we don't need to get into this war let Hitler go ahead and take England let the Japanese take Australia they can't come in and take us. We impervious because we've got the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Pacific on the other all of this we were taken in as the 18, 19, 20 years old and it had a great deal of

affect on us. Well we didn't like Hitler none of the scribes who were writing about it said anything nice about Hitler. Nobody liked the Japanese we didn't like any of it and we were mad at the victor, let's go get them. Well in 1940 I the congress finally had been persuaded to pass the draft. Any one from age 21 to 35 had to serve one year that's all they were drafted to serve one year in the military. That was either late 39 or the first part of 1940 and that was all. A young man got his draft notice he came home and said goodbye I'll be back in a year for I'm in the Army now that was the song. You gentlemen will remember it but most of you don't remember that. Well that was the time I applied to get in the Air Force and I got in the Air Force and went to flying school and learned to fly. We I went to one of the two flying schools that taught pilots to fly multi engine aircraft. There were only two at that time and I went through one of them. And when we got through very shortly after we graduated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1941 we graduated from flight school the war had begun because we were attacked on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1941. Well on the 8<sup>th</sup> we declared war against Japan on the 9<sup>th</sup> on the 10<sup>th</sup> I forgot which we declared war against Hitler and Mussolini the Italians. So we were just in war within two or three days after before we graduated and of course we were their pick away we went. And we formed I was one of the original members of the 93<sup>rd</sup> bomb group which began to fly B24s. At that time we didn't call it a B24 we called it a LB30, LB30 that's what we learned to fly with. We didn't have any scheduled training for it so the people of Washington who had been prepared for war but had kept under by these few senators were ready to send us over there. So they said alright you get into the B24 we'll give you check ride around the field a couple of times. We'll check you out and you'll be a B24 pilot and that's about all the instruction we got to fly the B24. A B24 was a four engine aircraft with four engines it was not the top priority of our bombing group. When I went through flying school the only two multi engine bombers we had we called them a B10 or a B12. They were a two engine bomber group with open cockpit pilots just like the little small planes that you see today. B10s and B12s they were stationed in Alaska at that time and they were our defense. Alright we formed the B24 group about oh February or March or during those winter months of 1942 in Blocksville Field in Louisiana that's in Shreveport. And then 93<sup>rd</sup> was formed there but it wasn't completely formed and then to get training as a group and begin to get formation flying formation flying means you did it in trays a leader a number two man a number three man leader two and three. And we had to learn to fly formation with that B24 and it was hard it wasn't easy to fly formation in a B24 it was very difficult to fly. Well we were pumped up we were young the war in Europe was going badly we didn't pay as much attention to the Japanese that was going in we paid more attention to Europe to England from which most of the people in this country came. And I applied for the air force because I could fly and I did very well. I was very fortunate very lucky learned how to fly but I learned because I wanted to learn and of course it was a good thing for me to do. It was a good thing because my early years in college I had wasted time I was in a class of 40 in 1940 when I applied in the air force my class of 40 and I had only accumulated a year and half of college. I had to take a written examination to get into the air force because I didn't have two years of college. But anyway I got through that I took it passed it did well. Well we formed the 93<sup>rd</sup> and went to Fort Myers Florida and began to learn how to fly formation learned not how to fly you better fly or your going to fly into an aircraft and we're both going down you had to learn to fly to survive but we did that. The next thing we did they sent us up to Manchester New Hampshire were we would pick up our new airplanes we would fly across the North Atlantic we hadn't flown hardly across the United States we were going to fly across the Atlantic. We had people who couldn't fly those airplanes very well they

knew something of the mechanics but they didn't know all the things you could do when something went wrong in an aircraft. Well some how or other that came to me and I talked to the pilots every time something went wrong we talked to them we talked it over we that is it was unsupervised by the military they didn't ask us to do it and we tried to decide what we could do if something went wrong. If we lost an engine what could we do if we lost two engines what could we do if you lost three are you absolutely going to go crashing down? No there was a lot of things we could do with one engine we learned how to do that. But we didn't do it at this formal air force training school we learned it because if you don't learn it your dead. We sent B24s over to England before we flew the 93<sup>rd</sup> over there and a lot of the English people did like we did they gave them a check ride around the air force and say alright you are a pilot and they'd come in and crash on landing. They had no background for it we didn't have much either but our flying schools were superior our flying schools were better than the ones in Canada they were better than the ones in England. In England they didn't have time to have flying schools like we did and we were training while the English were being shot at and dropped bombs on. You know it was something to fly across the North Atlantic very difficult too in your bind. The North Atlantic is a pretty good body of water we didn't fly from the United States to England we flew first to a little island I don't remember the name of it. There's a lot of things I don't remember but some of the things and strong feelings that I had I do remember. But we took off from that Canadian island for across the North Atlantic to we were going to land in a place just outside the northern boundary of England called Prestwick Scotland. Prestwick Scot right on the border of England and Scotland that was a receiving base for planes that went over there. Back in those days the Germans were playing havoc on the boats the steamships and the things they put on the water. They were blowing them up right and left our ships our ships we were trying to send supplies to England and the English were blowing them up. They had captured all of France and all on the coast of France they had built what we term submarine pens submarine pens they had built them so thickly with iron and steel above them 14 feet of that they had took even some of our 4,000 pound bombs that we carried and dropped on those things bounced off of them. And they didn't destroy them too much but they did injure them and we would go back and do it over and over and over trying to destroy those submarine pens that's the main thing that we were doing the first thing we were doing over there. Well let me just say one thing about the people who flew the B24s the principle bomber that the EF which was in charge of all of the airplanes that the United States sent over to England to help out the war was the B17. It was a four engine bomber two it only had one tail where the B24 had two and the B17 did like this had two wheels here a little wheel in the back and you landed at a three point landing just like some of the small aircraft that you see now a days. The B24 had only two main wheels it landed straight out but it had a nose wheel it landed on the two main wheels after you nose wheeled out. And that's it took off faster and landed faster and it landed I think safer the B17 had a huge wing. Any little breeze would tip that wing if you came in for some landings as windy as much as its windy today you had difficulty bringing it down because the wind would take that wing and throw it every which a way and your fighting to keep level straight and level. The B24 ran faster and the wind affected it less now what about flying in the B24 my goodness the even the air force people (Mr. Murphy beds to talk to someone).

Man who introduced Mr. Murphy: I've asked hi to explain to ya'll the mission that he received flying also it's his opportunity to talk now.

Mr. Murphy: Well I'll tell you about it over there your requirement was to fly 25 missions and they'd send you back home and we were training the troops other pilots back home and send them back overseas. I flew 26 missions because of a fluke I got down in Africa in December 1942 they sent our group of B24s down to Africa. We got down there and Rhino was fighting the war he had gotten his troops German troops all the way to Oran in North Africa. And they we held the western portion of North Africa all the way to I do have a map they gave s at that time anyway we flew a couple of mission from Oran after we landed we landed one month after General Omar Bradley had landed ground troops in North Africa. This was he landed the second or third of October of 1942 and we landed there on the second of December 1942. We had to fly over his group to bomb Rhinos troops that's what we for couple of missions and then they sent us over across over that and landed out in the dessert and we lived there for three months in the dessert. No concrete runways all they did was smooth off the dirt with a grader a road grader that's what they did the same that you see running over roads now smoothing it off. And then we began flying missions in back of us and we flew one mission I remember to what's the name of that Triple E Triple E was the capital of Tunas we might had heard something about it in the news that we hear now their having trouble over there now. But the fellow in charge of Triple E now was not he wasn't living at that tie. We dropped some bombs on that particular place we had about 20 aircraft on that particular mission dropped bombs on Triple E. And then we headed back towards Egypt where we were stationed as we left the target we were about 19, 20 thousand feet high as we left the target one of my crew called in and said look one of them B24s has got an engine on fire. I said oh as I pulled away from the formation pulled away form flying close combat closely so I could see for myself what was going on. I went by and there were I guess there were four parachutes opening my crew said they had jumped out of that B24 with one of the engines on fire four people had jumped out. They were they four and I knew they was in the back because the airplane was still flying and the pilot up front was still there he was still doing something. And would eventually put that fire out but those people jumped before the fire had been put out of the aircraft and I said to myself and my people look you tell me where they are at all times I'll get myself in between we had four or five fighter planes German fighter planes trying to shoot that cripple plane with one engine on fire. They were passing it I said look I'm going to get between them and his aircraft and you be sure and tell me whether I need to go to the right or the left. And we flew like that and kept those fighter planes away because he had lost all the four men in the back of the aircraft who managed the defensive the guns that protected him he had no defense. We was the only defense he had and we flew back away from where we dropped the bombs and flew out over the Mediterranean just a bit but we could still see land over there we weren't real far away. And after I got those myself between him I had protective fire power in my ship my people could still use their guns and protect us and they were obviously in a position to collect my aircraft and the other one too . Well eventually because they were fighter pilots they ran out of gasoline and they left us they didn't knock any of us down but we keep them from it. We did see some of those planes trying to get to the people in parachutes as they descended. Whether they got them I'm not sure but we never heard from any of those four people again never. We assumed either the Germans got them shot them as they flouted down in the parachutes or they drowned in the Mediterranean. We were about 200 miles off the shore and that's a little bit far for a pilot who is not trained to do it to swim so we never saw those four. But the pilot and the people who were in the aircraft the navigator the bombardiers and the copilot they and the engineer he was there too they survived they got the fire out

and kept going and landed short of where we were stationed where we were supposed to land. But they sent somebody the next day to pick him up brought him on home he and the people in his aircraft. They weren't hurt not a one of them not a one of them were hurt none of the people I knew was hurt. He wants me to tell you about how we protected the people in my aircraft. We never received any wounds from enemy aircraft and I went at the time I got the 26 missions I was the only man in the 93<sup>rd</sup> bomb group flying B24s who had that many missions I had more missions than anybody. And I got through after we were always briefed intentionally about what we were trying what the 8<sup>th</sup> air force wanted us to do on each mission. After the briefing we got everybody together and then after that we had individual briefing the people who operated guns were given their briefing the navigators got their briefing the bombardiers got their briefing and the pilots got theirs. After we got through with all of the briefing I said now gentlemen please all of you my crew all of you I said let's meet me at my aircraft it was our aircraft it wasn't mine. I said let's get together I want to talk to you just a few minutes about what we are going to do. I said we've flown these missions before and we've seen when we went to a place to drop a bomb on a particular area the people on the ground the Germans they had it looked like cannons they might have had two dozen cannons all the way around the place we were trying to bomb. And those cannons would send up missiles designed to go to the same altitude the same height that our aircraft could fly. And just as the bombs got to the same height that we were they exploded we call that flak we called ack ack flak that's what we called it. I have seen the flak so thick that you could not see between just like you've seen clouds that come down to the earth and you couldn't see hardly across the street. I've seen flak so thick I've also seen young pilots who are beefed over that and when you fly in formation in stay in formation you stay right there until after you drop your bomb. And if you want to preserve yourself stay in that until you cross over the waters heading back to England. Well I said gentlemen some of those aircraft that stayed in that formation flew directly in the middle of that flak and they never came back they went straight down. They were hit by the flak I said gentlemen we are not going to do that I'm not going to do that and I said I want you to know in order not to do it I may execute some unusual moves of the aircraft. I said that's what I'm trying to tell you know that's what we're going to do. We would when I saw that we were approaching an area where the flak was everywhere I would move because I'm in touch with all of my people in the aircraft and they would advise me where I needed to go. I would go to another formation we had aircraft when you fly in formation all over the sky it wasn't just a bunch right here we couldn't fly that close. We had to be concerned with the about the prop and the aircraft ahead of us we could not fly all that close as we were scattered all over the sky. I said we're going to join another formation that's not going through the flak that's so thick you can't see threw it and that's what we did. We dropped our bombs every mission we got through the mission came back and we did fine. I told the other pilots what we were doing one or two of them said alright we'll try it some of them didn't. None of course are here today I think there's only one other pilot one besides me who flew in the 93<sup>rd</sup> bomb group only one he lives in Arkansas. He's the man who I had a hand in saving after we dropped bombs on Triple E his name Lowey Brown and a good good fine outstanding citizen. And his son his daughter had written my son a letter saying thank you. That's nice I got a letter for that I got a distinguished flying cross. I was the first Distinguished Flying Cross given to any of the B24 people while we were down in Africa the first was the one that I got. There was another one given but he was not given one for action which happened over Europe and I was over Africa. What else am I needing to tell?

Man who introduced Mr. Murphy: Let me ask if anyone has any questions.

Mr. Murphy: Yes any questions that you would like know or maybe you would like to know what an airman went through to fly a B24 on a bombing mission. That's something I sometimes I always wore two pairs of socks then I put my heavy wool socks on then I had some boots put on top of that. I had some trousers heavy trousers with it got kind of cold up there. The coldest that we ever flew in was 60 degrees below zero 60 degrees below zero. Whether it got colder than that I don't know but that was all that thermometer would show 60 degrees below zero and that's cold. We always had to when you'd get above oh 17, 18,000 feet we wore oxygen masks we had to have oxygen. Over 20,000 feet any of us here we can't live more than maybe five or ten minutes without oxygen we're not accustom to it. I know in the Himalayans that largest mountain in the world that is 28,000 feet high and people have gotten up there and lived but they do by bringing little oxygen tanks with them and they take some oxygen and they take it off for a while and put it back on. But they have conditioned themselves to do that. We had to have oxygen whether we know it or not anytime any of us exhale anytime you exhale there's a little bit of moisture that comes out of your mouth a little bit of moisture. Well if you flying with an oxygen mask and we're trying to fly formation and it takes both your feet and both hands on the wheel it takes all of you to keep that thing in formation. Then your exhaling moisture through that oxygen mask and in about 30 minutes or an hour of doing that sometimes we were up there 60, 70, 80 hours or sometimes even longer than that. Well we had to squeeze that oxygen mask and break the ice because if you didn't do that the ice would block the air the oxygen that was coming to us and that's what we lived on. So every now and then even though this not only was affecting the pilots it affected every man on that aircraft. They had to do the same thing and it's very difficult for a man in the back firing 50 caliber machine guns out the windows when he had to take one of his hands and break the ice in the oxygen mask. This also the noise is such in the aircraft that when you fly in formation you cannot hear each other talk normal. The only way you hear is with the earphones and it is very very tough. Almost every trip somebody in at least one of the aircraft would have to go to the hospital and try to get his hands unfrozen because he had taken off one or two of the gloves that he wore on his hands.

Man in the background: Is there any other question before we end?

Mr. Murphy: Is there anything I can add to or tell you what I believe?

Man in the audience: I have to know ya'll had to have talked about it was it a bigger fear to be shot down over enemy occupied land or water?

Mr. Murphy: What is that?

Man in the audience: Was there more of a fear to be shot down over enemy land or water?

Mr. Murphy: Well son let me tell you this shot down is shot down. We didn't like to be shot down. When we were in Europe we didn't fly over much water in North Africa we had to fly every mission back and forth across the Mediterranean and that would take about an hour and a half to get across the Mediterranean.