

Interviewer: Well for the sake of the tape could you just state your name?

Price: Dan Price I was from Barlow Kentucky and I was a student at the University of Kentucky when the war started.

Interviewer: And what year were you born sir?

Price: I was born 7/11/21 that's why I'm so lucky 7-11-21 are the gambling lucky numbers.

Interviewer: Okay and so 21 you would have been 20?

Price: Yeah 20 when the war started.

Interviewer: Okay and what branch of the service did you serve in?

Price: I was in the Army Air Core they didn't have an Air Force.

Interviewer: And what primary unit?

Price: Ended up in 15th air force 2nd bomb group.

Interviewer: Okay well I'm curious sir you were 20 when the war started so do you have any recollections of the great depression?

Price: Oh yeah my

Interviewer: Well first of all where did you grow up?

Price: I grew up in Barlow Kentucky. It's just a small town about 700 population in west Kentucky near Paducah. My dad had a grocery store and meat market. I remember bread being a nickel a loaf and wieners 15 cents a pound and farmers sending their tobacco to Paducah and not getting enough money to pay transportation. Families living on cornbread and navy beans two and a half three nights a weeks. They didn't have anything there was no support public support or nothing. They didn't get any government support.

Interviewer: Do you agree with how Roosevelt handled the whole depression?

Price: Well yeah I guess you know things were really bad and at least we were gonna get some programs going. Even though I'm not a democrat but something almost had to be done and of course the wars what brought us out of the depression. The program helped out good going through the worst of that. But I look back families like boys my age and they run around and collect bottles in tow sacks anything we could to get a few pennies. And you know now you don't have any help or anything they ended up you know substantial citizens candidates or businessmen and things like that all on their own. I know this one boy and I we went of course there wasn't but 20 in our graduating class and we tied for valedictorian and the man we went to the University of Kentucky when we got up there that's when you really separate the students you know. He also ran and he was really sharp anyhow it ended up his dad made whiskey he was farmer and made whiskey on the side. And we were going to school we went to school a whole year for 500 bucks at the University of Kentucky and he couldn't afford to stay. He was

working for a dime an hour still making straight A's in physics and chemistry and all this stuff. And anyhow he had to drop out to work ended up he got his doctorates degree in electronics pretty much like space travel end up being CEO chairman of the board of Radiation Incorporated a big outfit that was down in Florida ____ multimillionaire all self-made. Not one dime from the government or anyone else. And that's the kind of people you had to be back then. You knew if you didn't do it on your own it wasn't gonna be done. So I really did like the pride in our country during the depression. There was no crime to speak of really you never locked your door.

Interviewer: Tom Brokaw wrote a book on that it talked about the great depression and how it reached your generation.

Price: Yeah it really I've said I'm glad I lived through the depression and WWII because they were two eras of this country experiences you just never get anywhere else and really makes a lasting impressions in you many of them. And WWII of course everybody was in the same objective and everybody together. I don't know how many times I've been in a restaurant and a couple would buy my dinner or ask me to eat with them or something like that. Everybody wanted to do their part so that's the WWII I think everybody will remember it when they look back with pride. The country and what good people we really were.

Interviewer: Hard working. So you went off to UK right after high school?

Price: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay and you were at University of Kentucky when Pearl Harbor

Price: No I had this fence work came along where you could make a dollar and hour and I mean that was big money then. So I quit school ____ this other friend of mine and went to work construction and I was home one weekend Sunday when this Pearl Harbor happened.

Interviewer: Can you describe what happened? Where you were and how you heard about the bombing?

Price: Yeah it was Sunday afternoon and I'd been out to my cousin's house out in the country and I heard over the radio that they had bombed Pearl Harbor. And here I was 20 years old and when you're like at a ballgame or something like that your kind of excited and scared too where you've got that pit of fear in your stomach. I said that's stayed there for three years you know because I knew that I was gonna be in it.

Interviewer: So at this point did you have any idea did you really have any real threat in your mind that the Japanese would attack or that the Germans would really try to make a move against the United States? Did you have any idea that that would

Price: Yeah there was that fear too. Yeah the Japanese could actually invade you know the west coast and you know England was just hanging on over there. Yeah there was that real threat but we actually could have just been taken over by the Germans or the Japanese. That was a real fear and everybody wanted to get in had that excitement we got to get in there that satisfaction. Going back to school I couldn't study everybody was leaving to go to service.

Interviewer: Well did you how did you end up in the service?

Price: How did I end up?

Interviewer: How did you yeah enter the service?

Price: Well I of course everybody wanted to be a pilot and fly with the cadets and do that. I joined in May of 42 but they didn't call me until February of 43.

Interviewer: And between May of 1942 and February 1943 were you training?

Price: No I was in school.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Price: Not doing much but there. You couldn't get interested in anything with the war.

Interviewer: So when you you said that you signed up did you have a fear that you were going to be drafted?

Price: Not after I signed up they swore me in and everything I was in the thing was just waiting to be called up.

Interviewer: Okay how did you did you go to some city and sign up or?

Price: Well I was in Lexington so I went to the recruiting office there. They give you all these tests eye test. I remember being worried about my eyes they had charts all over the place. One eye and one eye just could make out what was on ____.

Interviewer: Did they give you the IQ test and skill test?

Price: Yea

Interviewer: Okay well where did you go to in February 1943?

Price: I went up to Columbus Ohio and got sworn in then we got on this troop train went to Biloxi Mississippi. Keesler Field stayed there for basic training a couple months. I remember of course we were all college kids and they had like you know everybody was in. Like if you were running they would have some track star you know run you to death. Or have you out there with dumbbells they had a guy with arms that big around you know giving you these tests. We were had this big scaling wall first PT thing we went to. I thought it was one of these things like boy scouts when they climb the pyramid you know that thing. And you were supposed to run and jump with your left foot hit that wall and push yourself up. And I think there was about 200 of us in a squadron and you never heard such splatter in all your life. There was just one guy got over that thing but after three or four days we were getting over that thing. You know you get in shape pretty fast when you're that age. But they really put us through that physical training.

Interviewer: This was where you did your basic training?

Price: You know where you march and all this stuff. From there we went to Bristol Tennessee what they call pre pre-flight. It was a college and I was one of the first four to leave there and we came to Nashville for where they give you tests for whether you're going to be a bombardier, pilot or navigator. Stayed there a couple of months and then we went down to Arcadia Florida to fly these for primary. You fly these biplanes you see a lot for crop duster and I'd never been up before well I was up once before. I remember flying solo the instructor took me up to do acrobatics and scared me to death. One thing he did a slow roll where you turn the plane over like that it rolls over. And he said now you go up and do it what I was afraid of I'd get over and couldn't get back up see.

Interviewer: Right

Price: He did it in about two I went up about three and circled around to see if I could get up higher went up to four and finally I got up so high the engine was sputtering got up to about 12,000. So finally I had no excuse so I went and sure enough I couldn't get it back but then you had all kind of room. But anyhow that became a challenge to me flying slower and that's what got me through cadets. I wasn't any outstanding pilot so they'd give you these check rides and they'd give you all these maneuvers and various landings and the last thing they'd do was have you do slow rolls but they'd usually foul it up and they could chew you out for it. So I'd usually foul up all of these check rides then they'd give me the slow roll back. And keep your nose on the horizon keep it just like that but normally you'd do like that. And I'd keep it they'd think it was a fluke because I'd keep it right on it so then they'd give me another one and by the time I'd done a couple good slow rolls they'd forgotten how fouled up everything else was. So that got me through primary and also basic you know basic training with a single wing plane and slow rolls again.

Interviewer: So you were in a group of how many trainees?

Price: Oh I think each field they had to class you, you had an upper and lower class and it seemed like there'd be three or four hundred in a class.

Interviewer: Okay and out of all now in your primary training now what is the difference in your primary training and the training that you did on preflight?

Price: There was primary, basic, and advanced. Primary you just start out in a small airplane and you learn the fundamentals and you get acrobatics and you get kind of familiar with flying. You'd go through ground school you know navigation and basic would be a little more advanced you'd do cross country the courses ground school would be a little more advanced too and you'd be flying a bigger airplane. But then the third phase advanced they would decide whether you were going to be a bomber pilot or a fighter pilot. I was gonna be a bomber pilot so we went to planes that had these two motors on them down in Columbus Mississippi. And that's when you learned to fly formation I'll never forget the first time I was supposed to be flying formation they're would be this plane you were flying on and I'd be coming up here and the whole time I was in formation and when I'd go by him then I'd pull back then I'd go like this. I'd forget about the lag you know so I'd just like that so I thought man I never will learn to do this. But then you learn the lag and the speed of your airplane and all like that. I remember overseas it was just like someone playing the piano something you didn't even think about you just jumped right in there whatever way they went you just went without even thinking. At first it's one of them things where you've got to be thinking about eight or ten things all at once to be able to make it.

Interviewer: How many out of the three or four hundred students how many actually made it though completion?

Price: Well I think by the time we got through about forty percent got through.

Interviewer: That's a high attrition rate.

Price: Oh yea.

Interviewer: That's over had your class failed. Now what did they do with the students that didn't make it?

Price: They went I think some of them went to navigator and bombardier school. Some of them went to gunner school that's where most of them went still in the air core. A lot of them fly too.

Interviewer: Now that in preparation for WWII and actually during the first few years of the conflict that the military has to increase their numbers at a fast pace. So they came up with programs like 90 day wonder programs where they'd throw officers into these. And then they also had with that from what I understand had a number of people who were already prior service, who had been in before the war had started who were experienced soldiers and officers. How many what type of officers and enlisted people were you involved with in training that were prior service prior military who had experience with more than just?

Price: Well as far as cadets I remember one fellow they called Panama he was he had been in the service when the war started and he was in the cadets and he was going through just like the rest of us. And prior service as far as being able to fly or anything like that that didn't count. In fact they'd rather you didn't know anything you know so they could train you their way. But everybody you know the cadets were green as grass to start off.

Interviewer: Okay what about the officers and the personnel who trained you were they generally civilians who trained or were they military personnel?

Price: Well most of the at Dorr Field this was a Embry-Riddle aeronautical college and they had of course army personnel down there in charge of us on the ground and all like that. But the I guess they contracted with Embry-Riddle to furnish the civilian pilots you know to give us so many hours of training. And they were civilians but then the next stages everybody was military.

Interviewer: Okay well what were your thoughts when you first left home?

Price: What were my what?

Interviewer: What were your thoughts what were you thinking when you first left home?

Price: Oh you know just kids you know. I think about my dad who took me to the train station up in Paducah. I get on the train and leave for this new adventure and I look back at him and it just killed him he was about to cry. And you know I get to thinking about how I would feel if it were one of my sons were going off like that. But you know never be able to call or anything like that _____. I was eager to get through and there's a lot of pressure you know when you're in cadet training. But I liked that you

know some guys kind of thrive under pressure. And you want to get overseas and you get over there and you want to get back as quick as you can.

Interviewer: Now how long did your training last? You said you actually went in February 43 how long was your training?

Price: I was out in March, it took 11 months. It took 11 months then we were commissioned then we went I was assigned to B17 training pilot training on B17. We went to Avon Park Florida for transition where you're just learning to fly the plane and then the next stage was where you get your crew. Each one of these stages is about two months and with the crew you work together and you drop bombs and all like that. In fact we bombed ____ Florida somebody did. We were up one Saturday night we had a cross of light we were up about 25,000 something like that. This is one target down eight or ten miles is another light you know. You were supposed to drop bombs on this target go down there drop on that one turn around and come back see. We were all up there listening to the Hit Parade which was a really popular program happened on Saturday. Somebody after they dropped on that place saw ____ a little ole town they went up there and dropped they had this sand bomb there was just enough powder in it to make a flash it dropped on _____. Some man sitting on the edge of his bed his wife was in the bed, took the corner off the bed blew sand all over the house. Of course they were trying to call us down and everything like that and in the meantime we made another run on ____ dropped it right in the town square there. Man they never did find out who that was or they would have buried him under the jail. Things I never laughed so much I really enjoyed being part of the service because things like this happened plus things get so miserable you know they had to be funny. There was always somebody you know making some remark but after that training with the crew we went to Savanna Georgia for a couple days and picked up a new airplane flew it up to Newfoundland. And we were gonna fly it overseas but the weather was bad and we were up there about three weeks. Finally one night about midnight they woke us up said you're taking off. We took off there and it was snowing dark right off man that was about the loneliest feeling in the world. Here we were taking off there going in a war not knowing if you were going to come back or not. So we go in the Azores North Africa and up to Italy.

Interviewer: So you actually flew from the United State to

Price: Yea

Interviewer: Okay do you feel like looking back on your training do you feel like your training was adequate? Do you think you really felt prepared to fight in combat?

Price: Yea

Interviewer: In the training you received?

Price: Yea all you had to do was fly that blame airplane and stay in formation. I could do that but that when we first got over there got there were three pilots and a co-pilot one was Olson or Larson. And our colonel talked to us I never will forget he said you men are over here to drop bombs on the enemy that's your job. Said you'll see planes blow up crash you'll be scared and want to turn back said no pilot of the 15th air force has ever turned back because of enemy action said you're not going to be the first. I never will forget that anyhow that he said you could be wounded you could be killed but he got killed over Vienna. Molten saw him spin in over Yugoslavia all ten of his outfit. And I was wounded twice and my co-pilot was wounded so he was pretty correct especially about being scared.

Interviewer: Now you mentioned that there was a common objective did you feel a lot of comradely with the guys with your fellow pilots and your crew? Was there a lot of comradely in those areas?

Price: Oh yea of course the separation back then probably more than now between officers and enlisted men. Oh man we'd go out to the bar and drink together and all like that. But we didn't live together we had different mess halls and all that thing. But there wasn't any saluting or any such thing like that. We were it was more friendly with the co-pilot and bombardier than the enlisted men because we worked together and just good buddies and all that.

Interviewer: Well what about the sleeping arrangements?

Price: Huh

Interviewer: Sleeping arrangements what kind of sleeping arrangements did y'all have?

Price: They really they gave us a tent a great big ball there and we were supposed to put that blame things up. We didn't know anything about that we finally got that darn thing up. They gave us a tent each one of us a cot and a whole bunch of these blame army blankets. And I remember we finally got that tent up got the cots up and put one army blanket under us about seven or eight on top of us enough there was eight you know. And we nearly froze with that air coming up from the bottom. But then we got a 55 gallon drum that they had cut into they gave that to us and a gas tank. And we ran gas octane gas in on a brick and had a pipe going through the tent. And that was our heat so six of us slept in that tent. And the blame things leaked we'd have water coming in.

Interviewer: I know that they had before the war they had the maneuvers or as the war was going on they had the maneuvers. Those Louisiana maneuvers and several different maneuvers were you ever involved in any of those?

Price: No

Interviewer: Well so where did you go when you flew over to Europe where did you said Italy

Price: There in Southern Italy they had air fields all over the place right at the spur of Italy I don't know whether you recall a map of Italy, but it looks like a boot with a spur.

Tape stops and then starts again.

Interviewer: Okay you were talking to me about Southern Italy.

Price: Yea we were at an air field at the spur called Alameda and it had one steel made runway on it. And our bomb group 2nd bomb group there was another bomb group the B17s flew off of plus a British. The Lancaster bombers flew off of at night we'd be coming in in the evening and they'd be taking off at night. But the I remember I had to fly three missions co-pilot before I could fly pilot. The first mission was to Munich and you had to fly through this overcast and it was real clear. We kind of looked way down there and we flew we climbed at 100 miles an hour because we had a load and of course it didn't go very fast anyhow. So you know it took forever to get up to altitude. Anyhow we headed after a few hours I saw a black spot out there ahead of us and it got bigger and bigger and bigger. And they were throwing up flake barrage and they couldn't see you they'd throw up this barrage for you to fly through.

We flew right through the middle of that thing and the plane got a few hits and all that. The plane was crippled and _____. Anyhow I flew a couple more missions and I wasn't particularly scared you know I thought man I must be another John Wayne type it doesn't bother me I'll sign up for another mission. Then I got my crew and all that and we went to Regensburg.

Interviewer: Just curious how did you travel as a bomber group what formation?

Price: Oh we'd have it was seven planes in a stodgier three here and then three down here and one _____. I eventually flew in they call first essuran second essuran I usually flew in the second essuran where you looked up at the lead plane. And it was kind of hard to fly on the first but after you got _____ because I was using the second _____. Then there were four squadrons in a group so you'd fly a squadron here squadron here and sort of like a box until you got to the target the initial point. Then you'd all get in a row begin this bombing run. That's when the fight started we had a watch a clock up there with a sweet second sweet second hand on it. And I'd look up there at that clock seemed like a bomb would burst flag burst and I'd look up there at that clock thinking maybe three or four minutes has passed and it maybe 15 or 20 seconds. That was the slowest running clock I ever saw. But you'd finally drop your bombs and you'd feel that plane lift. The bombs drop then you'd be going down losing altitude because you didn't have that load. And I always that was the greatest feeling in the world. I always said it was worth going up there and getting shot at because the greatest feeling you had was when it was over. Coming off that target like Winston Churchill once said there's no more exhilarating in life than to be shot at without results. You could have been killed but you're coming off there going home. You've got one more mission it's almost worth going out there.

Interviewer: Now what kind of attitude did you have going into your training? When you would out yes I am going to be a pilot what kind of attitude did you have toward the whole conflict and your own ability to succeed in combat?

Price: Well the main problem was getting through cadets. That was the number one goal you wasn't thinking a whole lot beyond that you know. It's just get through this class then get through this next class then this next one see. Then after you got over there in transition and operational training then you began to think about I'm going over there and. But you still weren't too worried about it you always think it's going to be somebody else not yourself until you get over there. But I got over that John Wayne feeling thinking I was John Wayne we went to Regensburg and a spent piece of flack came through the windshield. I had there rubber goggles on rubber rims that you put filters plastic filters in. That piece of flack hit me right between the eyes you can still see a little scar up there. And imbedded in the glasses in that rubber it about knocked me out. Didn't hurt me too bad but I was bleeding like a stuck hog and man I hadn't counted on that at all. After that going through cadets and wearing those wings you were feeling kind of proud of yourself you know. Man that wasn't something I hadn't counted on at all man you can get killed up there. So all the way home blood running all over me and I thought man if I get out of this I sure don't want to go through this wasn't any way you could get out of it. Well you could say you just didn't want to fly or something like that. I knew I had to live with myself so I figured I wasn't gonna get out of it any way and still live with myself. I got a rag and put across my head and I went down to the operations officer and told him I want to get this thing over with. I wanted them to schedule me just as often as they could I wanted to get this over with and go home. But that once you get the mental attitude there's no way to get out I'm over here to do a job and I've got to do it and do the best you can as fast as you can. And so they did they scheduled me as often as they could and I got through in five months. Plus there was the whole month of January we could go down to briefing you

know on the airplane and all like that and they'd fly a red flair you couldn't fly because of weather was bad. But there were some days we'd fly three or four days in a row.

Interviewer: Now you said after Regensburg you felt like you wanted to fly as much as you can to get home. Do you feel like your attitude changed at that point?

Price: Well it changed from me thinking I was a blame hero and knowing I wasn't any John Wayne. And I'd gotten into something that I hadn't counted on and you know there was by god do your job. But one of two things I learned during the war you know any job you get in there is going to be good parts and bad parts. The good parts the cadets was you know going through there the challenge finally getting your wings and commissioned feeling kind of important. And the bad part is going over there and getting shot at. I find that happens anything you get in there's going to be good parts and bad parts. And ever since the war I don't care what it is when a bad part comes up I'm ready for it. Because nothing could be any worse you know than going through the war.

Interviewer: Sure

Price: I'll tell you another thing we had a British pilot come over and talk to us he lived in _____. I guess there was about 20 of us in this room and he'd been gone three years he'd flown, here we were sweating out 35 missions and he'd flown more missions than all of us in that room about two or three hundred.

Interviewer: Wow

Price: And he wasn't any different from us just as scared. But he didn't have any limit the end of the war was he was gonna get through. We were gonna get through at 35 and so the closer we got to 35 you know the jumpier we got. But he didn't have that so that's something else that I learned don't put a limit on yourself. You know like some people work eight hours a day if you've got to work nine you know you really can do it. You know since then man I've been in a lot you know I've been in business for myself a couple times broke three or four times and I worked 16 or 18 hours a day you know with no thought of it. You've just got to quit near eight o'clock or something like that. So there were two important lessons out of the war. I started to tell you I almost got killed I know God saved me for something. I was on my 25th mission and we were in fact my son wrote a little story about it. But we were gonna go to ____ Italy and it was an overcast about 20,000 feet and man that's rough. When you fly in formation and you can't see anybody and you fly along there just hoping you don't run into each other. Anyhow we broke out about 20,000 feet and the other planes in the group were nowhere around. And Larson this fellow I was tell you leading the formation and he decided we'd go over you know just these seven planes. And we had over 200 guns well then we had about 1500 so that wasn't really too bad. But

Interviewer: What year was this?

Price: Pardon

Interviewer: What month was this was it in 44?

Price: It was in February 43 I mean 45.

Interviewer: Forty five

Price: And so we head over ____ and man you never saw so much flack because they could focus it all on us. And normally flack breaks up in square pieces about like that well a piece about that big just like you were driving a car you know the wheel and all. Well all at once for no reason at all I bend over like that with my head between the steering column and the airplane and this giant piece of flack came through. I had a May West sticker there and it cut it plum into right off and grazed my neck and back. And it was just like a big shotgun blast sprayed the whole cockpit the ____ and Plexiglas and the _____. And one piece shot out my oxygen tube you know you hear that escaping. And I had a co-pilot there's an emergency button and I looked over there and Noel the co-pilot he was all flopped over there with blood running down his neck I thought he was dead. And I was reaching around there for that valve you know I couldn't I was getting ready to pass out in a minute. I couldn't reach the valve because I was hooked up electric suit and oxygen and all that. He came to and said I've got it Dan he fiddled along here until I got hooked up and he swapped out. But in the meantime we had an engine shot out called back and asked if anybody else was hurt. Wasn't anybody else hurt but five of the airplanes were gone. Two of them were shot down the other three were just crippling along there that's when I looked up and Larsen was about a few hundred yards ahead he hadn't been it. And we hadn't dropped our bombs they had a rule they did at that time they were supposed to be our allies and if there's cloud cover over there you don't drop. If you were in Germany you would drop anyway but anyhow we'd climbed up there we'd never dropped there he was going around. And anyhow I pulled the engine and pushed the throttle the engineer said oh man we can't go around your hurt this was the first time we went around. I remember what motivated me of course you're supposed to do your job but we'd been on a mission before and hadn't dropped our bomb got our butt shot off and it didn't count see. So I had another motivation if I got us there and got my butt shot off I was gonna get counted even if we had to go around again. So anyhow I said if he goes around we go around so we go around and it really wasn't too bad the second time. That was the 25th mission just had 11 more to go. But if I'd been sitting up normal well they when we got home they ran stick from where that came in and if I'd have been sitting like that it would have gone right through here. It would have just practically cut me into because it was about 2 inches of a whole going through the side. So that's why I know God saved me for something because I'd been involved in a whole bunch of things. Now I've got it so I will send you a copy of the book. But that's what really kept me from hitting on a bunch of other things. Then I finished up in March and I said the greatest most enjoyable month of my life sitting there in that cock where you're gonna be flying when you come in the jeep the sergeant would stick his head in the door call out your name. He could hear that jeep before you got in there and I'd think oh man I've got to go then I realized I didn't have to fly anymore. Then I'd go and I'd get up about eight o'clock and they would be taking off and you'd see them up there in the morning. Then I'd get there in the afternoon meet them out there at the air field for a month. That month spring time there in Italy knowing I was gonna go home the war was over pretty near. Then the day I left I put my bag on the truck and the sergeant came up saying that Roosevelt had died. That was April 18th something like that. But it was a great experience.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts when Roosevelt died? How did you

Price: I thought oh man Truman's gonna give everything back to Stalin because I didn't think he had it in him. (Could not understand what he was saying here)

Interviewer: Well what about when you were flying what kind of attrition rate was there with the pilots in combat? What was

Price: Well it was pretty high. I think at one time during the time I was over there our squadron lost more people than in the whole Gulf War. I'll show you an article here see I think it was about 255,000

people got killed in WWII well 50,000 of them were from the heavy bomber group. The attrition rate this is over Vienna (showing a photograph) the attrition rate of 12.38 percent was four times higher than that of the marine core and six times the regular army. So you were in real danger of getting killed by those darn things.

Interviewer: And you flew with the what aircraft did you fly?

Price: I was flying one of those right there.

Interviewer: B17

Price: Yea this is a picture we took the co-pilot took over _____. That was in he would take picture for just something to do. Had a big box camera and that was a plane right ahead of us anyhow they would turn it in to these would go to __ and all that stuff. Anyhow his wife in New York sent him a took it out of the newspaper the New York Times the same picture we had been on this mission and he had taken a picture.

Interviewer: Oh wow

Price: But that's white flag is 105 black is the 88s and this big ugly 155 but that's Vienna carried 1500 guns. We used to go in a briefing and we'd look around had a colonel, Colonel Cullet, and he would always go on to rough missions. And the first things he'd say when you'd see the old bastard he was about 35 he was old to us when we saw him with his backpack and parachute we'd know we were going to Vienna or somewhere rough you know. We didn't want to see Colonel Cullet. But he really he sure didn't slack up any. I'm really proud to be in it I think so much of it was the time meet some high quality people.

Interviewer: How did you what did you do to keep your sanity while you were there I mean underneath all the circumstances.

Price: One thing you were so blamed tire. You know wed be gone 10 or 12 hours flying and you'd be so blame tired when you got back just from the stress. When you hit that cot it was kind of good when you were flying three or four in a row. You'd end up being just sort of a robot but you know I didn't have any trouble sleeping. You know I was scared all the time like I said that knot in your stomach. But when you got ready to take off you really had to get the mind. We'd take off get seven planes on the runway staggered like this the lead plane would take off and fly two minutes in an 80 degree turn. Each other plane would take make a shorter turn. By the time you got back here we were all supposed to be in formation. This one time I was next to the last to take off and I was up like this and this other plane was down below me. And of course the more you bank your plane the less lift you've got plus you haven't got much speed anyway. I went down just as his wing hit the ground flame come up like that and man I go right through the flame and that will unnerve you too there was a lot of that going on. But one time we were up we couldn't fly up in Germany if possible we would practice formation around the field. We were up flying one day and started sleeting and we were coming in to land on that slick steel runway. You were supposed to land right on the end of it and then you just fishtailed until you got on down there in the mud and there was supposed to be a tractor that would take you out. Well I landed pretty soon we thought it was funny you know the guys were scared to death we knew we could crash but with our sense of humor it was funny. So anyhow this plane was landing and he was down there in the mud but this last plane the West Point guy just come in he was gonna _____ everybody but it's got to land on the

end. He landed kind of just a normal landing he started skipping and he hadn't waiting until that plane was out so he knew when to hit it so he tried to take off and landed right on top of that other plane. I was about oh as far as from here to across the street and I drove this it wasn't but just an old truck a guy with just an old thing on his back, this is what I'm getting at a guy doing his job. He jumped out of there and the flame the flame had just started. He jumped out of there it could blow up any minute and he got up there with that blame thing and put it out all by himself. And of course that killed about half the crew but he saved the rest of them. _____ they were really getting all kind of ____ this guys is really getting chewed out for using too much foam or something like that. He was here to do his job had been sitting around there probably hadn't done anything for a month but when the time came man he jumped up there and did what he was trained to do. I think that was pretty much the attitude of practically everybody there. Do your job.

Interviewer: I was curious before we're almost out of time here before did you have any idea what you were what targets you were you were actually dropping bombs on? Did you have any idea what those targets were what you were aiming at?

Price: Oh yea went to Vienna they had synthetic oil refineries we dropped bombs up there. Man we went up there as often as we could and that was the worst target you could get. Then we hit ____ Guard the airplane factory.

Interviewer: Did you ever experience any fighter resistance?

Price: Every once in a while most of the time it was just flack.

Interviewer: What was that like going on a drop with German fighters coming at you?

Price: Well we didn't change a blame thing. You know you'd get on that bomb run you've got to fly straight there you don't do any maneuver or anything like that. But we had fighter escort see in fact in that newspaper article I'll show you we were in Vienna one time and I got an engine shot out and I couldn't ____ the engine. Normally you ____ like this see and you let down the drag. I couldn't ____ it so it was I was flying along like that. And the rest of the group was just going along ahead of me and I man when you're out there alone like that. They had fighters and they picked off you know guys like that. And everywhere I looked I thought I could see one of them and I pushed this BHF button and call the commander and said send me some escort I'm coming up on target. And all those 1500 guns were shooting anyhow it seemed like about a week later and nobody had showed up. I said where's the escort where are the escorts and I here this voice say we hear you white boy. And I said what I said where are you we're up here. I looked around and there was two P51s up about 10,000 feet behind me. I said by golly one of you come down here so this one came down here and he was right on the canopy it had the Cool Fool. Big black face and all you could see was white teeth and white eyes you know big smile. And he lapped his wing over mine just grinned smiled all the way to the Adriatic. He got out of there he peeled off I never was so glad to see anybody in my life. Of course I grew up in Kentucky back in the 30s and heard of all the craziness. The Cool Fool assured me right then I could have kissed him. Any how they were

Interviewer: Do you know what unit he was from?

Price: Pardon

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Price: What

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Price: Yea he was from the 99th fighter squad and they had checkered tails and a red tail. They were the Tuskegee airmen the black fighters. And three or four years ago a bunch of them were at out Fort Campbell and I went out. When I see that they are gonna be around like California or anywhere else I just _____. Anyway Cool Fool wasn't out there but there was an article in the front page of the Tennessean and this one too we talked all about that my experience with the _____. But they were you know they would in a beefing they'd tell us you know where we were going how many guns they had were we'd pick up fighters and things like that. We paired with the 99th or another squadron they'd always be there/ Like if there was another group white they might be in the area but you may not see them. They may say they are gonna be up _____ at a certain _____ they'd be there. So they were really reliable but I'll tell you in one of the articles they say we never lost a bomber to enemy action which makes you think wherever they were going nobody ever got shot down. They may not have lost any fighters but they lost you know flack. You know we all had our I didn't really a whole lot about getting my biggest fear was getting in a spin because you know the pilot couldn't get out because of the _____ force. You'd have to get down in the bomb _____ bomb the nose so if you got in a spin the pilot and co-pilot you just had it. You had three or four minutes just so that was always my biggest fear.

Tape ended