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Interview with  
George Bernard  
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Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: George F. Bernard  
(Signature)

Date: March 19, 1976

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Oral History Collection

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Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello:            This is Ron Marcello interviewing George Bernard for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 19, 1976, in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Bernard in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Germans during World War II.

Now Mr. Bernard, to begin the interview, why don't you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Bernard:            I was born in Newark, New Jersey, on August 16, 1911. I left Newark, New Jersey, when I was six years old during the first World War, 1918, and moved to Philadelphia where I went to school. I graduated from elementary school, went into high school. I only went to two years of high school

when I quit and went to work for a printing company. So I started out as an errand boy and worked my way up into the printing business and learned the printing trade.

From there I went . . . later on in life I was drafted into the service in March of 1941, and I went to Camp Lee, Virginia, where I was inducted, and then transferred to Fort George E. Meade, Maryland.

I was then put into the 29th Division in the Field Artillery. In those days we exercised and went through our different motions with broomsticks and boxes of wood out of which we made a machine gun, and we imagined we were firing at the enemy with these wooden things.

I then was over twenty-eight years old, and a law was passed that said that those over twenty-eight were being able to be discharged from the service. I therefore was discharged. But at the time I was only transferred, actually, from the active service to the reserve corps. Naturally, the war became . . . the war started in 1941--December, 1941--and I was able to stay out for another year due to the fact that I was taking care of my mother who was then up in years.

I later was then recalled and sent to Fort George Meade, Maryland, again. But the 29th Division, having already gone overseas, I was sent to Camp Howze, Texas, which was then just being activated. I landed in Gainesville, Texas, on December 23, 1943, two days before Christmas, in a rainstorm. The place was nothing but a sea of mud. I went out to Camp Howze and was put into the barracks and straightened out.

My first Christmas I spent in the USO in Gainesville, Texas. Fortunately, I ran across a young man then that had a big ranch out of Muenster, Texas. He took us out there for Christmas dinner. I and a few other fellows had our Christmas dinner out there. He had said that he hoped that what he did for us somebody would be doing for his boy who was then overseas. He had a big ranch. He slaughtered his own cows and pigs and everything like that. It's the first time for an old Yankee, a fellow that had never been in the country before, to see how these things worked.

Well, after that we went through maneuvers at Camp Howze. I have captured and re-captured and sunk and everything the bridge between Gainesville, Texas, and a town in Oklahoma. I think it's . . . I

don't remember the name of the town--Henrietta or somewhere in that locale up there.

Anyway, after about a year there we finally went on maneuvers in Louisiana. From Louisiana we went to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, and spent a few months there.

They decided they would ship us overseas. They sent us to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey. We went from Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, after days there, and we were all suited out with things for cold weather in parts of Germany. We finally went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard on the first of October and shipped out and landed in Southampton some two weeks later.

Marcello: This was in October of 1944.

Bernard: Yes, 1944. We went over there with all the other ships around us and everything to keep us from being sunk by different German torpedo boats and things like that. We zigzagged our way over there in high seas. Many times, if you were on the bow of the boat, why, that front would come up and you could see everything, and the next thing you know, it'd go down and you couldn't see nothing out there but ships all around you. You couldn't even see part of your ship. I played cards all the way over, and I landed in Southampton with \$300 in my pocket that I

had won playing pinochle.

Marcello: How much did you think about the idea of going into combat? Did you and your buddies ever talk about it very much?

Bernard: We talked about it, but I don't think any of us really realized what we were going into. We were more or less happy-go-lucky sort of people. It never seemed to concern us too much about it. I don't think any of us really worried about it too much.

Marcello: What sort of ideas did you have concerning the Germans or the German soldier at this particular time? Did you think very much about this enemy that you possibly might be meeting?

Bernard: No, we had heard mostly what was going on in the past year and how they were being pushed back slowly through Italy and on into Germany and into France and being pushed slowly back into their own country. We just more or less didn't know whether we were going to actually get into combat. We just really didn't concern ourselves about it. It was pretty late in the war then in October of '44, and things were going pretty well for the Allies. So nobody concerned themselves too much.

Marcello: Would confidence perhaps be a good word to describe your attitude at that time?

Bernard: I think we were just saying we wasn't going to get into the war, so why worry about it? See, we had feelings we never would make it. We wouldn't get there in time, mainly.

Marcello: Well, there were some generals who were saying that it was going to be over by Christmas at that time, were there not?

Bernard: Yes, rumors had it that everything was going to be over and everything would be fine and dandy and so on. As I say, I don't really believe that we really thought we were going to get into anything overseas, certainly not anything like being a prisoner-of-war or being shot or killed or anything else over there.

Marcello: Okay, so you got to Southampton, and what happened from that point?

Bernard: Well, we stayed there about two weeks and went through a little bit of maneuvers there in the English countryside, which is really very pretty. We stayed in a place called Winchester in the barracks there, which, I understand, was some part of the king's palace somewhere when they moved out of . . .

Marcello: Buckingham Palace.



Bernard: . . .Buckingham Palace into these outskirts. That was part of one of their buildings. It was mammoth! Man, that was a big place! Finally, we all went to London while we were there and spent three days in London on a pass and watched the buzz bombs come over. Everything was blacked out at night, and you walked around there, and the first thing you know, you'd hear these buzz bombs. You'd wait. You could tell from the noise where they were going to land, and if it wasn't near you, you went on. It was quite exciting in London. We had quite an affair for the three days. As I say again, we were happy-go-lucky. Then we'd come on back.

We moved down finally and went across the English Channel and landed at Omaha Beach, where the D-Day invasion had landed the June before.

We walked then for many a mile. We walked through Saint-Lô and through the cemetery at Saint-Lô where mostly all of the 29th Division was laid to rest.

Marcello: Now this was your old division, is this correct?

Bernard: This was the division I was with originally. But these were all mostly infantrymen. I found out afterwards, after I had come home, that most everybody in the artillery that I was with never . . . nothing ever happened to them. They were too far

back. They were never up in the front lines. But these people in . . . these soldiers from the 29th Division were mostly in the infantry.

Marcello: What did the French countryside look like at this time as you were passing through it?

Bernard: Well, as you landed on the beach, you would still see all those boats upturned and the hulls sticking out of the water. You could see up there where the . . .

Marcello: German gun emplacements were?

Bernard: Gun emplacements. And you could see all of them up there. And they were all . . . where the concrete was chipped out and things like that where they had had many a fight. You could see that. And then if you went on through the countryside, the trees were splintered and busted down. Then, of course, as you got out more into the towns itself, their houses and things like that were all delapidated and crushed and things like that. You went on through . . . and still as I say then . . . I guess we never did decide . . . "Oh, we're never going to get there in time."

So anyway, we kept on going and finally went through Paris. We rode through most of that then. We rode through Paris, under the Eiffel Tower, and then we went on into Maastricht, Holland, which was

a town that had a lot of German people. They were German but more or less a . . . they talked a different language than the Germans did. The people used to go around with guns and rifles and things like that and walk around through the town and guard it from different people coming through and looting it and things like that. Of course, the Germans had been out of there for some time.

Marcello: Now all of this time, the front was ahead of you. You had not had any actual combat at this point.

Bernard: No. The first thing that I did when I jumped off the truck I will never forget. The first thing that I did when I jumped off the truck . . . we started moving when it was dark. I went into one of them holes that the Germans had dug and it was full of water. I was soaking wet, and it was cold at that time. We had to get our pup tents out and go into the bivouac area.

Marcello: Now this was in Holland?

Bernard: In Holland. But I was soaking wet from about the waist down. I fell in this hole with the water. We stayed there for a few days, and then we finally . . . I was a non-commissioned officer, a machine gun sergeant. We were all called up to headquarters and given our orders. What we were going to do, we

were going to move out on the 17th of November at around four or five o'clock under the cover of the darkness and move up to an area where we would jump off at 0700.

Marcello: In other words, you were getting up to the front lines now.

Bernard: Yes. We were now being pushed up there, and this is what we were going to do. We went back to tell our men that we were going to move out the next morning, which would be the 17th of November, and move into this area here where we would try to take the town of Prummern.

Marcello: This is in Germany?

Bernard: It's in Germany now.

Marcello: Why was Prummern so important? Do you know offhand?

Bernard: Well, that was the . . . we had finally caught up to our American Army now. We were then in combat. We were now being put into combat. We were replacing an outfit, and they were being brought out. We were sent in as replacements. We were sent in as a whole unit; the whole 84th Division was being sent in now, and another division was being pulled out. The division at this time, I can't recall who it was, but they were being pulled out, and we were being sent in. We were starting into combat for our first time.

Marcello: This was a new division, in other words. The 84th Division had never seen combat before.

Bernard: Not a one of us had ever seen combat. None of us had ever seen combat before. We were all in a new division, and we were all greenhorns.

Marcello: At this point would you just identify your unit in full. It was the 84th Division, 334th Infantry. . .

Bernard: It was the 84th Division, 334th Infantry, Company E of the 1st Battalion.

Marcello: I have another general question at this time. Had you ever been prepared in any way for what to expect if you were captured?

Bernard: No. No, I don't recall at any time ever being taught . . . we never had any lectures or any stories or talks about being a prisoner-of-war of any nature at all. We were prepared for combat because we knew what we were going into. Now we were finally oriented to what was going to happen.

We moved up under the cover of darkness alongside the road where the tanks were going up the middle of the road. We finally got up to the area where we were going to dig in until the jumpoff time at 0700.

In counting my men, I had lost one. So another sergeant--Sergeant Vercic of the . . . we had two machine guns and Sergeant Vercic was sergeant of one

machine gun, and I was the sergeant of the other. He's from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Him and I went back to look for our man and found him in a hole. He was scared to death, and he refused to come out. We finally got him out of the hole and pushed him up there.

But when we got up there, lo and behold, everybody was dug in but us. Of course, his buddy was already starting to dig in, so he had a partial hole to get into. But Vercic and I had no hole whatsoever.

The Germans had a forward observer in a tree from out of the town, and they were shelling us with everything but the kitchen sink. Vercic and I started digging desperately. Once in awhile he'd fall on the ground, and I'd fall on top of him. The next time it would be my turn. I'd be on the bottom, and he would be on top of me. We were digging and just figured, "Well, we're going to get hit any minute." His first name was Anthony. We called him Tony. I said, "Tony, well, we've been this way together all these years. I guess we're going to go together. We'll both go at the same time." But fortunately nothing ever happened. We got our hole dug and got down into it.

Finally, then seven o'clock rolled off. First of all, they thought we were supposed to go in and take the seven pillboxes. There were seven pillboxes on the outskirts of town. They told me we were to take them, knock them out, and then when they were knocked out, then we were to go up and go on through with B Company on our right and an English company on our left. I don't remember the British outfit, but they were on our left. B Company was on our right, and F Company was on the right of them. We went through the town and took the town in a hurry. We went through . . . our machine guns were carried by hand with an asbestos glove. They were air-cooled--.30-caliber air-cooled machine guns. We just sprayed the town and sprayed . . . we sprayed the bell tower of the steeple of a church, and we sprayed the houses and places like that. Our job was to go through there fast--take the town and go on into the apple orchard or peach orchard beyond it. I'm not sure if it was apple or peach now. But anyway, there was an orchard beyond it, and that's where we were to dig in.

Marcello: How big was this town?

Bernard: I don't really know. I went down one street and turned left and went down another street. The first thing

I know, I was out in the apple orchard or whatever it was. It wasn't a very big town at all.

Marcello: Did you encounter any resistance as you went through the town?

Bernard: Yes, we did. We took some prisoners and things like that. Of course, some Germans were shot. We didn't lose anybody. We didn't have any problem. There was no resistance. They seemed to move out. Just a few people were left there to protect it.

Marcello: Yes. In our outfit that were here . . . I was in the 4th Platoon, and the 3rd Platoon was to stay behind at the CP--that's the command post. After we took the town hurriedly, they were to come in the next day and clean up. They were the mop-up crew.

We went through the town and into the apple orchard or whatever it may be and dug in. Still the Germans were shelling with all kinds of artillery and everything from down in front of us there. When we got out there, we could see way out. It was pretty well open--open terrain. We could see the Germans out there moving around. They were, oh, I would say, maybe three-quarters of a mile of so. It was pretty clear, and you could see there very plainly, and you could see them moving around. But they didn't seem to bother us, and we didn't seem to bother them.



We dug in. Of course, a machine gun is dug in like a "U" shape. You have your machine gun at center, and you have a trench around it and in the back. The three of us, then, my two gunners and myself, were in this trench. Your infantry or riflemen are all around behind you protecting the machine gun, but we're up on the front. Vercic was a little ways to my right.

During the night, why, we heard a lot of clatter and loud firing and things off to our right but didn't know what was going on because no one seemed to bother us. We used to have to hide down in a hole there with a raincoat over you to smoke and things like that. We'd never light a cigarette in the dark because an airplane going over could spot that little light regardless of what it was. The next morning at daybreak, we could see the Germans again out there, and we saw tanks. We counted seven tanks.

Marcello: These were German tanks, of course.

Bernard: Yes, German tanks. And we sent back a runner to tell the command post that there were tanks out there. The command pose sent back a message that their air and ground reconnaissance showed no tanks whatsoever in the vicinity, and there was no tanks there.

We must have been seeing things. It wasn't long after that that seven tanks come up there chasing a horse. I can remember that horse running out in front of those tanks. It was scared to death, and so were we. Them tanks come up on our left and turned around and circled us and come in from behind us and got us all out of our trench. I was one of the last ones since I was on the front line because all of the men in back of me were picked up first. They were already lined up.

Marcello: In other words, the Germans knew that you were there.

Bernard: Oh, yes.

Marcello: And I assume you had no antitank weapons at all.

Bernard: We had run out of ammunition. We had bazooka ammunition, but it was all gone, and we had nothing to do combat a tank whatsoever. A bazooka was about the only thing that would do it, and, of course, your M-1 rifle had a . . . all the non-coms had a grenade launcher on their M-1. But we were out of ammunition with that, so we couldn't combat a tank whatsoever.

Now one man did stand up. One sergeant stood up. His name was Fannin. He came out of Alabama. He stood up on the terrain and fired at the man sticking his head out of the tank. They just turned that big muzzle on him and just blew him to smithereens. When

we saw that, why, we quit.

Marcello: Now were these tanks being accompanied by German infantry, also?

Bernard: Yes. They were all behind it. They were coming up with these tanks and would get around us. Everybody got out in a line. The first thing you know, I had some young kid come out here. He looked to be a boy about fifteen or sixteen years old--a German. He stuck that rifle in there, and he said, "Raus! Raus!" I just dropped my rifle, climbed out, and the other two men climbed out before me. I couldn't understand why they were in that line. They were all lined up already.

Marcello: About how many of you had been captured altogether?

Bernard: All of the 1st Platoon, 2nd Platoon, and 4th Platoon. The only platoon that wasn't captured was the 3rd Platoon, which was left back as the mop-up crew for the next day.

Marcello: What were the immediate feelings or emotions that you experienced?

Bernard: Scared to death! We didn't understand what was the matter because during the early morning hours we was getting a lot of artillery shells and mortar shells dropping in front of us . . . right in front of us and back of us. It wasn't coming from the Germans

in front of us at all. It was coming from somebody in back of us. We were always afraid that the Americans were dropping shells too close to us. We came to find out that in the battle or fire fight that they had on our right flank during the night, they wiped out completely B Company and F Company. The Germans went in through there and come back and had taken the town back during the night, and they were in back of us.

Marcello: In other words, they had taken Prummern during the night.

Bernard: Yes, during the night they went in and around and come in back of us. And they were on both sides of us-- front and back. There was no way out.

Marcello: What did these German soldiers look like, since this is really the first contact that you had with them?

Bernard: A lot of them were awful young kids. That's all they were. They were really young kids. I understand that they were on a new outfit, too. Some of them were just being in the front lines for their first time.

Marcello: Did they look like soldiers? In other words, were they neat in appearance and that sort of thing?

Bernard: Uniforms . . . they were pretty professional-like. I got one . . . in the line I was walking down there,

I felt something in my boot. I happened to think I had a knife in there, and I was a little bit . . . you walked down and you put your hands behind your head. You walked down like this (gesture). I happened to think about that. So I motioned to one of the guards and pointed down there, and he took the knife out and looked at it and thought it was pretty good. He put it in his belt and off he went. He kept on going. They took us right through the lines. Our artillery and mortar fire and all that were firing at the Germans, and we were going right through it. We'd go through the German lines there where some of them had been dug in for some time. They had doors on there. It looked just like a door that leads into a cellar. They had them all ready covered up and everything like that. They'd been in there for quite some time--some of them fellows.

Marcello: Let me just go back here and talk just a little bit more about the initial period when you were first captured. Did they loot you in any way? In other words, did they confiscate watches, rings, or anything of that nature?

Bernard: Well, after we went through German lines and were fired at quite a bit. . . and we walked over dead horses and whatnot. We finally got to a big courtyard.

I don't know what it was for. But anyway, they put us all in the courtyard, and they made us clean out all our pockets and take off your rings and wrist watches if you had any--whatever you had--and put them all down in a pile. Of course, they grabbed all our cigarettes and things like that, and the jewelry. Of course, you tried to reason with them. Maybe some of them was a keepsake, and you wanted to keep them. That didn't make any difference. You had to put them in the pile.

We sat there all that day and just watched all of our American planes coming over bombing. You could see the bombs drop and everything. We figured any minute they might drop one on us, but they didn't.

Marcello: In the meantime, had the Germans roughed you up in any way?

Bernard: No, no, no. No, they took pretty good care of us. They wasn't rough with us or anything like that.

Marcello: Were they feeding you?

Bernard: No, we didn't have anything to eat that day. That was our first day. We finally . . . after we . . . they moved us out of that courtyard and put us in homes. I believe at that time it was in Wiesbaden. They put us in a cellar there. We did go rooting around through the cellar. Of course, they divided

us up and put us in different cellars. This group I was in, why, we did find some jam and things like that . . . and preserves down there that we did eat and everything like that. That was about the only meal we got.

Marcello: How many of you were in this cellar?

Bernard: There was around about fifty of us, I guess. I mean they crammed us in there.

Marcello: And they just had a couple of guards outside?

Bernard: That's all, yes. Of course, you're in German territory, and there's nowhere for you to go. You didn't know your way around anyway.

Anyway, the next day they moved us out, and we walked miles and miles. Finally, we wound up at what they called a transit camp. That was Stalag 12-A, which was in Limburg. That was the camp that was hit on Christmas Day by an American plane which killed quite a few of the officers and when the man couldn't unload his plane fast enough and get back. He was crippled and he had to unload his ammunition, and it happened to land in Limburg and killed quite a few people on Christmas Day of '44. This was in November right before that. Well, there's where they interrogated you and segregated you.

Marcello: Okay, what did the camp at Limburg look like?

Describe it from a physical standpoint.

Bernard: Well, it was a number of buildings behind barbed wire. There was a quite a few holes dug around. In case of any air raid, why, you could go into these shelters or jump in these holes.

This camp was run by the English. The English was in charge of this camp. Every camp you'd go to, there was always somebody in charge of it. It was a German camp, but still they'd have . . . whoever have the most people in it . . . there happened to be more English people than anyone else there. They were the ones that run the camp.

Marcello: How large a camp was it?

Bernard: Oh, I don't really know. I was only there over night, actually.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Well, you mentioned that this was where you were interrogated.

Barnard: Well, this is where they take you . . . they take your picture just like you do . . . oh, I've never been arrested or anything, but I understand it's the same thing you do in prisons here. They put you before a camera and put a number in front of you and took a picture. Finally, they issued your



dog tags--German dog tags. Then they asked you where you had come from, your home, how many are in your outfit and all that business, where you're going and what you were going to do. And, of course, all you do is give your name, rank, and serial number. Of course, that finally ends that up.

Marcello: Let me just get a little more detail here so far as the interrogation is concerned. How was the interrogation conducted? In other words, was it one interrogator and one prisoner-of-war?

Bernard: That's all.

Marcello: What sort of a room did they . . .

Bernard: Well, it was in a rather large room. It had tables around and benches where . . . they called you and , . . different groups was . . . different ones would go over to one man. He was some officer. I don't know what all they called them. They're ober-something. But anyway, most of these people that interrogated you sometime or another had been in the United States. They knew as much about the United States, well, as much as you did. I mean, you could tell them you'd come from a certain part of the country, and they'd say, "Oh, I've been there in such-and-such a year." A lot of them were graduates from different universities

here in this country and everything else. They were here, went back over there to visit, and were caught over there. Most of them were in the German Army not because they wanted to be, but because they had to be. They were there, and they had to go into it. But a lot of them had been in this country for a good number of years and were educated here.

Marcello: Now were these army officers?

Bernard: Yes.

Marcello: And this camp, I gather, was run by the Army.

Bernard: And they once said that the American Army was made up of three classifications: those who were non-coms and who didn't have to work; those who were truck drivers that wanted to get in somewheres where they didn't have to walk and they could drive trucks; and those who said they were cooks because they wanted to get in a kitchen somewhere where they wouldn't have to worry about eating. They'd get something to eat. That's what they'd say. We were made up of three classifications: non-coms that didn't want to work; truck drivers that wanted to drive a truck; and cooks that wanted to eat all the time.

Marcello: The Germans said that.

Bernard: That's how the Germans classified us.

Marcello: Did this officer ever threaten you in any way while he was interrogating you?

Bernard: No, no. He just asked questions--this, that, and the other--and said that all this information would be sent back to the American Red Cross and that in time your family would be contacted, which did happen, but it was a good number of months after I was there. But anyway, it did finally get back to the American Red Cross. So it was truthful in that way. And they were alright. They were nice. They just asked how many were in your outfit--this, that and the other. Of course, you'd say just name, rank, and serial number over and over and over again. They didn't press it too much. They knew. They knew more about your outfit than you knew yourself. They were pretty well-informed. They had their ways of knowing all of this.

Marcello: Did this officer make it known to you that he did know as much about that outfit as you did?

Bernard: Yes, he did give that impression. He told you that. He said, "That's not going to make any difference. I know. I know."

Marcello: So you mentioned that you were just over there overnight. Had you been fed by this time? Well, let me put it to you this way. Had you been fed yet by the time you were interrogated?

Bernard: No, no, we didn't have any food.

Marcello: Did they tempt you with any food while you were being interrogated?

Bernard: No, no, we kept moving all the time, it seemed like. We didn't have time to eat. We finally . . . what happened in that camp there is that they had . . . that was a transit camp, and they'd send you out so many in a group. So those that come in one day would not go out most likely for two or three days. Well, I arrived there on Thanksgiving Day at this camp. I was captured on November 18. By the time I got around there, it was another week later. By the time I got to this camp, it was Thanksgiving Day. So we were all together in this camp, and everything was fine. But then on the day that they moved out--the next day--they called out a list of names of about thirty people. The last name on the list was mine. I got separated from everybody else because in all that group that I went out with--them other twenty-nine people--were all people that were in there a day or two before that I did not know. And the outfit that I was with was left behind. We started out.

Marcello: In other words, you were still with most of your buddies.

Bernard: I was with everybody up until that day, see. I figured we'd all go out of there the next day somewhere or a day or two later. It ended up that I was the last name called, and I was the only one out of that group that went in the day before. They just tacked me on the end of that group, and I went out with an entirely new group and fellows that I never even saw or knew before.

Marcello: Is this kind of an upsetting experience?

Bernard: It sure is because you're with everybody, and now you're with somebody you don't know anything about, and you don't know where you're going. You don't have any idea where you're going. They're going to move you to a permanent camp.

Well, we started out, and we walked a ways. Then we got on a train. We rode. It seemed to me that wherever they'd go they'd go to a fairly large city, and they'd get you off the train. They'd walk you through this city.

Marcello: What . . . go ahead.

Bernard: The German people maybe the night before had been bombed, see, with our airplanes, and they were digging out. They were digging bodies out of the rubble and this, that, and the other. All of the houses are

down. They've got shovels and they're waving them shovels at you. They spit at you and this, that and the other. They'd walk you through this town to the next station--train station--get you back in that station, put you in another train, and move you out a little ways farther.

One little incident I had--and I don't remember where it was exactly--but we were at the train station and. . . we always got the last coach. Fortunately, I never rode a boxcar. Everywhere I traveled, I traveled in a passenger train. The other group that followed behind me . . . my buddies wasn't that fortunate. They rode a freight train all the way. Anyway, I rode this passenger train, and I can remember this one. The German guards would go in there and get all of the civilian population out of the train and make them get out on the platform or go up in the other coaches, and we'd get in this rear coach. This one old lady was pushing a baby carriage. People in Germany travel around with all kinds . . . always got bags or something. They are always carrying something or pushing a baby carriage or got things in it--maybe their belongings or things like that. This elderly lady was pushing it with all her belongings

in this baby carriage in the middle of the isle. He told her to get out, and she wouldn't go. Of course, German people shout at one another. They always shout when they talk. When they talk naturally, they shout. He shouted at her and she at him. Finally he picked the baby carriage, threw it out on the platform, took her by the seat of her pants and the back of the neck, and tossed her out on the platform. I can remember that one. . . "Oh, that's terrible to treat a woman that way," but that's what he did. They loaded us all in the train, and we took off.

Marcello: How upsetting was it to encounter this civilian hostility as you went through these bombed-out towns?

Bernard: Well, you're scared. You don't know what's going to happen. You don't know whether they're going to attack you with these shovels and things like that. They don't. They stay on their side. And when you think it over afterwards, you think, "Well, what would you do if you were in their position?" The simple reason is they'd just been bombed the night before, and possibly people were killed that they had known all their lives, or loved ones. Of course, they're going to be hostile to you. As

I say, they never bothered us except to threaten us.

Well, we finally got off in a town called Neuss. We walked across the Rhine River bridge. At that time we could see the Germans dug in alongside the Rhine River, along the banks of the Rhine River. We crossed over into Dusseldorf.

Marcello: Which I'm sure had been pounded pretty hard by Allied bombs.

Bernard: As I say again, that's what they did. They took you off in this one town, crossed you over the Rhine River bridge by walking, then into this town of Dusseldorf, which is a fairly large town, and put us on a train again. Finally, we wound up in another big city, which I do . . . well, I had no idea where I was. And they took us downstairs about four levels below the ground.

Marcello: Is this in a train station?

Bernard: Train station. The guard . . . one of the guards went around trying to find out where we were supposed to go. I guess that's what he was up to. Anyway, he finally got us out of there and took us up into this city and put us on a train--an elevated train. And we went in there in the back part of the train. But the point . . . it was just like a trolley car,



is what it was. The German population . . . some of them were in the front there, and we were in the back. We rode around in that thing, and I looked up on the wall there at all the advertisements, and they had a map. I found out I was in Berlin. I didn't know it, but I was in Berlin. We went all around that thing and finally wound back at the same station we left. We come to find out that that's where we should have got a train out of that station to go on to this camp where we were going at five o'clock. By the time we got back, it was six o'clock, and we missed the train. So we stayed in that station until midnight.

Marcello: In the meantime, how had you been fed? What were you getting to eat?

Bernard: Well, they did finally give us a loaf of bread. They put seven men on a loaf of bread. The bread is what they call black bread. It's made out of sawdust. I'll tell you, if you're not used to it, you certainly got what they called in those days the "GI's." But you had dysentery pretty bad, I'll tell you.

Marcello: What sort of equipment were you allowed to keep? Did you still have your mess gear or canteen or anything of that nature?

Bernard: No, nothing but the clothes on your back. That's all, just the clothes on your back--nothing else.

We had an air raid about nine o'clock at night. You could hear the bombs dropping outside. All the German people were coming down and going into what they called rathskellers. They had big tables, and they had a big keg of beer, and everybody was drinking beer. They'd play cards in there. They seemed to be happy-go-lucky even with all the bombs dropping out there.

Marcello: How about you?

Bernard: We were still scared to death (chuckle), but they kept us in a corner away from everybody. But then we had to go to the bathroom, so we finally made the German guard understand what we had to do. So he lined us and he'd take in so many at a time. So we went down . . . they took us through this rathskeller where all these other German people were into a room back in there into the bathroom there.

And there was a bunch of Polish women sweeping. These German guards . . . people were going right in front of them and everything else like that. I saw this and that embarrassed me. I just wouldn't go. Well, I was sick. I had that . . . that German bread began to work on me, and it bothered me. I had

cramps in my stomach and everything else like that, but I still wouldn't go.

So I went back up again, and they took another group down. They counted you off. Well, I got on the end of the group, and, of course, I wasn't counted. They had already counted them. Right when they started off I got on the end and went down there again. I finally found a commode there that had a wall around it. So I got in there, and I wouldn't get off. I mean, I was really miserable. Finally, a German guard . . . he had taken everybody back up, and he counted them again. He found out he was one missing. He came back down there and rooted me out of there and got me out of there. I went back up there with the group.

Anyway, I got on this train, and I found where the toilet was on the train, and I sat there all night long. I locked the door, and all them poor GI's along with me were banging the door to get in. I wouldn't let them in. I sat there. I was miserable and I sat there. I'll tell you truthfully. I thought then I wanted to die. You never know what it is to be in that position. Your stomach is just hurting, and it hurts and hurts. You go and you can't go anymore, and it still bothers you. It's something

I can't explain but it's murder.

Anyway, we got to the camp the next day. All these camps had barracks. This camp had barracks in it and we were doing pretty good. I was put in a barracks with all these new people that come in. There were others in the barracks at the time. They had twelve barracks.

Marcello: Now was this to be your permanent camp?

Bernard: This was to be the permanent camp, so we thought. This was Stalag 3-B. This was in Furstenberg on the Oder and near Frankfurt on the Oder. Now there's a Frankfurt on the Main, but this is Frankfurt on the Oder. It's Furstenberg. There were twelve barracks there. I got into the eleventh barrack. The first ten were all loaded, and they were partly filled in eleven. We filled up the eleventh.

Marcello: Were these mostly Americans in this camp?

Bernard: All Americans. This was all Americans. It was in an American camp with all Americans and run by a master sergeant. He is the top man, and no one can tell him what to do.

Marcello: In other words, this is a camp for non-coms.

Bernard: This is a camp for non-coms. Everybody in there was a non-com from corporal all the way to sergeant major. He was in charge of the camp. They had one

man in charge of the camp. He's the one that intercedes. He goes to the German people and tries to get things for you. If they want to do something, they call him and tell him what they intend to do. Then he comes back and enlightens the whole camp. He'll tell the whole camp what we're going to do, see--what we have to do.

Marcello: How long were you at this camp altogether?

Bernard: I arrived there in the later part of November and stayed there until the first part of February. That was where we had the . . . as I say, all camps had a big stove in each barracks or a stone fireplace in it.

Marcello: It was made out of stone?

Bernard: Yes, a stone fireplace. And we had what we would call bunk beds. They were just wooden things with slats. You had to go out in the yard and get some of these slats. We were allowed--I don't remember now--ten or twelve slats and put them across on the rungs there. And they gave you two blankets, two German blankets. They were gray blankets. You'd lay one down on the slats, and one you cover over. It was cold in that part or section right there. It was cold weather. It snowed quite a bit while we were there.

Marcello: How were these barracks divided? In other words, were there so many in a section of each barrack, or was it simply just one long room there?

Bernard: It was one big barrack with a partition. It was divided into halves. I don't know exactly how many was in one section and how many was in another section, but it was quite a few of us there. We had to buddy together. You can never be separate. You could never go it alone. You always had to get a buddy. You'd pick up a fellow that . . . he's . . . maybe he didn't have a buddy. I buddied with one fellow that . . . you do all your cooking together and everything else like that.

Of course, when we got there, they gave us then bread and soup. It was more or less called . . . it was made out of . . . well, some of it was dehydrated. Some was just broth. Sometimes, like on Sunday, if you were lucky you got something like a barley or a rice in the soup. It wasn't too bad. And then you'd get a section of bread. It was . . . maybe if you cut it, you'd get about three slices out of the bread. That was what you get at noon-time. They would give you a cup. The American Red Cross had sent over plates and everything, cups. You got a cup. What you did, you got in a group,

and this group would go and get a cup of soup and a piece of bread. Then you'd go off in a corner with your other buddy, and you'd divide it up. You save up for later on.

Finally, they . . . our Red Cross parcels came through. When it first started off, there were seven men on a parcel. That meant that everything in that parcel had to be divided seven ways. Well, you had in there corned Willie.

Marcello: Corned Willie?

Bernard: Yes, it comes from Argentina. Spam. Well, it's the same thing as corned beef, is what it is, only it's a very poor grade. It was corned Willies because it wasn't corned beef, really. It was corned Willies. But it come out of Argentina. That's where it's processed. And Spam, which I will today not eat, Spam. You got a chocolate bar or you got a box of cocoa. It was either one or the other. You got soluble coffee, which is the same as your coffee today. You got peanut butter--a jar of peanut butter, which you could trade. You could get the whole camp for a jar of peanut butter because that was the most important thing. That was the best staple of all.

Marcello: Okay, let me ask you some general questions about this

camp, since it appeared that you were there for at least a couple of months, anyhow. When you first got to the camp, were you in any way subjected to any sort of interrogation or investigation by the Americans who ran this camp? In other words, in some camps the Germans would actually plant stooges in these camps. Sometimes there had to be some investigation procedures followed in order to try and determine if the prisoners actually were authentic or whether they were German planted. Did any of this sort of thing ever occur here?

Bernard: I don't recall ever running into anything like that at all. I don't really recall that at all. I don't remember anybody that worried about anyone in particular or anyone that seemed to be there that shouldn't be there and interrogating us in any way and trying to find out any secrets. As I say, when we got into the prison camps, there wasn't much that we knew anyway--what was going on.

We did, though, have an underground radio system that the Germans had an idea they knew something about, but they never could prove it. They used to make us go out at certain times, maybe in the middle of the night, and they'd go through the barracks--all the barracks--and tear everything up--tear all



everything you got.

They gave you, as I say, these cups and blankets. Maybe somebody needed clothing, so they got them clothing. Of course, we got some American clothing, too, that they had gathered up from time to time. This sergeant in charge would see that you got clothing if you needed it. But they would root through all of your belongings and things like that to see if you had anything that was telling us what was going on, see.

Marcello: Had you ever seen this radio at all?

Bernard: No, never. But we used to have a man come in every so often. It's like . . . if you've seen Stalag 17, it's the same principle. We'd have American guards with the various windows and the doors and everything like that watching for the German guards. Well, this man would call everybody to attention in this particular barracks. This would go from barrack to barrack. He'd say what was going on and where the Allies were and where the Russians were and this, that and the other. Of course, we had rumors that the Americans were going to come in there any day. Of course, it went day after day, and they didn't. They never got that far.

But anyway, we had our Christmas there. As I said, we had a Christmas play. One barracks there had a stage and everything. It was like an auditorium. We put on a show. The German guards and everything were in there in the audience and watched the show. I don't remember now what we all had there, what we all did, but we did do various things and made various costumes out of various things. That's really funny what Americans can do. The main thing that we did . . . and I always wish I had brought it home. I've never been able to do it--make a blower. It's made out of cans. You would get a piece of leather strap somewhere through some German. You'd bribe a German someways where he gets you a piece of leather and make a strap. But you make it out of all of these cans that come in the Red Cross parcels. You'd save them and you'd make . . . they gave you a German pot. It was just a round, small pot. We'd poke holes in that. We made all this blower with a little handle on it, all made out of tin cans from the American Red Cross parcels. Then we'd put a fire in the bottom of this German pot. We'd turn this crank. We made a little pinwheel underneath it to keep the air circulating. That's what we cooked on.

Marcello: Are these what are called the "kriegie" stoves?

- Bernard: That's correct. I had one but it . . . later on in the story, I'll tell you what became of it.
- Marcello: It's interesting that just every prisoner-of-war that I've talked has a warm spot in his heart for the "kriegie" stove. All of them want to talk about it.
- Bernard: Well, it was something. I think that was the most . . . I don't know the word for it. But that was something that was made just out of . . . a bunch of American people got together, and it just shows what the American people can do if they want to.
- Marcello: Plus, in a camp of this size there are obviously all sorts of skills. In other words, there's somebody in there who had the . . . there are all sorts of skills in this camp. You probably had somebody who knew how to make clothing. There was probably somebody else who knew to forge papers or whatever.
- Bernard: Yes, we made clothing and things like that for this Christmas show that we put on. As I say, I don't remember how all of that stuff was made and where it all come from. It's various things that you could gather up. You'd bribe a German guard to get something for you here and something for you there. The first thing you know, you've got something cooked up, and you make it, and everything seemed to work.

Marcello: You mentioned the "kriegie" stoves. Where were you getting the food to cook in these "kriegie" stoves? Was this your Red Cross parcels and things of that nature?

Bernard: Well, they were coming in a little bit more often. They were cutting down from seven on a parcel to . . . we got it down to two on a parcel. Well, that wasn't too bad. You would be able to cut . . . you'd take your corned Willie and your Spam and things like that, and you'd cut that up. Then you'd get your biscuits. They were just biscuits like come from your regular C-rations. You'd cut them all up and dice them all up. We made all kinds of concoctions out of it. I don't know. Maybe you'd get some potatoes or something. . . well, potatoes we could get. There were two things in our . . . I'll eat potatoes, but I will not eat rutabagas.

Marcello: Potatoes and rutabagas were being supplied by the Germans.

Bernard: No, rutabagas you could dig out of the ground. That was simple. That's all they grew over there, was rutabagas and potatoes.

Well, what we'd do . . . once a month they'd take you to a delousing chamber. What you'd do . . . you'd go down to this building, strip off all your

clothes. You'd take your blanket . . . you'd strip off all your clothes, and you'd stand around a little pot-bellied stove, maybe a hundred of you, trying to keep warm. They're standing up against each other for the body heat and this, that, and the other. They'd take these clothes, and they'd put them in a great big oven. The Russians would run these ovens. They put them in that big oven. That's where they'd delouse them. Then they would take you over to a shower. The Russians ran that, also. When they said something in Russian, why, you'd better get out there because they're going to turn the water on. If you've got soap, alright. If you don't have soap, it's too bad. But we did always . . . when we had any Red Cross parcels, we could get some soap. We always seemed to hold on to that pretty well. They'd turn the water on, you'd soap yourself all down, and then they turned the water off, see. And you'd get yourself all soaped down, and they'd holler another command, the water would go on, and you'd get all of that soap rinsed off of you. Then you go out to the pot-bellied stove. You stay there maybe about an hour trying to keep warm. It's cold out there. Finally, they'd bring your clothes out in these great big racks that they'd run through

these ovens. You'd get your clothes and you'd put them on. I mean, oh, that's heaven. The clothes are warm; the blankets are warm.

They start taking you back through the snow. We used to pass a coal pile. Everytime we'd go past the coal pile, we'd sneak a couple of bricks of coal. They were just like bricks. They were in brick form. We'd get them and stick them anywhere in our clean clothes. We'd stick that dirty coal in there, and we'd go back. That's what we'd have in them ovens back in the camp. We'd have a pretty good fire in there because we'd cook with that . . . at that time we were cooking in them stoves mainly. We were making these things at the time. But anyway, we'd get all this coal and everything.

Red Cross parcels were coming in, and we'd go out there and gather snow up and put vanilla with it and this, that, and the other and make ice cream out of it and whatnot. We'd make a lot of concoctions that I wouldn't . . . I don't even know how to make them anymore. I've forgotten about them. I wouldn't even think about making them.

Marcello: Where did you get the vanilla to . . .

Bernard: That came in the Red Cross parcels. Now at Christmas-time we got one special Red Cross parcel. You got

so much food in it, but you also got games. We got a little board with little pegs, you know. You could play checkers with it; you could play chess with it; you could play cribbage and all that. You could play . . . and cards. That's when we started to play pinochle a lot. Of course, I come from . . . there was a lot of soldiers in there that come from the East Coast. They liked to play pinochle in that part of the country. That was my game. I loved to play pinochle.

Marcello: While you brought up the subject of food, let me ask you some other questions on this same subject. In this camp here at Furstenberg, were you being fed three times a day?

Bernard: In the morning you just got coffee. Then at noontime you got . . . along anywhere from between eleven and one, they'd serve while you got this soup. They'd bring . . . it'd come down in a great big tub. They'd dish this soup out and give you your allotment of bread.

Marcello: Which was how much? How much bread did you get?

Bernard: Equivalent of about three slices.

Marcello: At one meal or for the whole day?

Bernard: That was for the whole day. Now that bread, as I say, was made out of sawdust, and it's altogether different than our white bread or rye bread or anything in this part of the country. You wouldn't. . . you wouldn't

subsist. . . you wouldn't get along on our bread. That bread over there was . . . it had that texture to it. It was solid. But it did make you have the "GI's" quite frequently. But it was . . . if it wasn't for that bread, I don't think we wouldn't have gotten along as well as we did.

Marcello: How about the evening meal? What did you usually get for that?

Bernard: Well, for the evening meal we got . . . we generally got a tea--what they called a tea--but the tea was so bad we couldn't drink it. Now I used to use it to shave with. It was warm and it wasn't like shaving in cold water. It was warm and I could shave with that.

Of course, now when you first come to camp they gave you all these utensils. You got a toothbrush and a razor and razor blades and things like that. That was all given to you when you first entered the camp by the American man in charge. That's all the stuff that comes from the Red Cross parcels. The Red Cross was sending this stuff into the various camps, you know, and they'd distribute it. They had things to shave with and brush your teeth and so forth and so on like that. But I used to use that tea



to shave with because it was terrible. It was terrible tasting. You couldn't drink it.

Now the coffee wasn't bad. You could drink that. You could learn to drink it. It was thick and heavy.

Marcello: What sort of food did you get for the evening meal?

Bernard: You didn't get anything. You just got that at noontime.

Marcello: In other words, you got the soup and bread at noon.

Bernard: Noontime, yes.

Marcello: And you didn't get anything at all in the evening?

Bernard: No, just the tea. Just this tea.

Marcello: Now you also on several occasions mentioned the Red Cross parcels. And, here again, for the record and just to make it clear, how often were you getting the Red Cross parcels?

Bernard: Well, it varied. It'd all depend. It'd all depend, also, who was in charge. . . who the Germans were that were in charge of the camp. They'd change from time to time. You may get some Germans in there that they wouldn't give you the Red Cross parcels. They kept them for themselves. Of course, when that was found out, there was a disturbance about that because the GI in charge of the camp would turn that into the Red Cross group, wherever they were, and they would put a stop to that. Now that's one thing they did. The Germans did go along pretty well with the

Geneva Convention. They did go along with that. They had other Germans in there that made you open everything. You'd go down to one barracks, and they'd hand it out a window and punch holes in it. You had to eat that fairly fast in a day or two because it'd spoil--this corned Willie and Spam and things like that. Anything that would spoil, why, you had to eat that fast. You couldn't meter it out and save it from day to day, which you could get by with it.

And you had some German guards who were a little bad on that. They'd do that on purpose. We raised the devil about that. Finally, they cut that out and gave it to you whole. Of course, we'd keep it in a can. You can keep it pretty good. Of course, you open and keep it . . . but when they put holes in it like that, you didn't know when they put them in there. They might have been in there . . . they might have had the stuff in camp for two or three days and then put a hole in there, see.

Marcello: In other words, the Red Cross packages came sporadically. There was no set time when you could expect to get a Red Cross package.

Bernard: Not until near the end.

Marcello: When you got these Red Cross packages, I gather

that on the basis of what you said, you had to use this food immediately--that you couldn't ration it, especially if they started punching holes in the perishable items.

Bernard: No.

Marcello: Now a lot of times, I know, the Red Cross packages would also contain cigarettes. Did you ever see instances where prisoners-of-war would trade food in order to get cigarettes?

Bernard: Oh, yes. I did myself.

Marcello: Could you explain that?

Bernard: Me, I was a great cigarette fiend. Food didn't bother me as much not having it as it did cigarettes. I'd go crazy without cigarettes. I was a nervous wreck. I've always smoked. I've smoked since I was a kid fourteen years old. I was always wanting cigarettes. In fact, I'd go from barracks to barracks every morning and go down the aisles and . . . butts of any kind--I don't care whether they were German cigarettes or what they were--I'd gather them up. I'd come back and put them in a can--break them all open and put them in a can--get all of that good tobacco out of it, and make a cigarette out of that. We'd follow the German guards around. I'd pick . . . when they'd throw a cigarette down we'd pick that up.

There was quite a few of us like that. But I was a cigarette fiend. I'd rather have cigarettes than food. I'd trade food. I even traded a pair of wooden shoes that I got in Holland for food that I was able to keep. I got away with them. I got through with them. I don't know how I got through with them, but I got them through. I traded them away.

Marcello: In other words, these wooden shoes you had picked up on your way through Holland, and you had been able to keep them while you were a prisoner-of-war.

Bernard: I don't know how I kept them. I can't remember yet how I got away with them, but I got away with some.

Marcello: Well, how did this effect your health--the fact that you had such little food to begin with?

Bernard: We were losing weight. Of course, I never was too heavy. I never weighed more than 145 pounds. Of course, when I was finally liberated, why, I was down to about ninety or ninety-five pounds. But as I say, it didn't concern me too much about food as it did about cigarettes. I was just . . . well, I was bad. I think I was worse than anybody else. I still believe that. I haven't smoked now in four years due to the fact that I had to cut them out, and I found quick that I could do away with them and get away with it, and it'd be alright. It doesn't

bother me now. But in them days I said cigarettes was a must, and they was.

Marcello: Now at the noon meal where you were being fed the soup and the bread, who was in charge of cooking and distributing this food? How did this work?

Bernard: Well, we put our own forces in there. They made Germans help, but mainly in these camps were the old Germans. These were the men that was in World War II. They were the ones that were mainly taking care of these camps. They had a few GI's down there helping them in the kitchen. Now we sent GI's down there to help them. They helped them prepare all of this food. They'd bring it up with . . . it was a tub with . . . you've seen these old wooden washtubs with these two big handles on it? Well, they put a rod through them two handles, and one GI on each side would carry that thing. We filled it to the brim. We'd take turns going in there first, see. Like, today would be my turn, and my group would go first, and then you go to the tail end of the line.

Marcello: I'm sure that when that food was being distributed, everybody was watching the person who was distributing it like a hawk.

Bernard: Yes. Oh, yes. You just got your soup and . . . of course, some people tried to get more and couldn't do it. Now the main thing is that everybody had to watch one another in a sense because you were always . . . you were your brother's keeper. You had to have . . . as I say, you always had to buddy up. You had to have at least two or more; some had groups of three; some had groups of fours. But you always had two, and you always had to look out for the other man. Now the man I had was a fellow that came out of Cleveland. I've forgotten his name. He was a man who couldn't control himself. At night I could hear him get up and go down. . . we put this stuff under the bunk, see. I could hear him get up and go down and start to raid that thing. I had to get up in the night and stop him. I mean, we had to ration it out. I'd say, "Now this is how much we're going to eat tonight. We'll save this for tomorrow."

Marcello: This is out of the Red Cross packages.

Bernard: Yes. But he could never do that. This Red Cross parcel we had at Christmastime . . . the food that we got in it wasn't too much because it was more games and things like that. But he sat down and ate every bit of it at one lick. And he was as sick as a dog. He was the type of person who couldn't control himself.

When they finally took him out of the camp . . . well, the other camp we went to later on. They took him out of there with tuberculosis. Well, for a long time I worried about whether I had TB or not because I had lived with him for quite some time.

Anyway, after this camp we finally decided that the Allies were getting too close.

Marcello: Well, before we get to that point, I still have a lot more questions to ask with regard to this camp.

Bernard: Okay.

Marcello: What was the thought that was most constantly on your mind during this time?

Bernard: Food. As I say, me, I gave food up for cigarettes, but still, and in all, food was the main thing on your mind. You'd sit and think what you were going to eat when you got home or what you were going to do once you got home. Your mind was always on what was happening at home or in your own home town. You'd wonder where such-and-such a person was, or this friend of yours, and what became of him, or what they're having for breakfast this morning, or what they're having . . . you'd sit there and you'd write out all of this food you could think of.

I've got letters here that I've written, and two pages are just different foods that I would like to eat different times. For breakfast there was your oatmeal and your cereals. And for lunch you'd have your different kinds of spreads and things like that. It was always in your mind. You always thought about it and talked about it. You'd make up different dishes in your mind and how you'd make that. Of course, a lot of us had never cooked in our lives. Even to this day I can't boil water without burning it, but anyway, I used to think of all the concoctions we could make up at home. That was the main thought on your mind, was food and when we were going to get out.

Marcello: What was the food that you were craving the most?

Bernard: Oh, I had different things written down. For breakfast suggestions here I had oatmeal and corn flakes and shredded wheat and all bran. Then we used to have pancakes and sausage and ham and bacon and eggs. Then later on in the day, we might think about toasted cinnamon buns and coffeecake and crum cakes --plain or cream filled--snowflake rolls, poppyseed rolls, easter hot cross buns, raisin cupcakes, donuts, half-moons--cream or jelly-filled, chocolate, butter-scotch--cream sticks.



Marcello: But if you had one particular food that you seemed to crave the most . . .

Bernard: Oh, I don't know any one thing in particular. I was always a great lover of pork. I like pork roast. I love a pork roast. I guess . . . I've got down here . . . I've got here relish, cold cut sandwiches, shrimp, smelts, tuna fish and salmon salad, egg salad, tomato salad, cheese, pickles, cucumbers, ham, chicken, stuffed tomatoes, peppers, apple butter, Ritz crackers, graham crackers, saltines, pies, cakes, cookies, puddings. All types of pies--chocolate coconut cake, marble, upside-down, peanut butter, oatmeal . . . oh, I don't know.

Marcello: These things that you're reading me are some of the various types of foods that you jotted down while you were a prisoner-of-war.

Bernard: Oh, baked apples, cheesecakes, Danish and French pastries, cream puffs, chocolate eclairs, steaks. Various suggestions. Here's one--steaks, fried potatoes, stewed corn, pork chops, whole, broiled, mashed, fried, French fried, or cream potatoes, baked beans, oven molasses or syrup, bacon. Another one is hamburger steak, mashed potatoes, peas and corn. Another one is macaroni and cheese and tomatoes. Another one is spaghetti, Italian cheese, sauce or regular.

Another one is fried egg plant, fried scrapple. There's one, fried scrapple. A lot of people in this part of the country don't know what fried scrapple is. Me coming from Pennsylvania, I had Philadelphia scrapple at home, and I used to think about that. Chopped chow mein, chicken, fried tomatoes, stewed or sliced tomatoes . . . ham and cabbage. . . pork and sauerkraut. Oh, I could go on and on. There's so much of it, and it's all of it written down on that piece of paper.

Marcello: Now what were the sanitary facilities like here in this camp at Furstenberg?

Bernard: At this camp here we had what we more or less would call outhouses. You'd have to walk to the far end of the compound. They'd have these outhouses. It was your job to keep them clean. We had to keep them clean. They had nothing to do with it. All they was was a big hole dug, but they did have houses. There was housing, and it was a shed-type. It was just like an outhouse that we'd have at home here and in the countryside and things like that. They were all alike. And we kept them clean.

Marcello: How did you go about keeping them clean?

Bernard: Well, all you could do was clean the stool part of it and the inside, of course. They didn't

move them that often. They didn't dig new holes and move them very often. Of course, the flies and things were awful. It was very bad out there. I mean, as clean as you kept them, you had to be very careful because you were afraid that maybe you might wind up with something. The flies were terrible, but there was nothing you could do about that.

Marcello: Did you still have a . . .

Bernard: We sprayed them with some kind of thing, but it didn't do too much good.

Marcello: Did you still have your dysentery at Furstenberg?

Bernard: No, I sort of got over it a little bit there. I think mainly with the soup and things like that, it sort of calmed down. I guess more or less that being frightened during the few days or the week you went through before you really got situated had now passed, and you knew you were going to be here for a while. Things didn't look too bleak then. I think your nerves quieted down, and I think everything else in your body became a little more accustomed to what you were doing day to day because we were doing practically the same thing every day. You didn't do too much exercise there.

Marcello: How about showers and bathing facilities? What were they like here at Furstenberg?

Bernard: Well, the only thing . . . as I say, the only shower you had was when they took you out there at the first or latter part of the month and took you to the delousing chamber. That was the only shower you ever had. You kept yourself clean the best way you could.

Marcello: Did you have free access to water and things of that nature, or was it rationed?

Bernard: Yes, you could get water. It was pretty good in this camp here. This first camp we went to, as I say . . . the barracks and everything . . . it wasn't bad. You were indoors and you wasn't out in the elements, although it snowed quite frequently there. It was cold during the winter. You weren't out in the elements too much, and you could keep yourself pretty well clean.

Marcello: Did you have a faucet in the barracks itself, or was it an outdoor faucet?

Bernard: Now that I am not quite sure. I cannot recall exactly where the water was in that camp. I really don't because in the next camp we went to the water was outstanding in my mind. But in this particular camp, I can't remember. I think we had everything pretty well at hand. I think everything was pretty good. The only thing . . . it was a little cold at night

because the windows wasn't too good, and the wind came through there, and you just had one blanket to sleep under. That was what the main thing we worried about was--the cold there. But as far as keeping yourself clean, it wasn't too bad. I can't recall just exactly where . . . the water at all. I tried to think down through the years, and I just can't place myself where that water was.

Marcello: What were the German guards like in this camp at Furstenberg?

Bernard: Oh, they were very friendly, very good--no trouble with them at all. I mean, you could . . . as I say, some of them you could . . . broken English. You could converse with some of them. They were fairly friendly. We had some that you could always bribe to get something for you here and there. They were very good--no problem at all with them.

Marcello: How would you go about bribing them?

Bernard: Well, you'd just go up to them and tell them what you wanted. You tried to explain to them what you wanted, and you'd give them . . . as I say, of the people who did most of the bribing were the ones that were in the camp for some time, those that would come in from Italy and Sicily and all that had been prisoners-of-war for over a year or two years. They

knew their way around this camp. They had a lot of everything. They were getting cigarettes and food. They were getting parcels from home. I never got a parcel from home--never. My things never got through. Everything got sent back. Parcels were sent to me, but I never received them. But they were getting parcels from home and things like that. They could bribe the person with a lot of food and cigarettes they had. They were getting things through.

Marcello: I would assume that once you had bribed a guard, he was yours. You had him then. Is that correct?

Bernard: Oh, yes. He was overly friendly then.

Marcello: Did you have any nicknames for the guards?

Bernard: I didn't. I don't remember any nicknames.

Marcello: How often would the Germans pull sneak inspections of the barracks to look for contraband material?

Bernard: Oh, I reckon they'd do that about two or three times a week.

Marcello: How would these take place?

Bernard: Oh, they'd just . . . you knew they were coming down. You could hear hollering and screaming outside. They'd get everybody out. They'd count you. That was the funny part. They'd count you down, you know. They'd line you all up out there in the snow. You might stay out there for an hour or two until

they'd go through all of these barracks.

But first of all they'd count you, see. They'd go "Eins, zuei, drei . . ." Once you'd do that . . . they knew how many was in that barrack. That's how many men they should have. What we would do is . . . they'd start the count, you know, and the guard would go down the line and turn his back, and one or two men on this end would turn around and go down to the other end, see. So when he come down there, he always had two or three people over. Then he'd go crazy. He didn't know what was going on. So while he's standing there trying to figure out what to do, they'd sneak around and get back in line again, and he'd count them again, see. When he'd get down to the middle of the line, two or three guys would sneak down to the other end of the line again. He was supposed to have thirty, and he would up with thirty-two or thirty-three. That was one thing we could fool them on. They never could figure out what you were doing. We would always be running from one end of the line to the other and adding more men to the line than were supposed to be.

But then they would go through your barracks and through your belongings and everything. You're

standing out there in the cold. As I say, sometimes we stood out there for over an hour.

Marcello: What were the items that you were forbidden to have?  
Well, weapons, of course.

Bernard: Well, you couldn't have any underground equipment-- anything that pertained to like a radio or anything like that. That's about all. I never knew them to really set down anything else except maybe you had maps for maybe trying to escape or something like that.

From time to time we'd talk about escaping, but in that particular camp I don't know of anything that . . . we never dug any underground tunnels or anything like that. We were content to stay there because we were pretty well. . . we knew we were pretty well deep into Germany. I wasn't too far out of Berlin at any time. I didn't realize this until later. When we moved from one camp to another, I still was within a short distance of Berlin. So we were way deep into . . . on the other side practically where the Russians were going to be coming in there.

Marcello: You mentioned that when they would count you off you would do everything to foul up their system. I guess it would be safe to say that this probably fulfilled some sort of a psychological need. The captives were getting back at the captors.



Bernard: Well, we used to think it was fun. We liked to confuse them. We always liked to . . . and no matter what it was, we liked to confuse them in everything. It didn't make any difference. Whatever they did, we tried to confuse them. We used to stand and laugh. We'd think it was fun if they'd find it confusing. And you could send a German guard up a wall. He just couldn't figure you out. He couldn't figure the American out at all.

Marcello: Did you witness German guards ever meting out any physical punishment to any of the prisoners?

Bernard: I have, yes, but that was along one of the marches.

Marcello: That's later on down the story. We'll talk about that a little bit later on.

Bernard: That's when I moved from one camp to another.

Marcello: If anybody had planned an escape in this camp, did it have to be approved by the man in charge? I knew that in a lot of camps this is the way it occurred.

Bernard: We had a young man I'd judge to be in his late twenties if I remember correctly. He was pretty . . . he was a big, strong, husky man. He was pretty strict. As I say, these people were in camp when we arrived there and had been in there maybe for a number of months. But they were all people that come from Italy and North Africa and Sicily and places like that. They

had everything very well organized. He didn't want anybody to go against the organization. He was staunch about that. As I say, them fellows had it pretty good. We wasn't mistreated or anything.

Marcello: Did the Germans ever warn you about what would happen if you did try to escape?

Bernard: I don't recall them ever doing that, no. I don't remember that in that camp at all.

Marcello: What did you do with your time during the day?

Bernard: Well, you just got up and . . . what little walking around you could do . . . that's about all you could do, was walk. That's just what we did.

Marcello: In other words, you had to fight boredom. That was a big problem.

Bernard: Yes. All you'd do is . . . you'd sit around on your bunk or go out and walk, but you couldn't walk too long. You'd just walk. As I said, it was cold and snow. You couldn't get out. In that particular camp you couldn't do too much of anything. You really were more or less tied down because of the weather outside. You were in barracks, so it wasn't too bad.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned the Christmas bash of 1944. Describe that in a little bit more detail. Obviously, that brings back some fond memories for you.

Bernard: We got together and . . . we had people in there who were pretty good artists. I had a thing here that shows a girl in a red suit, and it says, "Merry Christmas" on it and it says "1944 and 1945." The '45 is crossed out. I guess they figured they were going to get out by '44, and they wasn't going to be there in '45. But that didn't take place.

But we got this group of young fellows there that could sing and others that could do different performances. They could act; they were pretty good. They put on a pretty good show. Exactly what all transpired, I don't know. But we used to have all the German guards and the German high command of the area there--that compound. The ones that were high ranking officers, they'd come to this Christmas party. We'd make fun of the Germans and this, that, and the other. They'd sit there and laugh and take in everything. It was something that they could do. As I say, all of these people had been there so long that they had everything organized. Of course, we come in in the last of November or the first of December. It was all new to us. I didn't know too much about it. But they did have these affairs from time to time throughout the compound the year before and the year before that. As I say, a

lot of them were captured in the early part of  
'42.

Marcello: Did the Germans give you any extra rations or anything  
of that nature on Christmas?

Bernard: No. No, I don't remember any extra rations at all.  
As I say, we got a Red Cross parcel at Christmas,  
which had mainly games in it more than any food.  
We were a little bit disappointed because it had a  
lot of games in it that we weren't interested in  
playing. We were just card players or something  
like that, and that's about it.

Marcello: How great a problem was theft in that camp?

Bernard: It was very bad, very bad.

Marcello: Among the prisoners themselves?

Bernard: In that camp there, it wasn't too bad. As I say,  
it was in the second camp. In the second camp was  
where it was worse. We wouldn't have that in our  
camp. As I say, this buddy I had was . . . I'd  
catch him and break him of the habit. That's all.  
But if any of the men . . . if you were caught  
stealing, you were pretty well beat up by everybody.  
You carried a sign on you that you walked around  
the compound with, saying, "I am a thief. I stole  
from my buddies." You carried that around for two  
or three days. Everybody got to know who you were.

You were chastised pretty well. I mean, that's one thing they wouldn't go for. You cannot steal from anyone. You should never, never, never steal from any man regardless of how hungry you are. You should never, never steal from another buddy, never.

Marcello: Okay, when did you leave this camp?

Bernard: Well, in the first of February they heard that the Allies were closing in and they'd better move us. But they didn't know where to move us to. So we took out of there one day. With all this bunk beds and slats and everything, we made sleds. We put all of our belongings in these sleds and started out.

Marcello: Was this unsettling once again, that you had to . . . after you got used to the routine. . .

Bernard: Yes, you don't know where you're going. Well, we're leaving Stalag 3-B, which, as I say, was in Furstenberg. We don't know where we're going to wind up. We start out in the snow pulling these sleds with all of your belongings in it. We find out . . . the first night we wind up in a big barn. I mean, it's an immense big barn! There's probably 5,000 of us.

Marcello: Now is this the entire camp at Furstenberg, or have they been gathering other prisoners, also?

Bernard: No, this is the first camp. There's 5,000 of us in this group, in this camp, and they're moving us out now. They're closing that camp down. We tore part of the buildings down. Everything in it. . . everything with wood that we could make things out of to carry our equipment in--our blankets and whatnot--and pull them instead of carrying them on your back or things like that.

Marcello: Did they give you some warning that you would be leaving this camp in a certain number of days?

Bernard: They told us about two or three days in advance that we're going to move out on such-and-such a day. We got the chance to build things. They let us do that because they knew we weren't coming back anymore to that camp.

So we start out, and the first night they put us in a great big barn. I guess . . . I don't know how many were there. I guess they put the 5,000 . . . I don't know if they put the whole 5,000 in there or not. But anyway, you couldn't turn around; you couldn't sit down; you couldn't lay down. You stood up. That first night you stood up after walking all day. You stood up in this barn because you were crammed in there so close.

Marcello: Well, if nothing else, all of that body heat may have kept you warm.

Bernard: That part was about alright. The next morning they'd call you out. They'd get you out and the different guards would pick you up and take you out. You'd get in a group. They had so many in a group. The group we were in the first day, we had a German guard that was pretty rough.

Marcello: What would he do?

Bernard: Well, he'd walk along. He'd get tired . . . now the Americans, you know, every hour they'd have a ten-minute break, you know. But the Germans, they walk for two or three hours before they had a break. And it'd always wind up . . . if you were down there at the tail end of a group, by the time the front end would be down, they'd be up again ready to go by the time you got down. You'd have to move out. You'd never get too much of a break. But you'd go maybe for two or three hours before you'd get a break for five or ten minutes. So the fellows were falling out. A lot of them were falling down, falling out, and couldn't keep up the pace.

Marcello: Keeping in mind, of course, that these prisoners had been ill-fed to begin with.

Bernard: That's right. Well, they'd get something in this

camp. They weren't too ill-fed. But the walking . . . they wasn't used to this long walk, see. They couldn't go for two or three hours without a break. We had this one . . . one of these guards, he would threaten to shoot them if they did not get up and go. He said he would shoot them. He did shoot one.

Marcello: Did you actually witness this?

Bernard: Yes. And when he did that, we decided that we'd better take care of our men. So we used to go and carry some of them, you know--some of the weaker ones. It's funny. The American person can do so much, but there's always certain groups that's a little weaker than others in some respects. Of course, you had some of the fellows who just couldn't hold up.

So anyway, this first day out, we went out with them guys. We said, "We're not going to get with this group at all! The next day we'll kind of work our way out of it." So the next day when they called out so many men for the group, why, we heard what the order was going to be, so we stayed behind. We stayed in with the rest of them, and they got so many out. They'd count them all off, and when they got so many--I don't know how many they had in a group--they'd march out, see. Then they'd call another



group out. They'd take about five-minute intervals or ten-minute intervals, and then they'd start another group out.

What we did, we got out with the next group, and we got on the tail end of this group. We finally worked it out . . . we found out that you could go into various homes on the way there and get some bread. So we'd take turns. One man would sneak out, and he'd get caught. So he'd be sitting down there, and the guard would be giving him the devil and bouncing him around with the rifle butt a little bit--not too much but jostling him around a little bit. Well, while the guard was with him, another guy would sneak out and get in the house, you know. He'd get in the house and say, "Brot, brot!" He'd take soap . . . as I said, he had soap in his Red Cross parcel. You could buy Germany with a cake of soap. You'd give them this soap, and they'd open a great big over, pull out a loaf of bread--warm bread. You'd stick it in your jacket, and you'd sneak out back and get in the line again, see. You'd go on down the road, and you'd pass another German house, and somebody else would get out and do the same thing.

Marcello: In other words, the Germans coveted the soap as much as you coveted the German bread.

Bernard: Yes. By then we were getting into a territory where the German people seemed to be a little bit more friendlier. They never seemed to be . . . never bothered you or shaking shovels at you or spitting or anything on you. You'd go in their home, and they were glad to take care of you. They'd give you food. I mean, we found that the German people as a whole were very, very good. The German population, that is, the men and women . . . the elderly men and the women and children back home did not want this war. We ran into these people and found out that they were sympathetic.

Marcello: At the same time, I think it's also probably true that the Germans realized that the war was soon going to be over, and they weren't going to win it, and they'd better be friendly to you.

Bernard: They were a little frightened, too. They're frightened of you. They don't know what you're liable to do to them. I mean, this big mass of troops was going down the road there, of course, under guard, but they still don't know what you're going to do. They're still a little frightened, but as I say, they were friendly.

Marcello: In the meantime, what's the weather like outside as you were marching?

Bernard: As we're going from one camp to another, we started out in snow. We finally get into a climate where there is no snow, so we have to just throw our sleds away.

Marcello: How long did this march take?

Bernard: One week--about a week. I looked on the map afterwards and I found out . . . it don't seem like that far away. But anyway, it must have been. But anyway, we wind up walking for a week, and they had great big trucks come up with bread on them. They'd give us bread out on the march. You'd get your cut of bread and soup. That's about all you'd get. You'd go on, and finally, as I say, we got into a warmer climate. The first thing you know, you had to give your sleds away; the first thing you know, you had to take off some of those heavy clothes and things you had. You'd drop that until gradually you dropped everything until you were down to just your regular Army jacket and your pants and shoes, and that's about all. You'd throw everything else away. That's what become of that little stove that we made. You finally had to give that up. They're getting too heavy to carry, see, as you're walking day in and day out. For seven days we walked. Finally, we wind up in this camp 3-A at Luckenwalde.

Marcello: Okay, describe the camp at Luckenwalde. What was it like? Describe it from a physical standpoint.

Bernard: This camp was entirely different than the camp we just left. This was in circus tents. They had eight circus tents. They put you all in a circus tent, and you laid on straw. You laid in rows with a center isle, where the center pole of the tent would be. The way I would describe it is that it was just a big circus tent. Then they had an aisle down the center where the poles of the tent would be, and you laid off to the side. You lay in groups. The first group would lay with their heads and their feet against the tent. Then the second row would have their head against the man's head here (gesture) and his feet out in the aisle--a little small aisle--and the next group would be with his feet against your feet. In other words, you were laying head-to-head and feet-to-feet.

Marcello: How big were these circus tents? In other words, how many . . .

Bernard: We had 500 people in this tent laying on this straw in rows. If you were on the end of that row and wanted to come down in the middle of the night to get to the center aisle to get out of the tent to go to the latrine, you had . . . during the night,

you'd hear someone say, "Get off my head!" "Oh, you're on my arm!" They'd be walking up this narrow aisle between this pair of feet, and they'd lose . . . they couldn't find their way. It's pitch dark. They'd be walking at an angle, and they'd walk all over everybody. You're walking all over people. Fortunately, I was only the third man in from the aisle, so I wasn't too bad. I could crawl on my hands and knees and get out.

But now that's where the "GI's" really set in. Everybody in that camp had them in the worst way. Of course, this was from that moving again and disturbing your system and this, that, and the other. Of course, we were eating more bread than anything else. That's all you got on that seven-day jaunt. You really had them bad. You'd get up the next morning, and you'd find clothing out in the . . . outside of the tent--just clothing all messed up. They had to take it off and just throw it. They couldn't make it to the latrine. The latrine was just a big hole in the ground with a stump. . . bough of a tree that you sat on. That was dug by the Russians. There were a lot of Russians in this camp.

Marcello: This must have been a pretty big camp then.

Bernard: This was a big camp. We had Norwegians and Russians, French, English, Serbs, and Americans. There were six nationalities.

Marcello: Now was this more or less a transit camp or . . .

Bernard: No, this was another . . . it was a permanent camp. This is the camp we were finally liberated from. But this is the camp that . . . they'd walked us around so long . . . they didn't know where to put us. They finally wound up putting us in this camp here where, I'd say, all of these other Norwegians and Serbs and all of these other people were already there.

Marcello: Now who was in charge of this camp?

Bernard: Well, the same man's in charge. He was in charge of the camp where they put us. In that camp we also run into the officers' camp. Officers were in that camp, too, in another compound. Well, everybody was wired off. You were all screened off from one another, but you could talk through the fence. That's when I run into some of the first lieutenants and second lieutenants in our outfit that I had been captured with. They had gone their way by the way of the officers thing and wound up in this camp. They had been there maybe . . . oh, I don't know how long before we got there, but we finally come to meet somebody four or five months later.

Marcello: I assume that they had you segregated by nationalities in this camp.

Bernard: Yes, oh, yes. Everything was segregated. Things were getting a little bit better. We were getting two parcels . . . every man was getting one parcel to a man then. As I say, you buddied up. What you do then, you take one parcel and you trade practically everything in that one parcel with a Norwegian's. You give him a can of coffee, which he didn't have. They got parcels from home. Now they were not what you call really prisoners-of-war. They were civilian prisoners. They got parcels from home. They used to get this salami and cheese. We'd trade a can of soluble coffee and maybe something else for a big piece of cheese and a big piece of salami--Norwegian salami and Norwegian cheese. That gave us rations that the Germans gave us plus parcels. We were living like a king there.

You asked about water a little while ago. This thing is what stands out in my mind. I cannot remember the other place because this one here . . . we had one spigot in this whole compound--one spigot for eight tents. There were about 5,000 . . . the whole 5,000 were put in there . . . were marched in there. We had one spigot. We built a trough that went

all the way around. If you wanted a cup of water, if you wanted a bucket of water, if you wanted a hatful of water--whatever you wanted to carry your water in--you had to get in line. No matter how much water you wanted, you had to get in line to get to that spigot because that's all there was. But this trough . . . the water run constantly. It never shut off. The water run through this trench. What you would do. . . then you'd get out there in your clothes . . . well, it wasn't really cold, but it wasn't . . . it wasn't snowing, but it was cold and then would freeze. It would freeze. . . get down to freezing. But you'd get down there. You'd strip yourself of all the clothing, and you'd get out there and wash everything in this trough.

Marcello: Now when you say it's a trough, is it simply a trench dug in the ground?

Bernard: No, it was a wooden trench. All the wood they got . . . they dug out . . . we put all of this wood . . . just a . . . well, you've seen these sluices they have in the gold diggings and things like that. It was one of them things. It was just a wooden trench that went way around and stopped at the other end where the water would lay in there. You'd bath in there, and you'd lay there till your clothes sort of dried



out. Then you came out there, and they were frozen stiff. Then you take them in, and you put them underneath the blanket on that thing you lay on them until they softened up, and then you put them back on again.

We did have one delousing chamber there that we did go to once, I believe, or twice. It never seemed to work. It wasn't like the first one we went to. We used to think, "Well, anyway, we'll get all this lice off us, and we'll get a good night's sleep." You'd get deloused that day and everything like that and put your blanket on that straw. That night you'd have them crawling all over you. I'll tell you, I used to hear the . . . in World War I they used to call them cooties. I don't know where that body lice comes from, but I've had them. They leave sores all over you. They get in your pants and in your waistband where it would be tight against you and all down into your legs and things like that. I mean, you had sores all over you. Itch, scratch . . . you'd lay awake at night just scratching. We were in there from February until April.

Marcello: In the meantime, were you just idling away your time?

Bernard: Well, there we had plenty of room to walk. We had a path just worn out. We'd just walk around that

compound all the time--walk. All you did was really walk. That's the only exercise I did, was walk.

Marcello: In other words, you had barbed wire around this camp. And then within the camp you had circus tents, and in a great many cases there would be barbed wire dividing the various circus tents.

Bernard: No, no. All the circus tents was all for non-coms. We were all in there in one group together. They had so many in each tent. They had eight tents there. But we were all on that one spigot of water. Then you had your barbed wire separating you from the Norwegians. And you had your barbed wire separating you from the officers that we had come in contact with. They were in another section. But they could walk down . . . they were divided down, too, and you'd walk down and talk to them through the barbed wire fence.

Marcello: In other words, everybody wasn't in the circus tents. Maybe the officers had barracks or something of this nature.

Bernard: Oh, they lived a little better than we did, yes. I went through there once. We had to through there once to pick up some Red Cross parcels. They lived better than we did through their barracks.

I understand afterwards that they didn't know

what to do with us, and they put this section up on that end of that camp. The camp was there, but they built on this other end of it just for us to come into because they were lost. They had us walking around, and they didn't know what to do with us.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned the Russians. What role did the Russians play in this camp here at Luckenwalde?

Bernard: The Russians were the ones that liberated us.

Marcello: But did you say there were Russian prisoners-of-war, too?

Bernard: There were Russian prisoners-of-war in this camp, also. But they were allowed to walk around . . . they did all the dirty work. They did everything. They dug all of the trenches, and they dug all the holes to put the empty cans. . . the food cans. They would . . . we were not . . . we were allowed to . . . our Red Cross parcels. . . we took a vote and said that we would divide them amongst all the nationalities in camp. The Norwegians didn't have to have them because they were getting food from home. So they gave them to the Serbians, and they gave them to the Russians. The Germans would not allow us to give the Russians one thing. And the Russians . . . they treated them mean. There was no doubt about that. They beat them and everything else like that. They had them dig all of the latrines, and they made them cover them up and dig new latrines.

They made them dig a big hole where, if you emptied your cans out of food and everything, you'd throw them in this hole. The Russians would be in there down amongst all those cans and stuff and everything, and they'd be sticking their hands in there and licking their fingers. They'd cut their fingers on the edge of the cans and everything with sharp edges. But they would lick that food, and that's the food they got. They gave them very little food.

We got fairly good rations then from the Germans. We got this soup, as I say, and it got to the point where the soup was terrible. It was nourishing in a way, but it wasn't. It was just water. So one day the head man--the sergeant--come in and he said, "Fellows, I want to know. They just called me up down there, and they want to know if you people would like to have meat in your soup." (Chuckle) oh, everybody went, "Oh, sure! Sure!" He said, "Okay, it'll be horse meat." Well, that didn't make any difference.

So as I say, there we were more strict than anything else. You got a bigger group when you went for your noonday feast, so to speak. If you were in a French group, you got the top of the soup, which was just the broth. Then, of course, you went to the

tail end of the line, and your group went last the next time. When you were last, that was the best place to be because you were down in the bottom of the barrel then, and that's where all the horse meat was. It sunk to the bottom. You'd get big chunks of meat. I even got a big leg bone one day. So I ate horse meat, and I thought it was delicious. I enjoyed it.

As I say, when we used to go out to these different places to be deloused and everything, we'd dig up these rutabagas. Rutabagas grew wild over there practically. I mean, that was their staple food-- that and potatoes. So we used to eat these raw rutabagas, and we'd cook them up, too. Most of them would eat them rather raw. I never liked rutabagas that well, and I won't eat one today.

But between the parcels and the Germans' allotment that they gave us and the rations that they gave us and the things we traded for with the Norwegians and the rutabagas and the potatoes, we had a pretty good diet in that camp. The only thing, as I say, is that we didn't have very good living quarters like we did in the camp we left. They were barracks. Here we are in a big circus tent with all this straw and all the cooties and everything else.

Marcello: Fortunately, it was getting warmer, so the cold might not have been much of a problem as time went on.

Bernard: No, of course, then . . . as I said, we moved in February. We got there a week later. We were about in the middle of February when we arrived there, and, of course, it wasn't as cold as where we left. But it was still . . . it wasn't snowing anymore. It didn't snow as much there. In fact, it didn't snow any. But it had been down to freezing weather, where your stuff would freeze when you stood out there in the cold and washed yourself and went in there. It felt good. I mean, it was good. And you could get out and walk around more at this camp than you could at the other one. So it had its good points in one respect that the other camp didn't. But we didn't have the living quarters that we had in the other camp, see.

Marcello: Did you mention awhile ago that theft was a greater problem here?

Bernard: Yes, right here, and more than ever. I don't know why, but it seemed to be.

Marcello: That's interesting. I wonder why. From what you've said, their rations were perhaps even better.

Bernard: They were getting better and better, but we had quite a few people that just . . . they couldn't control themselves. They had been hungry for so long that

they were more . . . they were eating more now than ever, and they wanted more. Yes, we used to have them walking around there . . . quite a few of them with signs on. They had stolen the day before and this, that, and the other, and they were ostracized for a certain length of time.

Marcello: Were you still exercising a certain amount of military discipline while you were a prisoner-of-war?

Bernard: Well, you had American discipline. Oh, yes, you were under American discipline. That GI sergeant had everything. . . no, you didn't salute or anything like that. You didn't have to do anything like that or anything, but you had to live up to American standards and keep yourself clean to the best of your ability. Of course, some people grew beards and things like that. As I say, I used to use that tea to shave with. I shaved. I always liked to be shaved. I never was much for a beard. But some people grew beards.

Marcello: I would assume that the less hair you had, the least likely you were to have any of these body critters on you.

Bernard: You cut each other's hair and things like that. You kept yourself clean. That was stressed when you were first brought in the first time. They

stressed that you're not going to have everything like you have it at home, and you've got to do these things to the best of your ability with what you have. Keep yourself as neat as you possibly can; keep yourself clean at all times. And he would like to have you clean-shaven. The majority of them . . . there were only maybe a few who wore beards, but most of them are clean-shaven. In them days it seemed that them types of people more or less didn't like beards like they do today. Youngsters today are a little different than we were. But we always seemed to be more or less a clean-shaven type of person.

Marcello: It was quite obvious that the war would soon be over and that the Germans were going to be losing it. Did you notice any changes in the guards--in their attitudes, in their actions, and things of that nature?

Bernard: Well, them guards there in that camp were . . . well, I'd say all the guards were fairly friendly. They were about the same there, too. They knew that things were getting close.

As I say, then we had an underground radio that wouldn't quit. We knew the very next day that President Roosevelt had died. He died on April 12.



We knew it the next morning. We had already gotten all of that information. We'd place guards around the various tent flaps and things like that and see that nobody came around. They'd tell the Orders of the Day: Stalin said that his troops were at such-and-such a place, and they'll be here; and the American troops are so far. We knew when they were moving up and moved up to the . . . finally as far as they ever got was that river. We knew when they were moving up and when we were moving. They were closing in all around us. The Americans were coming from one side and the Russians from another.

Marcello: But you really didn't note too much of a change in the attitude of the German guards.

Bernard: No, they stayed just about the same. They were friendly. Well, maybe they were a little bit more. I don't know. As I say, I never did have any trouble with the German guards. As long as you didn't upset them in any way except . . . as I say, we did do things to confuse them and things like that, but that never really made them mad too much. They'd scratch their heads trying to figure out what was going on, see. And finally, in time they'd find out, and they'd laugh. They weren't bad. But these new guards that we had there were practically the same

ones that had come along with us. They had all traveled the same route that we did for seven days. They were on that road for seven days, too.

Marcello: This camp was still being run by the Army, I gather.

Bernard: Oh, yes, even more because now we were in a camp where there were officers.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that you were at this camp when you heard the news of Roosevelt's death. Did this effect the prisoners in any way?

Bernard: Well, we were worried because quite a few of us wasn't sure about Harry Truman at all. I mean, we just figured that he was weak. We always felt that Roosevelt . . . when he sat at all those and things like that. Of course, we heard all of these things about the conferences when Stalin and Churchill and Roosevelt got together, and that if it wasn't for Roosevelt we would have never held that group together at all because he was the stabilizing influence of the whole outfit, I mean, of Churchill and Stalin. He controlled them. I think he governed them, really. I don't think he let Stalin get too much on him, or even Churchill for that matter. But now that he was gone, what was going to happen? We're going to put a new man in there, Harry Truman. We didn't have too much respect for him because . . . I don't

know about the people themselves, but I had a man in our outfit who was a colonel whose name was Truman, and he was related to Harry Truman. I don't remember . . . I think he was his cousin or nephew or something. He wasn't a brother, I don't believe. He wasn't that close. And we never did like him. That was that group that was captured along with us in our outfit. But we just had a feeling that he wasn't quite strong enough to combat Stalin and things like that.

Marcello: Did you notice any satisfaction or anything of that nature on the part of the Germans when they found out about Roosevelt's death?

Bernard: I don't recall just what feelings they had or anything. I really don't . . .

Marcello: Now that . . .

Bernard: . . . because, see, that was on April 12 that he died. The Germans were then getting ready to pull out. Of course, we didn't exactly know that, but that's exactly what they were doing.

Marcello: Now that it was quite obvious that the war was winding down and that Germany would have to capitulate, did you ever feel that the Germans might hold you as hostages in order to get the best terms possible?

Bernard: Well, rumor had it that . . . we had heard these rumors along that Hitler ordered . . . decreed that all the prisoners-of-war should be killed. That was his idea. He wanted everybody killed. He wanted us all put to death and do away with us all, see. Of course, that was a rumor, and, as I say, the German troops . . . if that was true, it never did happen because the German soldiers would never do it. But there was rumors that he had ordered that all American prisoners should be . . . well, all prisoners-of-war should be killed regardless of whether they're Americans or what they were for that matter. But that never did transpire. That never happened.

Marcello: I would assume that there were no thoughts of escape in this particular camp.

Bernard: I don't know whether there were or not because, as I say, we were practically all new in this camp. We had to more or less get ourselves oriented to what was going on around us and things like that. We would hear these day-to-day reports on the underground radio that the troops were . . . Russians were closing in on one end and the Allies on the other and this, that, and the other. The English and

and the French and the . . . we were sure that the war would end shortly. As I say, Roosevelt died on April 12, and on April 22, ten days later, we were liberated by the Russians.

Marcello: Okay, describe the events leading up to your liberation, and go into as much detail as you can remember about this.

Bernard: Well, we woke up Friday morning. The gates were open, and the German guards up in the towers up there were. . . the machine guns were gone. There was nobody around. We were there by ourselves.

Marcello: But you had no inkling that the Russians were that close.

Bernard: No. The Germans had pulled out. They had left us all by ourselves. This was on a Friday. So we tore down the barbed wire fences, and everybody got together and had a glorious time.

We went to town down in Luckenwalde, which wasn't too many kilometers down the road. I've forgotten how many. We went to town there and got acquainted with some of the German people in our own way. We went into some homes, and they fed us and treated us nice.

The Russians would come around. They got all of these motorcycles and bicycles, and they went

crazy. I guess they never had bicycles and motor-cycles in Russia because they just went hog wild. They were like a bunch of kids. They were just running things all over the street, all over the pavements and everything there, fell down and laughed and got hurt and skinned their knees and laughed and had a good time. They'd come to these houses, and when they knew that we were in there, in the house, they'd go on. They wouldn't bother them. But we heard that the next night. . . after that night when we had left and gone back to camp, they would come in there and loot the houses and rape the women and things like that. They were bad.

Marcello: Did you have very much contact with the Russians? Now obviously, they actually didn't liberate this camp. You just woke up one morning, and the Germans were gone.

Bernard: Yes, we were on our own. That's true. But that was on a Friday. We went to town on a Friday and Saturday. Sunday at ten o'clock in the morning, April 22, the Russians come in with their half-tracks and their tanks. Big, stout bruisers of women were driving them things. All of the Russians went hog wild. Of course, everybody went crazy. But all of the Russians, they just hopped on them half-tracks

and things like that, and they went on to combat. Us, the first thing we wanted to know is when we'll be going home. The Americans wanted to know when they were going home. But we were liberated on April 22, 1945.

Marcello: By the Russians.

Bernard: By the Russians on Sunday.

Marcello: Okay, what happened at that point?

Bernard: Then they decided that they would keep us captives. We were free to roam around, and they fed us good. They brought in great big tubs of butter, great big tubs of cheese, all kinds of . . . different kinds of food. They fed us. But they had a ruling that everyone that they had repatriated was going to go back by the way of the Dardenelles, goes through the Mediterranean, go back through the way of . . . they would be paid by the United States government so much a head for each American soldier they liberated. So we all got together and . . .

Marcello: In other words, they were going to send you home the long way.

Bernard: That's right, and they were going to charge for everyone they gave the United States government. So we got together, and we found out that the Americans were not too far from us on another route. I don't

know how they did it, but I guess they sent somebody out the back way somewheres. Anyway, they got these trucks. The trucks came down. We drew lots. Certain groups would move out each day. And Monday morning these trucks came in the woods in the back there. We used to go through the woods and get on the trucks and be carried back.

Marcello: Now these were American trucks.

Bernard: Yes, these were American soldiers.

Marcello: Did the Russians know what was going on?

Bernard: They didn't know this was going on. It was way in the back. You'd go way back through the woods and then go back out. They were all up in the front there in their different compounds they had up there, where all the German soldiers used to be, where all the high command of that camp were. So every day there'd be a certain number of men to go out. I didn't go out for about ten days before I drew my lot. It took me about ten days to get out.

But what had happened . . . we were just dwindling down. Everybody would be roaming around the camp. Nobody was paying any attention. The Russians didn't pay any attention to you, but they didn't figure you were going to get very far anyway, see. All the time we've been sneaking out the back. So finally,



I got out of there.

I heard the next day that the Russians had found it out. They come down where the trucks . . . the Russians went into the woods and stopped the trucks and stopped the Americans from getting on them--what was left--and they sent the trucks back empty-handed. They went back to General Hodges'. . . I believe it was General Hodges' 9th Army. He come down himself in his jeep, and he just told the Russians where to head in. And with that they loaded the rest of them GI's and took them out.

We went back . . . I don't know exactly where that was, but we went back to the delousing camp there where they would greet you, and you'd take all your clothes off.

Marcello: Is this still someplace in Germany, or were you back in France?

Bernard: Still in Germany. We're still in Germany. We went back through the . . . what is the . . . I can't remember the name of the river where the Allies stopped.

Marcello: The Elbe?

Bernard: The Elbe, yes. We went back in that direction to the Elbe River and went into our American lines, and there's where we were greeted. You'd take all your clothes off and just throw them in a pile.

They'd burn all that stuff up. A man stands there with a big mask on. He's all covered with white, and they spray that delousing powder all over you. After you had that on for a little while, then you'd go in and take a shower. Oh, boy, it feels great! Then you'd get new GI clothing. You're back under GI command now completely. We were there for awhile.

Then they moved us out to Hildesheim, Germany. That was on May 8. I was in Hildesheim, Germany, waiting to be flown out of there to Rheims, France, when the war ended. That's where I was. On May 8, I was in Hildesheim, Germany. They flew us out on the way to Rheims, France. At Rheims we stayed in an outdoor camp there and had the Germans feed us. They made the German troops cook the food and everything and then feed us. Of course, it was all American food, but they did all the dirty work.

Marcello: Now was this where Camp Lucky Strike was?

Bernard: No, no, no. That's the first transit camp on our way back. The good point about that was . . . they issued you a mess kit. You already got your mess kit and everything. You've got your GI mess kit and everything issued to you. When you got to the end of the line and you got your food, you ate your food and you just took your mess kit and threw it on a

pile, and the Germans had to wash it out. You didn't have to wash it. That was something (chuckle). You didn't have to wash your own mess kit for the first time.

Marcello: Did you have to guard your diet at this stage? In other words, did they just open up the commissary to you and let you have what you wanted?

Bernard: No, no. Everything was just like you were out on . . . they were field rations, is what they were. It was all field rations.

Marcello: In other words, you weren't getting any special food or anything of that nature yet.

Bernard: Not yet, no, but we were getting what the GI . . . but it wasn't any more C-rations or A-rations or anything like that. It was cooked food, but it was just like you'd get in a . . . it was a field ration. What I mean, everything was cooked in this big cooker and everything like that. You'd go by and they slopped it in your mess kit, and they'd put the pudding right in the middle of the mashed potatoes and everything else like that. It was the same old thing. You're back under GI rule now. Anyway, we stayed there overnight.

They finally put us on a train from Rheims, France, to Camp Lucky Strike. On the way medical officers

and non-coms and everything go through and check you all out and look you all over and give you an examination. Of course, I've got spots all over me from malnutrition and things like that, and all this lice and bites and everything. So they put a tag on you. When they put a tag on you, you know what you're going to do. You're going to wind up in the hospital. So I got a tag. So I thought I'd be smart. I took the tag off because I knew what was going to happen. I'm with all this group of people that I had known after that first time that I was separated from my own group. I got in with this new group. Then my own group caught up with me. I caught up with the officers in the last camp. Here I'm with everybody I knew. I knew if I got this tag I'd go to the hospital. I'm going to lose out with everybody else.

I took the tag off, but I wasn't smart. A man comes through again and caught me without the tag. He put the tag on me, and I wound up in the hospital. I stayed there for two weeks. Everybody that I had come into that camp with was all gone. I was then again with another group of new people--people I didn't know. They were coming in from camps all over.

I had forgotten one thing way back. When they interrogated us, they put the non-coms in one camp, put the officers in another camp, and they sent all the privates to what they called a commando camp. They had to work. According to the Geneva Convention, they were compelled to work. They were supposed to get more rations than the others because we didn't do anything. We were too lazy. They used to say the non-coms were too lazy to work. So now all these commandos were coming in from all over--every camp. All the camps then were being liberated by the Russians and Americans and everything else. They were just getting in here.

Of course, as I say, on May 8, I was on my way back. The war was over. Everybody was getting out, and they were coming into Lucky Strike. They were just piling in there like mad. Now Lucky Strike . . . we had chicken, which I understand back in the States during them days was very scarce. We had chicken three meals a day--breakfast, dinner, supper. We had chicken, hot chocolate and chocolate milk, milk, eggs, and everything to fatten you up.

I was in the hospital for awhile. They got me straightened out. I wasn't too bad. I don't know. I just had a few marks. They were just a

little bit worried about me, but everything was fine.

Finally, two weeks later, they sent me down to LeHavre. While I was at LeHavre waiting to board a ship that had docked the day before, I heard all these fellows hollering over the rail, "Watch them French girls," and this, that, and the other. I said, "Gosh, that man's familiar! I know him from someplace." But I couldn't figure out who he was. So I asked somebody. It happened to be Victor Mature, the movie actor. He was chief petty officer aboard this ship. This ship had just come from California. It was on its maiden cruise, shakedown cruise. There was never any soldiers or anybody on board except the crew. We were the first GI's on board coming back.

We came back in five days. In five days we came back from LeHavre to Boston in the rain. Well, my job on duty there was to be in charge of the coffee and the dishwasher. We had coffee on all the time, all night long. I worked at night. We had hammocks on board this ship and had two men to a hammock. The man that worked nights naturally slept in the day. The other man in the hammock, he worked in the day and slept at night. That's how we had to double up to get everybody on board to get them back.

General Eisenhower did come to one of the camps, Camp Lucky Strike, and said to us that he appreciated all we had done for the country and this, that, and the other, and that they were going to do the best they could for us to get us back to the States, and that we might be a little put out because we had to double up and things like that to get everybody back as fast as they could. But we had to make these sacrifices. He figured that since we had sacrificed during the war as being prisoners-of-war, then we could sacrifice another day or two--it wouldn't hurt--which we did. We doubled up, as I say. This other non-com had the hammock with me. . . shared the hammock with me. He worked in the daytime and I slept, and I worked at night.

All I had to do was see that all the dishes got cleaned. The sailors would come down, and they would eat. Then the GI's would be fed. Then they had the GI's clean up. Again, we had the system where the poor pfc.'s and privates had to do all the work. The non-coms did all the bossing. All I did was to see that the dishes went through the dishwasher alright and came out the other side. The poor privates had to clean up all the mess and put them in there. My job was just to see that everything ran smoothly in

the mess hall. That was it. On a ship it's called the galley.

But anyway, it rained practically all the way back to Boston. We landed in Boston. Of course, the Red Cross meets us there, Salvation Army, what have you, with coffee and donuts and things like that.

And they put us on a train in Boston and sent us out to a place called Camp Miles Standish on the outskirts of Boston. I don't know exactly where it was in Massachusetts. But we got there. Of course, we got royal treatment and everything like that, got fed good at the mess hall. Of course, we could go down to the PX and get anything you wanted.

Oh, I'm a little ahead of my story. While we were at Camp Lucky Strike, we got a little bit of money for our back pay. We got it in French francs. Then when we left there, it was changed into American money. And so when we got here we had a little bit of money in our pockets--not much but we had a little bit.

Anyway, we went to this camp, and, of course, went to the PX that first night at camp with all these new people that I knew and met coming back on board ship and this, that, and the other. We went there



and drank our fill of beer. I'm telling you, we were a sick bunch of kids the next morning. That beer wasn't any good--drinking that on top of an empty stomach. Our stomach had shrunk up too much. Boy, we were sick.

Anyway, then there's where they segregated you again. Now all those that came from the West Coast would be shipped out partially. I think they went to Camp Pendleton. I'm not sure. I think that's where they went--most of them--out there on the West Coast. Some went down here to camps in Texas. But me, coming from Pennsylvania at that time, I was sent to Camp Dix. In Camp Dix they then gave you all new clothing. That's where I received an Eisenhower jacket, which I wore until I wore it out. I got my duffle bag loaded up again with all new clothing and everything like that and was sent home for seventy-nine days of recuperation furlough.

I came from Camp Dix to Philadelphia and got a taxi in Philadelphia and came home to my mother. That was the first time my mother knew exactly . . . she had received a letter from the Red Cross telling her I was a prisoner-of-war. For seventy-nine days I just . . . I drew all my back pay, and I rode around the country. I just had a grand old time. I was in

a hotel here in Fort Worth, Texas, on VJ Day, which is August 16, which also happened to be my birthday. I spent a little time here, and then I moved on and went to various parts of the country.

When I finally got back at the end of the seventy-nine-day recuperation furlough, they sent me to Atlantic City, New Jersey, where I then went into a hotel there and lived there in fine style. In them days they were getting about twenty-five or thirty dollars a day. Of course, today it would be much more. But in them days it was twenty-five or thirty dollars a day. We had our room there to ourselves. We lived on the fat of the land. We'd come down in the main dining room and have them waiters wait on you and give you anything you want. They had a menu there that wouldn't quit. You could eat as much of it as you wanted. You could have your milk and your pancakes and your eggs and your bacon and your oatmeal or cornflakes or whatever. You could eat all that at one time for breakfast if you wanted to. If you could eat it, eat it. But if you could not eat it, don't order it because they didn't want it wasted. Everything you ordered you had to eat. But you could order anything you wanted. You had a menu that any civilian would have. It was wonderful.

I stayed there for a couple of weeks where they gave us an orientation lecture on just what to expect now in the United States since the war was over and this, that, and the other.

They finally figured out where they're going to send you. They wound up sending me to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. I was put in charge there of sending out these communiques, orders of the day, and all that kind of stuff. Of course, I had been a printer in my younger days. They finally got around to seeing I was one, and they decided, why, they'd give me a job like that. So I was in charge of mimeograph machines and all them things. I'd order out them things. Another sergeant and I were in charge . . . these new recruits were coming in. They were going through this camp being inducted and everything. They did all the work they can. They'd run all the machines, and we'd just stand around and make sure the machines run right. When it got dirty, we had one of them guys clean it up. So we used to take turns going home. He'd go home for three or four days, and I'd work for three or four days. Then he'd come back, and I'd go for three or four days, and then I'd come back.

Finally, we got enough points . . . they figured

I had enough points to discharge me. I got discharged exactly one year to the day I was captured. I was separated from the Army on November 18, 1945. I was captured on November 18, 1944--one year to the day.

Marcello: In looking back upon your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what did you learn about yourself?

Bernard: Well, I don't know. When it first started out, I was frightened as anybody else would be, naturally, and not knowing what you're going through. Then I went through it with flying colors in one sense of the word. Of course, I was in a nervous condition. I mean, my nerves had the best of me for a long, long time.

But I found out that I could . . . I got through with that . . . and I had gone through the depression days with no food. I was only a kid twenty-one years old back in 1929 and 1930. In the depression days I lived then on a can of beans--a half a can of beans today and a half a can tomorrow. I went through them depression days. I come out of that without too much trouble.

I went through the war, although I wasn't in combat. I was in the service not quite five years altogether--about four years and ten months. I went through prisoner-of-war days, which, again, is not

eating and knowing what it was to do without food.

I come back here, and I seen how the other half of the world lives. I still say today that if the young people today could see how people in the other parts of the world live, they would never, never be the way they are. We American people waste more food than them people over there can eat. I've seen them people in Holland . . . them little kids in Holland with bare feet, no shoes. Some had wooden shoes. Some didn't have any shoes at all. They were begging for food. You'd share your food with them. I saw the Russians not being fed by the Germans. I've seen ourselves living on short rations. Then you were a little bitter, but you must remember that the German people didn't have it either. I mean, the war was in their country. If the war ever was in the continent of this United States, the people would know what it is to live. It's terrible. At nights you hear that siren going off and air raids. The air raids are coming over and planes dropping bombs on the countryside and things like that.

It's something that . . . as I said, I would never trade my experience for a million dollars, but I'd never want to go through it again. But it was wonderful. I had good times. I had times where

I'd laugh. I had a lot of fun even in prison camp. I've seen people get killed. I've killed people myself. I was bitter for awhile. But I got over it and come back and come back to this country and thought, "This country don't owe me a living at all. They don't owe me a thing." I did my share, what little it was. People did more than I did. People didn't do as much as I did, but we got this country through the war.

I come back. I had met this young lady here when I was in this part of the country. I sent for her in Philadelphia, and we got married in 1946. We've been married thirty years now. She had two children. Her husband passed away when they were only youngsters. One was one year old, and the other one was a little over two. They never knew their father. So their grandmother was taking care of them.

I come down to this part of the country for one year to see what it was like. I had been down here during the war but it wasn't much then. Of course, it was pretty rowdy with all these soldiers from all of these camps around. I came down here for one year. I was a printer. I wound up getting a job with Star-Telegram. I stayed there for twenty-six

years. I am now retired from Star-Telegram. I'm not a millionaire, but I've got everything. Even at my age now, I don't drive a car. I haven't ever driven a car in my life. I never owned a car until I came to this part of the country. I now have a '73 Chevrolet out there. Everything's clear. I'm happy.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Bernard, I want to thank you very much for taking time to talk with me. You've said a lot of very interesting and, I think, very valuable things.

Bernard: I hope I have. As I say, it's been so long, and there's certain things that stand out more in my mind. As I said, we talked about that water. I wasn't going to say anything about that. I couldn't remember where that water was except for that one spigot. I'll never forget that spigot. Never in my life will I ever forget that spigot in that one camp. But, I mean, there's certain things that stand out in my mind.

Of course, when I came back down here, I got acquainted with all people in this part of the country. I got involved in this American ex-prisoner-of-war business, and we had a convention here. Then I got into the national organization and became a national

officer. I've worked through that all these years. With them I went to New York and Birmingham, Alabama, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Tocomo, Washington, and San Antonio. We had conventions in all of these places. I'm thinking about maybe going to the convention this year. It's again for the third time now in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in July.

Marcello: Well, again, I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us. I'm sure that future historians are going to find your comments most valuable.