

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Glynn Dewey Hull

Date of Interview: March 7, 2013

National Museum of the Pacific War

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Interview in progress.

Charlie Simmons: This is Charlie Simmons. Today is the 7th of March, 2013, and I am interviewing Mr. Glynn Hull. We are in...Kerrville, Texas. This interview is taking place, uh, excuse me, this interview is in support for the Nimitz Education and Research Center, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

Glynn, if you would, please, state your name, your place of birth and your date of birth, and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Hull: Glynn Dewey Hull, G-l-y-n-n Dewey, D-e-w-e-y, H-u-l-l.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: Date of birth, December the 22nd...

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: 1920.

Charlie Simmons: 1920.

Mr. Hull: And I was born in Prairie Township, Taintor, Iowa in Mahaska County.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and what sort of circumstances...were you on a farm, in a small town, big city...?

Mr. Hull: No, it was all farming community.

Charlie Simmons: Farming community?

Mr. Hull: Uh, yeah, farm...land we lived on was...mostly out of a section my great-grandfather, a Civil War veteran, gave to his children; he had quite a number of children.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And my grandfather also purchased a part of that land, and we were raised on a hundred- and twenty-acre farm called The Old Garner (sp?) Farm, and went to the Garner School which was a two-story school building that one acre of ground was taken out of the land that we lived on, so we actually came down to a hundred and nineteen acres.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. So, you were the...landlords for the school property...sort of. So, you went to...all eight...was it eight...eight grades in the school?

Mr. Hull: Well, I went to...started in the eighth grade until we got burned out in the 1934 draught.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And...went down to a much poorer farm further south.

Charlie Simmons: And...no brothers and sisters?

Mr. Hull: I had one older sister born in 1919 by the name of Law (sp?), and the farm that she married into is one of the historical farms of Mahaska County. It was a...under the name...one name was Powell, but there was another name that I can't recall...that's a historical farm that's been in the family since before the Civil War.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: And her name was Law; she married a John Q. Powell, and I was the second and she was born in...on April the 22nd of 1919. I was born December the 22nd, 1920. I had twin brothers and sisters born June 3rd, 1923.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And through a series of miscarriages and finally my mother had her last one, Marilyn Leigh (sp?), born July 3rd, 1934

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and during this time, you were growing up on a farm and you were doing the typical farm chores? Excuse me.

Mr. Hull: Yes, it was a small dairy farm; we milked cows and...and...on this hundred-and twenty-acre farm.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And...we raised a few hogs and a few chickens, but basically it was dairy cows.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, did you have like a...truck garden, you raised your vegetables?

Mr. Hull: Yes, we had two truck gardens, but we never were able to raise all the potatoes to get us through a winter. We always ran out of potatoes usually along about March or April, and we had to buy potatoes for the rest of the year.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: We couldn't raise enough potatoes.

Charlie Simmons: So, did you...did your...mother can...uh...

Mr. Hull: Oh, my mother canned an awful lot; yes, she canned...we canned...we sold corn, sweet corn, and we sold sweet corn and tomatoes to the Marshall Canning Company in Oskaloosa (sp?), Iowa. So, we had...and we raised...usually one acre of wheat which we took to Pella, Iowa to make...into flour.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and you raised your own wheat.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, we had an acre of wheat.

Charlie Simmons: And had it milled.

Mr. Hull: And had it milled.

Charlie Simmons: That's...that's sort of unusual. I...I've never heard of that.

Mr. Hull: Well...

Charlie Simmons: Usually people just buy their flour outright.

Mr. Hull: Oh, my great...my grandfather started a flour mill in Oskaloosa, Iowa, and his...first daughter married a Wake and he took it over and it's known as a Wake's Feed Mill and it's in operation today.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so you had sort of an inside...track to the...to the flour milling processes.

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, very interesting. Okay, so talk to me a little about your schooling then, uh...

Mr. Hull: Well, my schooling was a two room school, and...it was divided into halves with the second part was a four-foot raise in elevation with steps up to it and with screens removed on both sides...for stage productions. So, we would put on plays, and the community would have spelling bees, spelling contests. And my mother...Leonard...Leonard Johnson, a neighbor and my mother were the...usually the winners of the spelling contests.

Charlie Simmons: Oh (chuckles). That's...that's interesting. Uh, okay, so well...what kind of home life did you have; did you...did you have friends over to the farm and did you go visit your neighboring farms or...?

Mr. Hull: Well, I...in Taintor they had a two story building that's called The Oddfellows Hall, and that was a...that town only had around sixty residents, and so, that...that old town hall in Taintor, Iowa was the place where we put on local plays. And my dad was a great participant in that; he was in every single one, every single play they had. They put these on annually. And the Garners, uh, they were great in that, too, and the Cranstons.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. And do you play any musical instruments at all?

Mr. Hull: My dad and his cousins were all musicians, and my...dad's family were musical; they had a piano which was a little (unintelligible).

Charlie Simmons: (Cough), yeah, yeah.

Mr. Hull: And my dad's...mother had a sister that married a Shaw (sp?); she had eight or nine children and one of them played a musical instrument.

Charlie Simmons: Oh?

Mr. Hull: Dad's family...he played a banjo and his brother played a mandolin, and Dad also played the Bones. I don't where...you know what that is today? But he had a pair and they fit in between his...forefinger and the one next to it on each of your hand, and he'd play them back and forth as a...like a drum instrument. He also played a...a washboard.

Charlie Simmons: I've seen people do that with spoons...would play the spoons.

Mr. Hull: Well, these...these are what you call Bones...rattle the Bones.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, uh huh.

Mr. Hull: In those days, there was quite a few. And the Shetawqua was a traveling show that Shetawqua (sp?) was a traveling show that...

Charlie Simmons: Yes!

Mr. Hull: ...that traveled in those days, and dad also sang in the Shetawqua.

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Mr. Hull: He had a bar...good baritone voice.

Charlie Simmons: Well, its quite a bit of talent there in that...

Mr. Hull: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: ...in that (unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: (Unintelligible), and his next to the youngest sister, Velva (sp?) married a McDowell (sp?), was an excellent piano player, and they all played by ear.

Charlie Simmons: Now what...now what about your generation? You, your brothers and...sisters...

Mr. Hull: My...my brother was a musician in the family...

Charlie Simmons: ...your brothers and sisters?

Mr. Hull: ...and he could play an accordion, a saxophone, a banjo and about anything else he picked up he could play, and he played by ear. The day...year he went into the service, he and I went in the service, Dad said to the family, there was five of us, "I'm going to be a little extra special on the boys because they may never come back," and my brother...never did come back. He was killed and buried in Nijmegen, Holland in the Airborne.

Charlie Simmons: Oh. So, well we will...we will be talking about that a little later I think then. Uh, okay so, what...so to...to go back to your schooling a little bit, now how far did you go?

Mr. Hull: I went through the first half of the...in 1934 the first half of my eighth grade and we got burnt out and couldn't re-rent the farm; the farm was sold out from under us...

Charlie Simmons: Right.

Mr. Hull: ...(unintelligible) a farmer. My granddad owned that farm and he lost it in there. He one time owned four hundred acres and eventually lost it all; the last in 1938 he lost the old homestead.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm! Boy, that's too bad. So...so you had no more...schooling after...after that or...?

Mr. Hull: No, we went to Eddyville and uh, it was a...in a real rough...coal-mining area. The school was called Hard Scrabble. I was the only one in the eighth grade, so I got top honors in...the eighth grade.

Charlie Simmons: (Laughter), that's...uh,...number one student!

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: Uh, I...I'm having a hard time writing that I'm laughing so hard.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Okay, so...after that what...what was your...what...what happened to you?

Mr. Hull: I started to school in Eddyville, Iowa at the age of twelve years and I weighed seventy-five pounds.

Charlie Simmons: After working on the farm...all those...? So, seventy-five pounds?

Mr. Hull: I was twelve years old; I was a runt.

Charlie Simmons: Uh, okay! So, you must have started school pretty young to...

Mr. Hull: I started at five years old.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Okay so, then...well, tell...talk a little bit about your life there then. What...what were you doing there?

Mr. Hull: Well, we were on a hundred- and eighty-acre farm south that belonged to my uncle and to my uncle by marriage, J. H. Wake, and we had...we moved late in March, so it was pretty late in the year. And it was...we moved...most of the livestock, we moved...driving down the road a distance of...uh, twenty-eight miles.

Charlie Simmons: Now, were these dairy cattle that you were...you were driving?

Mr. Hull: We were...drove...my brother and I herded them on our ponies, and...we started as early...we started around four o'clock in the morning, and...late that night...we made that distance; we drove those cattle awful hard.

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Mr. Hull: We drove them awful hard; it was a...they said we couldn't do it. They said we couldn't drive that, and...those cattle that far in that short of time, but we did it.

Charlie Simmons: Now, you were on a...public highway or road?

Mr. Hull: Well, actually...they were just paving good in those days.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: In that fact, the road from Eddyville to...Oskaloosa hadn't been paved yet; that was still a gravel road. And the five...three and a half miles past Eddyville where we lived was a dirt road; it was dirt after we got to...Eddyville.

Charlie Simmons: Okay so...so when you got to the farm, uh, do you...

Mr. Hull: They had...did have a little gravel and shale.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Now, I...I don't want to...'cause people can look back and say, "Oh, we had a gravel road," that's true.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But all of it wasn't; only about the last half was dirt, and then it was...we had a little shale, and it was...in the early days, they used shale before they...and then they came to gravel and then they went to rock.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: That's...that's a progression of the...the...road treatment.

Charlie Simmons: And the...there wasn't a whole lot of traffic then, you...

Mr. Hull: No, no.

Charlie Simmons: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: No, no.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, so...

Mr. Hull: Very little traffic, and...

Charlie Simmons: So, you didn't have to worry about...

Mr. Hull: After we got to Oskaloosa, I don't think we saw a single car. We got through Eddyville and then was...the farm...we lived on.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and what was life like there after...for you after...after you got moved there? You're...you're getting older now and you're...

Mr. Hull: That was the year of the draught, so our garden, we got in late and it didn't produce. And the only thing to produce...and Mother had canned a lot, we mentioned that before, we must have...taken several hundred jars of applesauce for one thing and a lot of tomatoes when we moved. And...and

we used the vehicle for a good share of this. Now, I don't want to...it wasn't all on foot and horseback.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Most of it was by vehicle. We had a...had an old Ford. But when we got there, the only...we had zero garden, it was that dry, and it was particularly dry where we lived. We could see it rain across the river once in a while, but...and the river ran by our place.

Charlie Simmons: So, you were on the river?

Mr. Hull: Yes, we were on the Des Moines River.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: But we had a big crop of gooseberries, and Mom had all that applesauce canned. Dad would always joke through it and he'd say, "Pass the salvation of the nation," and that's when we passed the applesauce.

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckle)

Mr. Hull: Called it the salvation of the nation. And we moved...we had several bags of flour...that got us through the...and we also had a recipe for homemade grapenuts...that we made from the flour.

Charlie Simmons: Huh!

Mr. Hull: And we had a...a few bags we'd trade for...for different types of flour, uh, buckwheat flour. And we moved our chickens, and they didn't do well, so we ran out of eggs...mostly; eggs are a very short commodity. My dad would say, "Pass the salvation of the nation."

Charlie Simmons: Huh.

Mr. Hull: And we fished in the river and the river produced harvest of a lot of carp. And we would go down that backbone and cut out that mud strip and Mother would make that carp in the oven, and it was delicious!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well, it's...could be...just a good white meat; you get through the bones and things. So, it's pretty tough times, and then we're talking now about what...what year...what span of time...what...what years were...?

Mr. Hull: That was in 1934.

Charlie Simmons: 1934.

Mr. Hull: And Dad, with a hand seater, with a little handle on it that you put around your neck...he sewed fourteen acres of kafir corn, that's a type of milo; they called it kafir corn in those days. It was some type of milo. And that produced well, and that was the only grain...that we produced on that farm...that year was from that kafir corn. Corn, the field corn, by the time it got nearly shoulder high, it was also starting to wither, and we cut it and fed it to the cows...green; what...it had a little green in it, something like insulig (sp?) would be; we fed that, too, until that...and we had about fifty acres of that. But we cut all that corn green and fed it to the cattle. And we finally ran out of foo...uh, feed and we got neighbors to take our cows for the milk and the calves they produced.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: We couldn't sell then because there was no market.

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Mr. Hull: We had one beef-type cow, one beef-type, young cow, that was old enough to breed, but we sold her 'cause she was a beef-type, and Dad got eighteen dollars for her, and she was a...probably would...weighed around a thousand pounds. And when...Dad bought our school supplies in 1934.

Charlie Simmons: Well, what did you do with the fourteen acres of milo?

Mr. Hull: We...that was fed up to the cows.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: So, it was all for cattle feed, and chicken feed, too, I suppose.

Mr. Hull: Well...well, a little of it, yes.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, so...yeah. Yeah, well, it sounds rough days...for awhile there.

Mr. Hull: It was very rough (whispering).

Charlie Simmons: So, how did you...what...what progressed after that? What did...did you stay there for quite a while?

Mr. Hull: It was tough going because even during...Dad was a big, strong man and they had him as a deputy marshal. Eddyville was always known for a rough town because it was a mining town, and they would drink their

homemade concoctions. And there's a man in town called Van Dyke (sp?) that had the funeral home. Odd...odd situation because he had a tent dance with it and he hired Dad for two dollars a night as a bouncer...to throw the drunks out of the tent.

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles), did he have it there at the funeral home?

Mr. Hull: Oh, he had a funeral home.

Charlie Simmons: (Unintelligible) tent on the funeral home?

Mr. Hull: No, the tent was separate, but he just...I heard him say one time...

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: ..., "I don't want to wish any bad luck, but I'd sure enjoy having a funeral for the income."

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, yeah. So after...how many years did...did...were you there...in this location?

Mr. Hull: We were there just one year, and Dad went to his...work for his uncle in the feed mill in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And I carried a...country mail...for the Des Moines Tribune; they used to have two, a Tribune and a Register.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: The Tribune has long been gone, but I carried that and would pick up my papers at the depot and walk up the road toward Oskaloosa, Iowa – that was my route, and a little branch at the roads (unintelligible) ran into it, and I would go about half way to Oskaloosa and even...and I wouldn't get home until after...well, in the fall, I wouldn't get home till after dark...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...in wintertime, and I did that all through my first two years of high school. I'd go down to the depot and that's where I picked up my papers.

Charlie Simmons: So, you walked the whole way?

Mr. Hull: Walked the whole way. And the Sunday, and the Sunday was so heavy that I could only take half of it at a time, and lots of times my younger

brother would help me or...or...and on...on Sundays my dad would also help...to get those papers delivered at...on my Sunday route.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It was too heavy to carry all at one time. But I'd been...well, I probably shouldn't say this, I don't think I will.

Other Person: Well, you're half way there, might as well go the rest of the way.

Mr. Hull: Well, Mother would ask if I would pick up a loaf of bread...out of my paper money, and you could buy a loaf of bread for a nickel. It wasn't the big loaves we have today; it was about...two-thirds of the length, but it would sell for a nickel. And we had...we brought two cows, milk cows, into town, and my younger brother milked...milked those cows and we sold milk.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Five cents a quart.

Charlie Simmons: Hum. Well, so you were in high school then; you went to...two years in high school doing a paper route, and...

Mr. Hull: Then we moved to Oskaloosa, but anyway, my folks moved and left us in town because he worked for my uncle in the mill, so he went to...driv...say...driving...he moved to my grandmother's farm at the edge of Oskaloosa, and my older sister and I was farmed out. My older sister worked Hogue (sp?) Koger (sp?) in a garage, doing housework and cooking and cleaning the house, and I worked for a...fellow that had a little filling station by the name of Doc Norman. And...in the spring, we would...get ready to have his...they called them truck gardens in those days, truck farms?

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Because he had about...just a few acres, less than fourteen in all, and all of it wasn't where the filling station was; he had another...a few...part of that fourteen acres was on the other side of Eddyville. And he'd walk over there and attend it.

Charlie Simmons: So, you're working through high school there, and...did you finish up high school there?

Mr. Hull: (Unintelligible)...just about there. In my junior year, I'd moved back to Oskaloosa 'cause Dad was feeding quite a few hogs then, and we'd get the feed through the...Wakes Feed Mill and we fed hogs the last two years. Well, the last year we fed a lot of hogs; we went to Missouri and bought fifty sows...

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Mr. Hull: ...and we were only on a sixteen acre farm, so the whole thing was just one hog lot.

Charlie Simmons: Hum. You had to buy all your feed from...?

Mr. Hull: Most of it came from...there, and there was Tan Vlack (sp?) Yeast Fed and we had a Tan Vlack feeder with a great big metal handle on it; it would...that...it was shaped in a U-shape; that flap top you could throw back the lids, and we put the Tan Vlack, and that was yeast, and that was...Tan Vlack was the brand of the feed, but it was yeast product. And we would put it with ground wheat. And we bought government wheat to feed those hogs. And Dad fed them three times a day. And we would...he would let us use his old Ford to drive to school, come back at noon and feed them at noon, drive back to school. And after school, we'd go home and feed them the third time. We fed them in open troughs, V-shaped troughs we'd made. And we carried those buckets and those hogs would back you around like a ping pong ball...

Charlie Simmons: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: ...getting that...wheat dumped into those feeders.

Charlie Simmons: Now, were you still a runt?

Mr. Hull: I was...well, I only weighed a hundred and twenty pounds when I graduated from high school. My... my wife always said that I went to work too early 'cause I was (unintelligible) hay when I was eight years old.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Mostly Timothy hay. Dad would give me a rake 'cause I was the oldest boy.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: My brother grew up to be a man; he was six foot, four, and he...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well...so what year did you graduate from high school?

Mr. Hull: 1938.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Now, it's a lot going on in the world then. What...what did you know about the outside world and...?

Mr. Hull: Well, my dad was an avid newspaper reader. In 1935, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...and they were still back in the savage days of bows and arrows and lances, and he went in there with rifles and dum-dum bullets, and a dum-dum bullet was no more than a hollow-point bullet...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...that entered the body and then be shattered.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Hull: And Dad..., "You see, that must be the cruelest man in the world." And of course, he was a part of the three triumphant with...Hitler and...Tojo.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He was the other one.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But he went in there and slaughtered those poor Ethiopians.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: That was in the mid-30s. He was a newspaper reader; he said if..., "I hope I never support...that I can't have a newspaper."

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well...aft...what...what did you do after high school?

Mr. Hull: I went to work for my uncle in the feed mill. But I started actually...when I moved to Oskaloosa because he and Dad bough some heifers; he put them down in the fairgrounds in Oskaloosa, Iowa at the...livestock...they only rented two of those, and he bought fifty heifers, white-faced, poled

(sp?) heifers. And that was my job, the feeding...those cattle, and I did that in my junior year. I took care of that fifty head of cattle, and also finished up Dad's...we still had a lot of hogs.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But in 1937, the hog market hit seventeen cents a pound; that was just out of this world. Before there was time you couldn't ship a hog to Chicago to pay the freight bill.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But they got up to seventeen cents, and that's when Dad said, "You boys have got to feed them three times a day to get this market." And they were sold for thirteen cents a pound...which was absolutely fantastic. And...we took our, Dwight and I, farmed two acres of tomatoes and we sold those tomatoes and Dad took half the money, and with that hog money he bought his first farm and paid cash for it – a hundred and twenty acres for five thousand dollars near Bussey, Iowa.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: Well...

Mr. Hull: And he sold it a number of years later for a hundred and sixty dollars an acre and that made Dad a wealthy man.

Charlie Simmons: (Laughter)

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, but I...at a hundred and sixty dollars an acre would...would be a pretty good...are...are...

Mr. Hull: For a hundred and twenty acres.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, for a hundred and twenty acres, it's...

Mr. Hull: He bought that farm for five thousand dollars.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: So, so you're working...

Mr. Hull: That sounds unbelievable, don't it, but it's truth.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It's the God's truth.

Charlie Simmons: Well, it was...a depression in those days, and there was a lot of...lot of...poverty going around the country. So, what happened to you...now, you're...you're working in the feed mill and you're going along here and...and things seem to be getting a little better, uh....

Mr. Hull: It got into 1938...well, 1937, I...I'd better not get into this. This was at...where I met my wife at a talent show at Eddyville, Iowa...in 1937. And my brother and Dad and I had a banjo band, a three-piece band, and they were all different. I played a (unintelligible) banjo and my...brother played a tenor banjo, and Dad had an old...five-string, strum...he used to pick it with his fingers. And we took second prize. Well, Dad was shamed to go up for the prize because it was fifty cents.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: And my future wife won first prize on her guitar, and she got a dollar.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: 1937.

Charlie Simmons: So, you figured you better hook up with her; she's going to make a...make a career out of being...playing a guitar.

Mr. Hull: And guess who was the leader of our little band? The same guy that had the tent show, Van Dyke. He had a...dance tent show and he had a little band and he had the funeral home.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles), well we're...

Mr. Hull: So, that's where we got together...in Van Dyke's bank. My wife used to play with Grace, a guy by the name of Grace...called the Rose Hill Ramblers. But he...she got a little better deal out of Van Dyke's because we would put on a program and get...start out with a dollar and he finally advanced us to two dollars a night.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: Well...

Mr. Hull: And I was making about fifteen dollars a week in the feed mill, and that two dollars came in handy.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah! Pretty good...date money.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: Well okay, so we're...we're working our way up here; how long did you work at the feed mill, a couple of years?

Mr. Hull: Clear up to the time I went in the service, and I...I wanted to get in the Air Force real bad, but they wouldn't take married then in the Air Force which we had a cadet program.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: You had to have two years of college and had to be single.

Charlie Simmons: So, and you had gotten married, right?

Mr. Hull: I got married in 1941.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And so, when it came time to enlist, the con...it was a congressman from Iowa, L. E. C-o-m-p-e, he was our congressman from Iowa, I was still a runt, only weighed a hundred and thirty pounds and that...but anyway, in July of 1942, they opened the gates and they would take anybody in the Air Force that could pass the entrance exam; what was the other qualification? And...and be married, that was the other qualification 'cause I was married in '41.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: So, I took the examination and passed and got in and I enlisted in the res...well, I...I thought I was going to go right in. It was in October the 13th, 1943...and...

Charlie Simmons: 1943?

Mr. Hull: '43.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And I went to Des Moines, Iowa and with my suitcase thinking this is my...I'm going to eat Army food tonight, Army Air Corps. They sent us home and put us reserve 'cause they had too many to handle. I saw a bunch of my cousins up there in those days; we were all enlisting. I saw several of my cousins.

Charlie Simmons: And...so you hadn't gone...you hadn't done any training whatsoever; you just went home and...?

Mr. Hull: Yeah, I took my suitcase and went home.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: They called me in January right after the first of the year in 1943, was it? 1940...oh, this was '42...'43, yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay so...

Mr. Hull: And...I...

Charlie Simmons: So, you went down to sign up in October of '42?

Mr. Hull: Yes, this was '42; I got my years screwed up.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, okay.

Mr. Hull: '42...and '43 before I got in.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, did you have any...

Mr. Hull: My brother, when we got married, moved in with us. We'd always been just like that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And as soon as I went into the service, he volunteered. Now, in those days if you start...mine was 1724...well, let me see, I've forgot...I...I can't quite remember it...started with a 1, but if you volunteered, your service number started with a 2, and if you were drafted, it started with as 3.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: 1, 2, 3...that's how the program went. That was federal; that was all over the United States.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And I had moved in the meantime...into the Defense deal 'cause (chuckles), I heard you could make over fifty cents an hour, so I went over there and worked for John Deere in the munitions and got fifty-six cents an hour, so I left Wakes. And so, I was out of the state when they called me into the service. But I was already in Illinois, and they called me at the same time and sent me to Decatur, and from...Decatur...all this happened so shortly that we just moved...at night. I just took my little old Betsy

coup Chevrolet and put everything I had in it; took...dropped my wife off. My dad put me a car, took me to (unintelligible) for a...to go on...into a train to Decatur.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And Decatur, I just got there and they sent us to Jefferson Barracks. So, I was only in Decatur one night. And then I went to...Jefferson Barracks for my initial training.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and...so this was January of '43?

Mr. Hull: Right.

Charlie Simmons: And now, what was...had...did...were...were you in...basic camp there, then...basic training?

Mr. Hull: Basic training at...at...Jefferson Barracks...was that the name of it?

Other Person: Yes, Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis...

Mr. Hull: Missouri.

Other Person: ...Missouri. You were a hundred and thirty nine...pounds, five foot, nine inches tall.

Mr. Hull: See, I gained a little after...

Other Person: Yeah, and a twenty-nine inch waist.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: I gained a little bit after I got out of the feed mill.

Other Person: My leg.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Uh, okay how long was basic training for you?

Mr. Hull: Have you got the date...all the dates there (asking question of other person). I went to...San Antonio to classification center...next.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so after boot camp, you went to San Antonio, and...

Mr. Hull: Aviation Cadet Center.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And the road...

Other Person: It was March 16th of '43 that you went to the University of Missouri in Columbus, Missouri for your...

Mr. Hull: College Training Detachment.

Other Person: ...College Detachment...course detachment, yeah, your college training detachment.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. So...so, you went...you did college training before you were assigned...you went to San Antonio then?

Mr. Hull: Yeah, went (unintelligible), and actually the sentence there to fill in gaps, you know?

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: These different fields were...filled up; they could take so many.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: So, then I went to Classification Center to where they classified you as a pilot, a navigator or a bombardier.

Charlie Simmons: This is in San Antonio?

Mr. Hull: Yes sir.

Charlie Simmons: And...what were you classified as?

Mr. Hull: I was in the upper...ten percent...of the testing, so I got a choose, and I chose navigation. And the reason I did, I thought it would have a more of a civilian conversion in...real life as a bookkeeper or...accountant or something like that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, okay. Well, that kind of makes sense.

Mr. Hull: That's...that was my thinking. I thought when I got out, I can get a job.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and what kind of training did you have as a nav...for navigation?

Mr. Hull: Well, they was...sent me to Houston next, and that was...and they called it Pre-flight (chuckles). Well, I went to Houston, and I...I was only there a few months. I think...have you got the dates down there, son? Where...go to Houston next.

Other Person: Well, let's see. Yeah, because you got your graduation from the University of Missouri for successful completion of your courses, the 31st...uh, Army Air Force, conducted by the University of...of Missouri, and then...

Other Person: (Unintelligible)

Other Person: ...you were transferred September 12th of '43 to the Classification Center in San Antonio as an aviat...at the Aviation Cadet Center. Okay.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so in...

Mr. Hull: And then from there I went to Houston.

Charlie Simmons: ...you went to Houston for the Pre-flight and then...and what...and so you learned...the basic math of navigation and how to take sightings on the stars or the sun or anything like that?

Mr. Hull: I haven't got that far yet.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: Next, the...when I got through there, they said, "There's no schools open, so we're going to send you to Laredo to a Flexible Gunnery Training...

Other Person: Yeah, see here...

Mr. Hull: And then if you wash out in navigation, you're automatically a gunner."

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: Well, wait a minute. Navigators are an officer normally, right?

Mr. Hull: What?

Charlie Simmons: A navigator normally is an officer, right?

Mr. Hull: Oh yes.

Charlie Simmons: But now, gunners are enlisted.

Mr. Hull: Absolutely!

Charlie Simmons: So, do...you going to lose your ranking if you had to...if you wash out of navigation.

Mr. Hull: Well, actually as a cadet, you don't have a ranking.

Charlie Simmons: Oh, that's true, so...okay.

Other Person: But he was transferred October 23rd of '43 to...Pre-flight at Ellington Field in Houston. (Pause)

Charlie Simmons: That's interesting. I lived...I lived in Golden Acres which is a suburb of Houston that's right...right over...right near the end of the...of the main runway at Ellington Field, and the...the two...the twin-engine planes would take off; they trained twin-engine...(unintelligible) pilots here; they'd take

off day and night and they flew right over our house. About every three minutes there was a plane about a hundred feet right over the roof of our house.

Other Person: (Chuckle)

Mr. Hull: You slept well.

Charlie Simmons: I slept...it got to where you didn't even here it after...after a while. And I probably heard you, if you were flying out of there though.

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Charlie Simmons: You went to...so, you went to Laredo then?

Mr. Hull: Yes, Flexible Gunnery Training.

Charlie Simmons: And...what...what...how...what did gun...gunnery training consist of?

Mr. Hull: Well, you had to be able to take a...machine gun apart blindfolded.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They called...field strip it.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And they even had...made you use gloves; take it off with gloves and then take it off blindfolded. You had...you knew that machine gun pretty well.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And you rode around in a...a small airplane; I think they were called a...AT-7, in fact, it'll be in there.

Charlie Simmons: Why...that's okay. Its...

Mr. Hull: Anyhow, you sat backwards in it...in the seat behind the pilot and with a machine gun and you'd shoot at a...sock with colored bullets...in your gun and then they'd count...'cause some...uh, they'd use that same sock...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...for other planes. And the ones that had your color in them was your hits.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Well, how'd you do?

Mr. Hull: Oh, I...I did pretty fair, I graduated.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, were you a bird hunter as a boy? Do you...ever do any hunting?

Mr. Hull: I...did very little.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: I did very little hunting. I did trapping...for furs.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Well, you had a lot of pheasant up in that part of the country.

Mr. Hull: Uh...

Charlie Simmons: I think you...(unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: ...when I was growing up there was very few.

Charlie Simmons: Really?! Okay.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, you had to go clear to Minnesota, but...through the years, the pheasants worked down.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: But when I was a boy, you were very lucky to see a pheasant...(unintelligible).

Charlie Simmons: Okay, that's interesting because there's a bunch of them up there now.

Mr. Hull: Oh yeah. But in...when I was a boy...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...that wasn't true.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so how long were you in Laredo?

Mr. Hull: About three months.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. And then what happened after that?

Mr. Hull: They shipped me to San Marcos, Texas for...Advanced Navigation. Now there's where we get into what you were talking about.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Other Person: That was in...February 27th...

Charlie Simmons: That would be '44?

Mr. Hull: (Unintelligible) '44.

Charlie Simmons: '44. Okay, what's...how long does that take?

Mr. Hull: Well, it was supposed to be a nine-month course, 'cause it...I think that...it was 44-9, isn't that...my course number?

Other Person: Yeah, '44-(unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: And I finish...I (unintelligible) September you graduate...Sep...September of '44, and that was 44-9 is what I meant; I was in that class.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Well, the way it was...they just flew us practically night and day. We...we were short of sleep we'd go to sleep sitting up...'cause we actually were...were training.

Charlie Simmons: So, you were making actual flights?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: And plotting the course and figuring out where you...were and where you needed to be?

Mr. Hull: It was...there are several types of navigation. There was Pilot-E (?) which was ground training just looking at the...you have a map with things on it.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Rivers and everything. And then there's Dead Reckoning which is the most basic and Dead Reckoning you fly by instruments. And then there's Celestial and there's radio...with a radio compass. In those days they made a big map with a...what they call a...compass star in it; it was colored in the middle...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...like Beaumont would have one and it'd have it's call numbers there.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And they would have them two ways. They'd have them in the...the figure L, and then they'd have it in the...uh, international code...strip.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And so, that was the...basic types of navigation.

Charlie Simmons: What was...what...what did you concentrate on most, any one of those?

Mr. Hull: Uh, I think all of them...because usually there's...the...the planes...was a Beechcraft and it held...three...three trainees – the pilot and the co-pilot and the...and occasionally we'd have one...one would have the instructor with us. And...the first one was just a...three simple little dog legs, maybe you'd fly a hundred miles in a dog leg, sixty radiant or whatever degrees to another basic town.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: And then...back to your base. Our take off base was Kyle which was located right near San Marcos; Kyle was a little bitty town, and that was our number we would take off from...from Kyle, and then we would go back to Kyle. And...I...I think it was...they used that type of destination because it was so simple to pinpoint. It was just...one spot in a little area of town where...very few people lived and the water tower and a light on top of it.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, that was our take off point and our destination. And then as you progressed, you would go from that and...and the reason you had the three seats...each one of these navigators did a different type of navigation on each flight.

Charlie Simmons: Oh! Okay.

Mr. Hull: One of them would do a (unintelligible), one of them would do a...Dead Reckoning, and the other'd do a radio.

Charlie Simmons: So, you can't copy off what the other guy's is doing...

Mr. Hull: No, everyone had a different...

Charlie Simmons: ...(unintelligible) homework?

Mr. Hull: ...different...

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: ...different method. And the same way when we graduated Celestial. We'd have a Celestial, and we would have a Dead...always had a Dead Reckoning. That's the basic, and everything else you fell back on Dead Reckoning. That's an instrument-type thing.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and...and were all of these Beechcraft equipped with radio-direction finding...

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: ...(unintelligible), okay.

Mr. Hull: And all of them had an astro lobe where you stood up in it and you used your sextant.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: And...had a...various things to take...uh, astro-lobes and sextants and...and they all had a drift meter for...checking the wind speed and your drift angles. From that you could compute your...wind velocity.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: And you would use an E-6B computer. And an E-6B computer in your navigation kit was a...type of a circular slide rule and...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...and had conversions between metric and statue on them.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, that's...

Mr. Hull: You know about that?

Charlie Simmons: Uh, yeah. Well, the...so, that...so you...so...so how long did you actually stay in this program, and you said it's supposed to take nine months. Did it...you go through...

Mr. Hull: We graduated the last day of...the last day of June.

Other Person: Right.

Mr. Hull: The last day of June I graduated.

Charlie Simmons: So, you cut it in half then in other words...just about?

Mr. Hull: Well, July, August, September...three months. I think we cut off three months.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But we did just...we...oh, we were dog...dog tired! We'd get up early in the morning and do our calisthenics and stuff and go to school and then fly. And we put in terrible, terrible long hours.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Fourteen, fifteen-hour days.

Charlie Simmons: Well, there was a war on. Yeah, they're just trying to...trying to get some people up there; they were losing a lot of planes back in those days and...especially in Europe. Okay, so when you...so you finished up in...what...what'd you say...May?

Other Person: Uh, June (unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: Last day...in June.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, you finished in June. Did you have a leave or you...were you getting ready to get assigned?

Mr. Hull: They sent...they sent us home for what they called a delay in route. It wasn't a furlough; they sent us home for a few days...for what they called a delay in route. And then they sent us to Tampa, Florida which was another place where they'd distribute these people.

Other Person: That's the placement depot.

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Other Person: And that was July 19th of '44.

Mr. Hull: Correct. That was (unintelligible), Florida.

Charlie Simmons: You're in Tampa?

Mr. Hull: We were in Tampa just a short time, and then they sent us to Plant Park which is right in the middle of Florida, right smack dab in the middle between Tampa and Miami. Right smack dab in the middle and that was called Plant Park, and there we met our crew. We were introduced and we were introduced to a just barely nineteen-year-old pilot by the name of Chron (sp?).

Charlie Simmons: Did you know what kind of plane you were going to be flying?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: We were going to be flying a B-17.

Charlie Simmons: Okay...Flying Fortress.

Mr. Hull: And his co-pilot was Lawrence (sp?) E. Lundy (sp?), and that was my best friend.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: War does a lot of funny things. When we...well, I won't get into that now.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so you...how long did you have to...get acquainted with your crew bef...were you actually flying planes at that time out of...

Mr. Hull: Yes, we were.

Charlie Simmons: ...in Plant Park?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, so you...had to fly B-17s?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: And you had all...you all...a full complementary crew. You had your gunners and your...

Mr. Hull: We had just cut back from a ten-man crew to a nine-man.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: And the reason for that being...they used to have a...right and a left...waste gunner...

Charlie Simmons: Right.

Mr. Hull: ...in the waist, but all the attacks...they would be coming back from one side, because they wouldn't be both...coming from both sides, or they'd be running head into each other.

Charlie Simmons: Sure, yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, they cut...one waist-gunner out.

Charlie Simmons: Makes sense.

Mr. Hull: And the waste gunner they gave us...was a return; he had already flown and...his missions. We used to think that...they'd five twenty-five and they'd come home and it was heaven, but after the first ones that came back...after the first one or two that...actually made it and you know why they said...the twenty-five? They were losing four percent every raid. So, if you flew twenty-five percent, there's nearly a hundred percent chance you weren't coming back.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, the ones that first came back, they gave them desk jobs in something...I think!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: That's what we thought, at that time, but very shortly, the ones that came back, that did make it...they re-assigned, and we got one of those as a waste gunner. And in training, he got badly injured and had to have a replacement, and the replacement was named Brown (sp?) that took his place.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: He had a...shattered his right arm...in a...accident.

Charlie Simmons: Huh! Okay, and how long were you at Plant Park?

Mr. Hull: Just a short time. Uh, I'd say...probably a matter of months, and I think we were there about...two to three months.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Other Person: Yeah, because October 1st, you were transferred to the...combat crew center in Hunter Field, Georgia.

Mr. Hull: Yes, and that's right near Savannah. And that's...Savannah, Georgia is where all of this can be verified today – how many flights you made and that's where the history of the...

Charlie Simmons: That's Eighth Air Force Headquarters.

Mr. Hull: Right.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah...or it was then.

Mr. Hull: It's...

Charlie Simmons: So, your museum...(unintelligible), I guess it still is, isn't it?

Mr. Hull: Yes, was the last I knew.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, I've been in the museum there; it's (unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: Our 385th Bomb Group that I was in flew the second most raids of any group. They have that kind of (unintelligible) Georgia, too, so they can reconfirm most of this...probably.

Charlie Simmons: Did...did you go to the Eighth Air Force, uh, Historical Reunion in...San Antonio last October?

Mr. Hull: No, I did not.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: I don't...I...since then, I haven't even...I've had several opportunities to ride in a '17 and I've declined.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, uh hum.

Mr. Hull: I...I...

Charlie Simmons: Well, they had a fairly nice...nice reunion; there were a couple of...several hundred guys there that...that we...

Mr. Hull: My last ride in '17 was enough.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Okay, well we're going to hear about that in a little bit here. Okay, so you're in...you're in Georgia; you got assigned to your group here; you're going to be re-assigned; you get a plane there...what...what happens?

Mr. Hull: What happened there was...the navig...it was mostly for the navigators; they had to...uh, what did they call it? You had to...it...I'm going to use the word calibrate; they had a different name for it. You had to...you got...we got a new plane and those we had re...we...had to calibrate; they had a different name for it.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And they gave us two hours to do it in, and...or we'd be a gunner again. That's what they told us...

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: ...it was a tear...a fear tactic, I think, 'cause I got mine done in one hour and then they told us just, you know, just...do what you want to do. But we...figured our gas consumption in our plane. I remember to this day, it took two hundred and twenty gallon an hour...during the...the test that we had to run; two hundred and twenty gallon an hour it took, and it was a four-engine plane, the B-17.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And we had to calibrate...the drift meter, and...and they gave us...this length of time to do it. And our...we...we had a time trial, so we could check our speedometer. And some of the instruments were in metric and some of them were in statues. And so, the E-6...computer was having...handled all that; you just turned them on a scale, but...certain place and you could get...you can convert statutes to...metric. All this could be converted with that...computer.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: But we had to check our drift meters and this...gallons...of fuel that we used an hour. We checked our air speed against the...the time trials they

had set up, pilons and everything you had to fly...fly to check your...your speed against your...what it was actually.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: And...flex-gate compass, we had a flex-gate compass, and a...a manual compass. We had to also check those. That was part of this work we did at...at...Hunter Field.

Charlie Simmons: (Unintelligible) that's all navigator...

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: ...stuff then, yeah. And the Bombardier, I guess was...checking out...

Mr. Hull: No, yeah he had to check out, too, and we had to...we had...the navigator had to...use a signed curve which is a mathematical curve to make averages, and draw up a chart and hand that in with our work. You know, a signed curve looks like...a big S with a line down through the middle for an average.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: You had to compute it...mathematically.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: Different things.

Charlie Simmons: Hum. Okay so, so you get all...you get your plane all checked in and you're all checked in and...

Mr. Hull: Then they head for New Hampshire to get our fittings.

Charlie Simmons: And...what do you mean by fittings?

Mr. Hull: For our clothing we'd wear over there, now...

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: ...see, this is the fall of the year now, and this is...this was one of the last groups that would take the northern route. The southern route...went down south and flew to Ascension Island which is a little...air spot over in the middle of the Atlantic.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And from Ascension, they went to Africa and disbursed. That's the southern route, and that was for the winter groups. But what made the

things a lot worse with us, as we went to Goose Bay Labrador which was our departure point in Labrador, our pilot had a bad case of diarrhea and had a...accident in his cl...in his uniform. He got off with dirty clothes, and he was hospitalized for five days, so we had to fly alone over the north Atlantic after they had shut down because of the storms had happened...in the north Atlantic in the winter time.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And...I'm going to cut this a little short.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: After we left there, we left there...it was on uh, July the 12th and what...what day is it...is...is everybody so suspicious about, the 13th, on a Friday?

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Well, our co...our tail-gunner was so suspicious that we were leaving at that time. I said, "Okay, now we turn all of our time to Greenwich Civil Time. You turn up your watch...how many hours," I think it was five or six, and they did, and I said, "Now, this now the 14th." And Roy Winters (sp?) in the back said, "Oh, thank god!" He was worried about...that...13th.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Other Person: (Unintelligible words)...13th.

Mr. Hull: And when we got to...our plane iced up so heavily we used...the...the B-17 is fit with deicer fluid...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...in the boots, and these boots are moveable, and they have this fluid in there to shed the ice. We used every bit of our deicer fluid, and then we tried to fly above it...to get away to where you...wouldn't ice up

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: You can actually get up so high and dry that it won't do that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, we got up...that high, and so we burned up our fuel and had to make emergency landing in Iceland. We were supposed to fly directly to Scotland.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, we landed Iceland in the...in...in...and having a storm there, it took every one of our nine men to get an engine cover on to protect it; they're canvas and they're...we carry them in our '17s. We put them over the props and then...carried them...it took all nine of us pulling (unintelligible words) and we'd even tried to...enlist some other people around there to help us, but they were already busy doing something else. And we finally got those covers on there, and it took us nearly two hours...the wind was blowing so hard.

Charlie Simmons: This was...this was July...

Mr. Hull: The ice...yeah, let me see now. The field...Meeks Field in Iceland.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, and...

Mr. Hull: And by the way, my...I had a malfunction in my...sextant, so I did get a new sextant while I was there. I had a malfunction in it, but it...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...it added to our troubles. I didn't think we was going to get across the ocean.

Charlie Simmons: Well, I could...pretty...pretty (unintelligible); pretty big ocean up there...especially in that kind of weather. So...but you finally made it to...into Scotland and...

Mr. Hull: Yes, we did.

Charlie Simmons: ...and...

Mr. Hull: Yes, we did. I got...I got in a little trouble with the food ministry there, but I won't go into that.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, well...well, that's okay. What...did...you brought in...some live chickens or something (chuckles)?

Mr. Hull: No, I ate...I ordered an egg sandwich and it was...dehydrated...dried eggs.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: And on big, heavy bread and I said, "I don't believe I can eat it," and I laid it down. And that woman said, "I'll have to turn you into the food minister." So, I sat there and ate every crumb!

Charlie Simmons: Oh! Wow, that's...different set of rules over there than the U.S. I guess. Uh, okay, so you got to Scotland, and you were assigned...to a bomb...to the, uh, 385th immediately?

Mr. Hull: Right away.

Charlie Simmons: And what...what base were you...did you go to?

Mr. Hull: Green Elmswell (sp?) in the town they called the town Green Ashfield, and there was a 385th, 551st Bomb Squadron.

Charlie Simmons: And where...where was your field; where...were...what part of England was it...were you at...(unintelligible)?

Mr. Hull: It's...it was, uh, sixteen miles from Ipswich which was our (unintelligible) station. Ipswich...Ipswich is right on the coast...of England...Ipswich.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. And...you flew your plane in there and...looked around; you...you...got a...bunch of salty B-17 crews that had been...been flying combat missions for a while; what'd it feel like?

Mr. Hull: They hazed you. We had...the officers...there's four officers in a crew. The navigator was an officer. So, in our crew there was three others and when we got there, we cleaned out...the dresser drawers to put our things in...uh, the people that had just lost...uh, we had...we...that's...that's why...how...what happens to replacement crew; they replace somebody else.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They either go home or they get shot down.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Well, usually they...they get some administrative person to take...take the...anybody's that lost or missing, they...pick up all their personal effects (unintelligible words).

Mr. Hull: They had a...they had a man in there with us watching us, and we helped him. Why I...I, of course, maybe it was slam bang, but they had a man from the government checking us out on what we had...actually

handled...take the guy's underwear and this and that, and he logged it down and made a note of it and sent...personal items back to his family. A lot of them would have...like souvenirs he'd picked up in...London.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: That sort of thing.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. So...so, you got settled in and...how long was it before you started flying combat missions then?

Mr. Hull: Then we flew training missions.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, training missions...right away?

Mr. Hull: Absolutely, next day.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Other Person: (Cough)

Charlie Simmons: And what did a training...mission consist of?

Mr. Hull: Well, it...we would go through the briefings...like the ones that were actually flying; they'd brief us...like...

Charlie Simmons: You went through with them?

Mr. Hull: ...no, no.

Charlie Simmons: Or you went through the uh, uh, training briefing?

Mr. Hull: They...yeah, we went through those. And then we went through what they called a critique after you get back. And then they would send you down...down to the buncher with a plane. That's...and our buncher was number L, and the L was international code, and we all had headsets on and then we'd...blink L...it would shoot L, and you could...and then we would radio...home in on it, usually with the radio. And of course, we didn't use radio after we got across the Channel because...the ornery Germans would jam it!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But then, we learned to...first thing we learned to do was bunch as a...a squadron, and we were assigned a squadron, and we were assigned to the high squadron. And in the lead squadron, we would learn to meld in with

the lead squadron. And the low squadron was the last one to come in underneath.

Charlie Simmons: Now, had done any...really tight, close formation up until then?

Mr. Hull: A tiny, tiny bit. A tiny bit of formation flying.

Charlie Simmons: Well, in combat...over there, they...they were really trying to get you in...

Mr. Hull: Into...and into a group.

Charlie Simmons: ...as close as you could get...

Mr. Hull: Because what we had in the States was basically on a squadron level.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And there's three squadrons in a group.

Charlie Simmons: (Cough), okay so, uh, so you fly a mission...what...every day just about...whether...?

Mr. Hull: Just about every day or they'd scrub it.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: (Unintelligible) there was certain things that would cause them to scrub it...mostly weather.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And they come around...usually around between three and four o'clock in the morning and wake you up; get you in a truck, and you'd go down and get a little breakfast, mostly just toast and...and coffee. And...we'd stand with a...slice of toast on a fork and hold it up to one of them potbellied stoves; that's how we usually toast it and then drink our coffee...

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: ...sit down along the bench.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, how long were you in training...uh, sessions there then?

Mr. Hull: Not very long. Uh, I think we flew our first missions to Giessen. Now, do I have that in my book anywhere?

Other Person: Yeah, I think so, yeah. Because October 13th '44 is when you started the European theater of operation.

Other Person: Was that (unintelligible) crew?

Mr. Hull: Yes, that's our crew.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Uh okay, so you're first mission was a...what...what was that...considered a...a pretty easy run or...?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: I don't know whether they...I don't know whether it just came up that way or what, or I...I doubt if it was planned.

Charlie Simmons: No, they...

Mr. Hull: I...

Charlie Simmons: ... well, from what I've talked...I've talked to guys and a lot of them...their first mission was all...was all the way in to, you know, ...

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: ...like Slangford (sp?) or...

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: ...something like that, so...

Mr. Hull: No, this one was...pretty much a milk run.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It was real easy. I got to thinking, "Boy, if they're all like this, we'll get through in a hurry."

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It was an easy mission, and...

Charlie Simmons: Now, how many missions were you going to have to complete to get to...to be...?

Mr. Hull: At that time, twenty-five.

Charlie Simmons: It was still twenty-five?!

Mr. Hull: But, it changed in...December of 1944. If you didn't have your...at least twenty in, and we didn't...we lacked...just very few.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: We just lacked...just two or three miss...uh, a few missions. Again, I don't remember exactly how many, but we then had to go to thirty.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Now, in the 15th...out in...the southern, they had to go to fifty because it was based on...losses.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And they were losing down there...just a little, about three percent, and we were losing four.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, we...but now, our...our losses started to get...less. It was up around three percent or three and a half, and then they had to go another five. Now, I...these figures are...are approximate...’cause I...I don’t know exactly.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, I understand, understand. Okay, so what...what was that first mission like?

Mr. Hull: It was...it was nice, and we had...light, light flak. I had a diary and I can’t find it, a little brown diary.

Other Person: Yeah, I don’t know what you did with that?

Mr. Hull: Do you know where it is?

Other Person: No, I don’t.

Charlie Simmons: Oh, that’s okay. We...we’re doing verbal here (unintelligible).

Mr. Hull: But...but anyway, it said in there I had...light or moderate or how many...aircraft...or rats or...if we got attacked, we’d call them different things.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: I put them in my diary as rats many times...when we were attacked by rats...were...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well now, by this time, you...you had...fight...did you have fighter escorts all the way in?

Mr. Hull: We had fighter escorts and it was not very far in. It was...if you didn’t get a...I’m...I’m (unintelligible) again, I think it was a six-degree longitude, if you didn’t get on the other side of it, it wasn’t a mission. That was...just a milk run that didn’t count. You might have dropped bombs or ground support or something.

Charlie Simmons: That was in France then?

Mr. Hull: In France.

Charlie Simmons: Yep, okay.

Mr. Hull: If you didn't get on the other side of that, it didn't count as a mission.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: I think we only flew one or two of those, but they didn't count.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: I volunteered for some...one time, one...'cause I liked...I wanted to see what the bomb assessment was. I volunteered in separate planes afterwards on...one or two occasions on a bomb assessment just...just because I wanted to.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum. Okay. Okay so...

Mr. Hull: As a navigator, I went as a navigator on that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. So how...so when you started flying combat missions then, how...what was the typical frequency? Were you flying just about every day, every other day? I know it was weather dependent and mission dependent.

Mr. Hull: Well, right after Christmas time, we didn't fly for a week.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Because...it cleared up Christmas Day, and the whole Eighth Air Force went in on the...1944.

Charlie Simmons: Well, that was the battle...that was the Battle...Battle of the Bulge where...

Mr. Hull: And the...

Charlie Simmons: ...they...they were going in; yeah, okay.

Mr. Hull: It cleared up, but for a week before that, we didn't fly any...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...for...either six or seven days straight. But normally, we would fly...maybe seventy percent of the time and the weather was a big deal.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Now, there's...certain groups...that couldn't fly because of combat loss, but I don't think that ever happened to us. I don't recall it.

Charlie Simmons: So, there was a minimum number of planes you had to have in the squadron before you could...you could take it up. I didn't know that; that's...that's a...new data for me.

Mr. Hull: No, that...that didn't happen very often. I can't even recall it.

Charlie Simmons: So, you're...flying with the, you know, you're up into January, February of...1945, and then you're shooting for thirty missions. Are you racking them up...like, you know, ten a month or fifteen a month or...?

Mr. Hull: Oh, probably more; not...not every other day.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It was...there'd be a few times that you wouldn't fly for two or three days.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: Not...not very often. I can remember once during Christmas season...that happened...I think that's about all I can recall really.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Did you ever have any...really bad targets? I mean, bad...where you had a lot of flak and German fighters and...

Mr. Hull: Well, everybody remembers Schweinfurt.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Our first one...when we hit Schweinfurt, I think three times, but on that first time it wasn't bad. But on the second time, I remember my co-pilot saying, "If we ever have to fly...to Schweinfurt again, I'm going to have everything in order...of my affairs."

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles), yeah.

Mr. Hull: 'Cause we had...lost thirty planes over the target that day. And I don't remember where these thirty came from. Uh, we made it pretty well. I would...I'll tell you something that often happened, too. Most losses from fighter planes happened on the lead planes...went in. We took turns like the tanks did. If you lead in...on our last mission we got you down, we lead in and Colonel Jumper, our...C.O., was the lead pilot. But they usually took the heaviest part of the fighter planes because they wore them down through the day, and the ones that came through later...was a lot better.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But that day was...March the 2nd, 1945 we lead them in, and Colonel Jumper was our commanding officer. And oh, I don't know whether I should tell this now, but...our low squadron drifted out, it drifted out and they got hit by planes first because they were...fewer of them; they had less protection from the group. The way...the way they were staggered, the lead squadron was first, the high squadron was next and the low squadron...like tailing Charlie was low ones, was the last.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Here's the lead plane, here's the high, here's the low. The low swung wide over the IP, that's the initial point.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And they were jumped, and they lost...uh, on one pass through, they lost like three planes. All the ones...Slim Williams, our...engineer, top turret engineer, said, "Damn, it's coming in at ten o'clock."...I think ten o'clock, and that was an hour of...directioning him in. Was that ten o'clock? It was either two o'clock or ten o'clock. Well, anyway, it was...it was coming out of the sun. And so, I run...I had a gun on each side; I got a hold of my gun...just as they were going through and our right wing was hit at bomb's away at 10:16 'cause I'd just logged it in my log...bombs away. Our bomb doors were down, and they were shattered, and I could tell they weren't machine gun bullets; they were...rockets.

Charlie Simmons: Rockets?!

Mr. Hull: They were shooting rockets; they weren't machine gun bullets.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: They just...tore a great big chunks out of it when it went through. And they had...a rocket went through and hit most of them and exploded and just made...did a lot of damage.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They were firing rockets. They hit our number three engine and immediately the fire went back...about three lengths of our B-17, and then

it...instantly sucked back up to the...(unintelligible) the engine itself. And there was a big hole in the top of it...that ripped out of our wing...right over that engine and around...around that engine. It just about chopped that engine off.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And our pilot immediately feathered it 'cause you don't want to let them things run wild because going forth they'll...they'll go five times faster than...the...motor will take them. And they'll...they'll shatter them right off the wing or pull your wing off.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And...it was burning, and...so, I don't know, but I knew we were in trouble right then and I got hold of the pilot and I said, "Give me a heading of sixty degrees." I didn't have time to figure it out; I just knew that would be a...from Nuremberg that would be heading toward Russia...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...Russia area.

Charlie Simmons: So, the closest allied territory was in Russia?

Mr. Hull: Right.

Charlie Simmons: (Unintelligible) behind the western lines, okay.

Mr. Hull: But anyway, the plane started to come out in a...drag. The left wing dropped down. The pilot was using all of his strength and energy and the co-pilot to try to keep it level, but it kept dropping and...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...and we kept going around in a circle. And so, we just made a series of ovals as we was going down. And we were losing probably five hundred to a thousand feet a minute...as we were going down. And the pilot gave us a bail out; he hit the bail because all the electrical went out.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And our wheels dropped down on our plane because the electrical went out. That...when your wheels drop down...that means you...you surrender.

(Unintelligible), but he didn't drop them down. They...the...malfunction took them down.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But the wheels of our plane was down. And that meant...quit shooting, I'm giving up. But he didn't mean it that way.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Other Person: (Chuckle)

Mr. Hull: And so, as we were going...

Charlie Simmons: Were the German planes going down with you? They...were...

Mr. Hull: We had...German...about three of on us to start with...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...went around with us. Now, we knew the number of them because we could see them. There was 11FW190s, that was their best plane; that (unintelligible) 109.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And one enemy 109...was in the group. And the one...one of the last going around as we were circling...a German...fighter plane went by and saluted to Chron, our pilot, and he returned his salute. And he was the one that followed us down. When we got down...we were trying to get out of there, but the (unintelligible) electrical went out and we couldn't get the ball turret gunner out.

Charlie Simmons: Oh boy!

Mr. Hull: So, we weren't going to leave that plane with him down there, and we got the hand crank and...Slim Williams, mostly alone, cranked that plane till...that ball turret...till it opened with a hole in the bottom of the...airplane, and we pulled Doyle Green (sp?), our gunner, out and it was at eleven thousand feet. We had...we had got hit at thirty thousand feet.

Other People: Wow!

Mr. Hull: We had dropped down to eleven...and we pulled him out. And he couldn't even wear his chute in this ball turret gunner...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...and his chute was laying right there on top. And we got him in that thing and then we all started bailing out. And our pilot was the last one to bail out, and when he bailed out...he...he bailed out in between the German and Russian lines. And when he lit on the ground, it was about eleven o'clock when he hit the ground...his...the wind was blowing at...terrible speed and his chute drifted away from him and he drew fire from the Russians...into that chute. Well, they probably knew we were an allied plane!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They'd shoot at anything.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And they...they were...they were peppering that chute and when he...when he realized that, he was pretty sharp...you wouldn't have to be in this case...he'd buttoned his chute clip thing here was...just like a...like a snap on you have on a...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: You know what they are?

Charlie Simmons: Yes, like a safe...safety seat belt, yeah.

Mr. Hull: And he'd turned that buckle and got (unintelligible), and so they kept shooting at that chute. Well, that...in a few minutes that chute was...a quarter of a mile away!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And they were sure...still peppering that. They must have used an awful lot of ammunition.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And anyway, the...tail gunner was the first one that I got to see, and they brought us in about the same time and his left ankle and leg was shattered.

Charlie Simmons: So, you came down behind the German lines?

Mr. Hull: I came down in the trench.

Charlie Simmons: In the German...

Mr. Hull: German trench. I lit...physically lit inside of their...stand up trench.

Charlie Simmons: Boy, they didn't shoot you coming down!

Mr. Hull: No, they didn't, but they...my chute was an electric chute with an eighteen plug to keep it...you warm, and the cord was there, and they pulled it and they said, "Pistoli, pistoli," and I could speak a little German...mostly Dutch because I went to school with them, and they were the first...first people come over here and I went to school with them. I could...say a whole lot of words in German.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: I could say bread and milk and a whole bunch of them, and I said, "Nichts pistol." I said it wasn't a pistol, but it was that plug in that it...the cord came out of and it was a little box about two by four inches long and...and he says, "Pistoli," and pulled and...they pulled that cord clear out of my suit.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And I didn't have shoes on; I had flying boots on. Well...(pause) so they marched me in my flying boots all down through the trench to the headquarters. And this German officer came out and cursed me every word he could think of...for bombing his women and children. And...

Charlie Simmons: So, in English or in...German?

Mr. Hull: I don't remember, but I could understand it in German anyway, most of it. I've...I've lost most of my ability to speak it...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: 'Cause I haven't used it since then. But, oh, I can still say (unintelligible) and some of those. You speak a little German?

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, I can still speak a little, or I can...I can...(unintelligible). I can still say a few words.

Charlie Simmons: So...so what...so what happened after the officer got through with you or did he...did he get through with you?

Mr. Hull: Well, he took my coat...for...the first place, a B-10 jacket, and they took my boots and that left me sock-footed. And it was...the ground was

frozen, and it was cold, and they had the worst winter in Germany in fifty years.

Charlie Simmons: Now, what about your other crew members? Where...where...what are they doing in the meantime?

Mr. Hull: They were doing the same thing. They were...kept...putting...round them up and put us in a...put us in a building; it was a two-story building, and old brick building. And we were at Wetzlar...Boimitschlabe (sp?)...Boimitschlabe which is right on the Russian...German line. And in this building...had been a prison for political prisoners. The one that we were in had three calendars on the wall...scratching there...on their ears and there were some had been in there seven years on different (unintelligible).

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: We...we went over there and started making a few marks on that one (chuckles).

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Yeah, they...they were...you had...do...do you have nine members in the crew...

Mr. Hull: And they only had three of us and...in three, threes and threes out of...put us in a...how they confined us in cells.

Charlie Simmons: But then now, you pilot landed between the lines. So, did he end up in...Germans then?

Mr. Hull: They didn't...they didn't bring him in until about ten o'clock that night.

Charlie Simmons: So, whether you...whether you'd go to the Germans and have the Russians shooting at him or (unintelligible)?

Other Person: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But anyhow, the German...the Germans went out and pulled him in.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: Now, he just...he didn't move; he just laid there; he had...it was a depression...he said, "There was a long groove in the ground a hundred yards long," and he said he could just about get his body in that groove.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He just about get his body in and then he stayed...just a little of them was on the outside of that groove. They came...but they knew he was there. They'd seen him...spot him in the daytime, and it was dark when they brought him in.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And they'd give him a little interrogation before he joined us, I believe.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Because, we didn't see him till he said he was...the Germans had him about nine o'clock and it was later when we...all got together.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And then they split us up about midnight, three to a room, and I...and Clemcoe (sp?) and R.C. Lundy, the co-pilot, was in one room and had one window in it and the window was at least ten foot high; they had about eleven foot ceilings; they were tremendously high. But by putting one of us on his shoulders, we could get the edge of that window sill and peek out a little. That...one standing on the...somebody else's shoulders they could see out. And it was right on the German lines where they had sandbags and trenches there.

Charlie Simmons: Well, uh, were...all...were all of you in pretty good shape?

Mr. Hull: Five were injured. The worst was (pause) Rob Werner (sp?), Rab Brown (sp?) was the next; he broke...him in this rugged ground; he was a side gunner. His face was this big around and just as black and blue and it was just...purple. And I thought they'd beat the snot out of him, but anyway, he was drug over this rocky terrain and he...

Charlie Simmons: By the chute?

Mr. Hull: ...and they didn't fold his arms.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They told you to grab the shrouds here, grab the shrouds here to protect the face. We all had that training. And they drug him over the rock until he was unconscious and they brought him in, and he was only semi-conscious.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: Then they brought in the pilot, and...okay, the...the...who's hurt? The radio gunner, Paul Clemcoe, had a badly sprained right leg. Uh, Brown had his face all beat up. Roy had his leg torn up. Uh, Doyle Green was in pretty good shape. Uh, Chron was in good shape. R.C. Lundy had a bad leg; did I mention him?

Other People: No.

Mr. Hull: R.C. Lundy and the radioman had...bum...bum legs...mostly swelled and weren't broken.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. So, you're there; did they bring a doctor around, anybody to help...or give you any medications or anything at all? No, do nothing...did nothing to help you?

Mr. Hull: They didn't even have an aspirin, and the Germans didn't have any.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They were out of medication.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, in...in all fairness, they couldn't.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. So, how long were you there?

Mr. Hull: We were there...uh, six or seven days. We went through a Sunday, and they brought us a...an extra slice of bread. Rations, we got...twice a day and they weren't that bad. Most of it was peelings that...in a...in a soup.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They had potato peelings, turnip peelings...most of it was peelings, but it was...edible.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And it was...fairly nutritious.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: And we got a thin slice of German bread...with each meal; we had two meals a day. But on Sunday, we got a little something special...got an extra slice with their...wasn't butter, but it was something like cream.

Other Person: Was it hot...the soup?

Mr. Hull: Yeah, the soup was warm. And they were brought by prisoners and most of them were Russian prisoners. And we had a guy that could speak fluent...Russian in our crew; his name was Paul Clemcoe. His father was a Russian and his mother was Polish, so he could speak Polish and...Russian both, and so he could talk to them.

Charlie Simmons: I'll be darned.

Mr. Hull: That was a fine thing...

Other Person: (Unintelligible)

Mr. Hull: ...wasn't it?

Other Person: Uh hum.

Charlie Simmons: Nice...nice guy to have along in a place like that!

Mr. Hull: Yes. He...he could speak fluently with them.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He said, "We're get...about getting ready to get out of here because the Russians are going to take this place." He said, "They're bringing up the saddest...reinforcements you ever saw." That's what the guards was telling us. He said, "They're bringing...men here that are sixty years old..."

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...for...into the lines.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well this is March... '45; they were running pretty thin by that time; the Russians had killed off about all of them. And...we'd gotten quite a few on the western front, too.

Mr. Hull: But Paul Clemcoe is the one that had no memory after he left.

Charlie Simmons: Hum.

Mr. Hull: Zip, zilch! He couldn't even remember he had been in the service.

Charlie Simmons: Wow!

Mr. Hull: We had...in fact, that's where we got a lot of our stuff together...was telling him what went on...mailed to him. That's what the kids were looking for. I can find them if I find...dig far enough.

Charlie Simmons: Well, uh okay, so you...you're...you were there for a week and they...their...did you pull out with the...with a military unit that would...had you did you (unintelligible)?

Mr. Hull: The Russians came into the town and we left in the middle of the night. The trains were on...on there and they were...on it like caterpillars; people were all over it. And I saw young boys pull women off the train and take their place.

Charlie Simmons: Now these are Germans?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: Leaving... Boimitschlabe...going (unintelligible). All the trains had all their...didn't have a sound window in any of the cars; they just...shattered glass. Well, we did get...they put us inside and...we sat on wooden benches there that was covered with glass.

Other Person: Uhm!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. And...where did you go?

Mr. Hull: We just went inland; we didn't know where we were. And Boimitschlabe is actually in Czechoslovakia.

Charlie Simmons: Oh.

Mr. Hull: It's on the border, but it's...actually in Czechoslovakia. I can look through there and give you a guy's name from Czechoslovakia...has been writing to me. I've got a letter...of here...now.

Charlie Simmons: And...so you...they...they sent you...do you...went into what...back into Germany?

Mr. Hull: Yeah, into Germany, and it probably...just like a troop train, about as fast as you can walk.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: At first, the people were on top of the trains like caterpillars. After we got inside of Germany...maybe...maybe, I'm guessing, ten, fifteen, twenty mile...the train stopped, and they made those people all get off and walk. They were just on...like caterpillars, just laying on top of each other...to...to ride out. And boy, it was...they fed us first because they just...pushed them old women off to one side.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And I'll tell you, a man's inhumanity toward man.

Charlie Simmons: So, would...did you end up at...uh, uh, a prisoner of war camp then?

Mr. Hull: That night we slept in the morgue. A morgue was (unintelligible) dead people laying on benches. They cot...cot is that high so he could work on them.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And they...they were French prisoners that we...weren't with us...that they'd had. I was looking for one to lay down on, and a French fellow helped me get up on...oh, it was up this high, and I was having a little trouble getting upon there because I had a...I was carrying a bunch of stuff, and I carried my friend Roy Werner...on my back. They put him up on there and they put me beside him. Roy couldn't walk. (Pause) You remember his funeral (talking to someone)? Two years ago, they told about it.

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He wouldn't have been here if it hadn't of been for me. I don't want this in there.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But I did, and they told it up there, and his daughter to this day knows it.

Charlie Simmons: Well...

Mr. Hull: But I...I carried him on my back every time we stopped. And we'd go...sometimes we had to walk maybe for a mile and I'd have one guard behind me and Roy...all the way to...(pause)...all the way to interrogation camp on the Rhine River, near Frankfurt on the Rhine. I don't want that

in there about me carrying Roy. I don't want that in there about me carrying Roy.

Charlie Simmons:

Okay.

Mr. Hull:

I don't...I don't want to go down (unintelligible)...

Charlie Simmons:

Okay, so...you just took the train...took the train...train to...near Frankfurt on the Rhine?

Mr. Hull:

Yeah, now on our third day...but on our first night I...we slept in a morgue. The second night we got hit by our...oh, an Air Force bombing and we tried to get in a...air raid shelter and the Germans drove us out of there. The civilians wouldn't let us stay in it and they...threw bricks and they hit one of our guard in the mouth with the brick and broke his...teeth out. It was our...own guard but didn't hit us.

Charlie Simmons:

(Chuckle)

Mr. Hull:

And we went back and slept underneath a car on a railroad track. Now, I don't want that in there either.

Other People:

(Laughter)

Charlie Simmons:

Well...

Mr. Hull:

It was...it was three days getting to...getting us out and it was interrogation camp. And we were only there four days, and...

Charlie Simmons:

What did they interrogate you about?

Mr. Hull:

First thing they ask you is what camp you're from; what...what field you're from, what unit you're in. And...this guy said, "Well, I know all these things," and anyway he said, "I was in the meat business in...Morales Ottumwa (sp?). Now, I don't know whether he was or not 'cause he probably knew I was from Iowa some way.

Other Person:

(Chuckle)

Mr. Hull:

No, I didn't tell him that; I didn't tell him anything. And he said, "We're going to find...all anyway," he said, "I'm...I'm in the meat packing business and I know all about you and where you're from," and I don't know whether he did or not.

Charlie Simmons:

It sounded good!

Mr. Hull: Sounded like he might. He said he'd...had been in Ottumwa and that was just...next town south of Eddyville where I went to high school.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Well, they had your plane; maybe you had...did you...maybe you had some materials in the plane.

Mr. Hull: I don't think they had found it yet.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, it...it was...it was smashed up pretty bad when it hit the ground, and we hit all the button, we hit all the red buttons in the plane. They had them to destroy the drift meter and the bomb site. We...we...

Charlie Simmons: Oh...

Mr. Hull: ...we punched all of them before we bailed out.

Charlie Simmons: So...okay. So, you were interrogated for three days; did you tell them anything?

Mr. Hull: I didn't tell them a darned thing.

Charlie Simmons: Uh, after they...after you left there where'd you go?

Mr. Hull: We went up north to a distribution center, and it was up...okay...uh...

Other Person: (Unintelligible)

Mr. Hull: ...it's...I remember the town for a long time. It was near a German optical work and it was about a hundred and twenty kilometers north of Frankfurt and it took us two days to get there. And we didn't...the first day they got...we were in a marshalling yard which is a railyard, and we didn't do anything; we just sat there. And we didn't...hadn't got any food the day before now. When we started to march our last meal was in the morning; we got two meals a day; we didn't get any evening meal. They took us into something like a gymnasium...had a floor like a gymnasium, and we tried to sleep on that. And the next morning they got us up and...we were going to this interrogation center...or distribution center, and it was about a hundred and twenty kilometers north of there. And we just stayed there for half a day and...(cough)...at noon, we started walking and we walked till evening and we needed water awful bad and we came to a place where the...they fuel the trains and they had a big water spout down there and

they brought that thing down and we got some water. We had a heck of a time because...with the facilities because we didn't have cups and bowls and things to pass around.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But we finally got water in some way. I don't just remember how, but it...we were scrapping for that water. It was...really precious. And that night...we just slept on the ground, and...oh, this was cold weather. Next day we got up and I just remember one incident. The Germans had an apple and they rolled down a little bank to see us fight for it. And that apple was pretty close to me but I said, "I'm not going to get scratched up for a scrawny apple." I let them have it.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: We got into...(pause)...wasn't (unintelligible); no it wasn't it. I don't remember the name of the town, but that's where they would send you out and they sent us to, our group, to Nuremburg, and I think it's Stalag 7-A. But it was in Nuremburg is where they sent us. They put us on a forty and eight car, and there are forty and eight...you know what a forty and eight car is?

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And we...the guards, they had a seven, armed guards; they circle off a little place about that far to the wall right where Les is, the seven stood in there and had a lot of straw or they had...and the rest of us was piled up in this thing. You couldn't sit down at all at one time. Yeah, a good share of the people had to stand, and even at night. Sometimes, they'd...lay on each other, on top of each other, but...I wasn't very big, and I know in the morning my legs are all asleep and my hip down and I was trying to get up on my feet, and...we were in that car and didn't get any food; there was no food; they did bring us some water, but they didn't bring us any food for our entire trip to Nuremburg. We went without food and I suppose it was probably three days getting there. I had a can of canned meat that I'd...scrounged when I left...that distribution center, but I didn't have any

way of opening it and we kept trying to work on opening that can and I never did get it opened until we got in Nuremburg.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: And...

Charlie Simmons: Well now, you had...you had bombed...you had just dropped...dropped some bombs on there in (unintelligible) did you get to do any damage assessment while you were coming in there?

Mr. Hull: There was nothing left of it other than...even that camp that they put us in...was in pretty bad shape.

Charlie Simmons: So, you did a good job then! You...

Mr. Hull: They did a whale of a job!

Charlie Simmons: But...you weren't bragging about it too much...at the time...to the Germans I guess, okay. So...so, you got into Nuremburg and you went into a...

Mr. Hull: That was an old Hitler youth camp.

Charlie Simmons: Uh...

Mr. Hull: And...and there was...

Charlie Simmons: ...and did it have bomb damage or was it just...okay, so...you guys hit everything then. How about...did you have food there?

Mr. Hull: They fed us twice a day. We didn't get anything and they said we was going to have live on their fat behinds (?); we hadn't got anything after we left that camp.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: So, there wasn't much fat left on our hide. But they brought in some...Russian prisoners...there...at the same time, and they were in really bad shape. They could barely go on...they was helping each other.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, well you were...so this was...be...past the point where they were segregating Air Force from the...from the other military units and the German concen...the German prisoner of war camps...yeah.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, they...we were...officers and enlisted men were together.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, they didn't segregate here.

Charlie Simmons: So, okay.

Mr. Hull: And...I'll tell you a little about the food...if we did get. It was...most of it was beans and they was...had bugs in it.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And some of the people would take their spoon and press the bugs back to one side and eat the soup, but most of them would just go ahead...and eat...soup, bugs and all.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And that was...that was our...two times a day deal, and...about the third day we were there, we got some Red Cross food. My goodness that was great!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But we didn't get the package; they brought it in to us, a. And they...they asked for volunteers, and the first day they wanted wood...to...for fuel. They had to go out in the timber. I volunteered every day because I wanted to see if there was a way to get out...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...to...for escape. And...I'd been a navigator and I thought if anybody's got a chance to get out, I have!

Other Person: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: So, when I get wood, and actually it was dead wood. They wouldn't get us...let us use live wood.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: It was just in...in brush, and so, we used the brush for tender and...sticks up to this big around...we would carry in...in a bundle and carry them back because that was the fuel for...the kitchen.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: So, on the second day, like I say, I can speak a little...I can still speak a little but not much, the...cook wanted to know if...we wanted some volunteers to help him, and I volunteered...just said, "boy, I want around the kitchen!"

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, the first day he gave me an iron skillet, and he told me to clean it. And I went out, and they had a sandpile behind there just to...like a child sandpile, and...he gave me a couple of boards so...sort of like paddle boards...and we would put the sand on this and rub on that skillet to try to bring it back to life (scratching sound), and I worked all day hard on that 'cause I wanted to keep my job.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And I got a spot, maybe the size of a small spot, in the center about the size of a saucer, and clean through the (unintelligible), and he thought that was alright!

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, the next day I got the same skillet and I worked on the outside edge...but that night, when I went out to...to...sandpile...on that sandpile was a little square of limburger cheese.

Charlie Simmons: Huh!

Mr. Hull: And that tasted like honey!

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: It was a little square of that there.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And I knew where it came from.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, the next day we were going to get ready to leave, and this was in April and it was still cold, the ground was still frozen. Now, like I say, it was the coldest winter in...and records will show that's true.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Other Person: Did you ever get shoes?

Mr. Hull: Yes, I got my own shoes.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: But they were English paratrooper shoes, and I'd...I'd traded for them because I wanted...I thought they were sharp looking black shoes, but they only had a sole leather about that thin. Well, I'll tell you what happened to those shoes later. I got...(unintelligible) the soles of them were completely gone by the time I got to Moosburg, and I'd find every shock on the way I could...under, any piece of bark I would put in the bottom there to cover up that hole in the bottom. But when I got there, the hole in the bottom of each one was that big.

Charlie Simmons: Huh.

Mr. Hull: I never had a handkerchief...all the time I was there and I wore the same underwear when I got out...that I wore there; I wore the same underwear for nearly ninety days and they were chocolate covered...colored...'cause we all had dysentery.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: And I'd never had a handkerchief. We got bombed by our own planes on our trip down there, and I hope I have time to tell you about it. They thought we were German troops, but then they realized that we weren't and they wagged their wings and flew off, but they killed about nearly a hundred of us.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: And the mos...the...first group was English. We were in the second tier, and every year we would...every day we would...advance or go back. The last ones...the tail end would be the...lead on the next day. But the day we got hit by those planes, we were in the second position, and they killed...most of them were English in the bunch a head of us.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: Six...three hundred men to a row. Anybody that was on that march will tell you this is right. They had...they had...groups were in...in...staggered in five columns, and there was three hundred in a group. (Pause), our aide man had hit head blown off.

Other Person: Uh!

Mr. Hull: (Pause), he was laying right there on the road. In fact, I can speak a little German; they put me in the front lines so I could pass on information down; I was the...one of the five guys in the front. I was...one on the outside...on the front, and all of us that could speak just a little German...none of us were real great at it, or...our pilot was, he could speak...fluent German, but he wasn't in my group. And when the planes came down, this is second day out, they were P-47s, and they weren't shooting machine guns; they were shooting these darned rocket things, and evidently, it was something like that that hit this...aide man; he was a Filipino boy. He was only about five-foot-tall and he was an aide man and he was standing next to the tallest guy in our group which was about...nearly six and a half or seven, he was a big...basketball height. They had a pair of boxing gloves on they gave us in those camps to...play with...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...they each was...playing around; he was still there with his boxing gloves on because we'd been there for nearly an hour standing, and his head was off his shoulders.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: And there...two men was over here at the right side of the road and they were in...death throws throwing their arms and legs, and that sight will never leave me.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Just like it...you'd chop a chicken's head off, they were throwing their arms...and their legs.

Other People: (Sighs)

Mr. Hull: I thought...when I get home, I'll have these dreams, but thank God, I never had a one.

Charlie Simmons: I'll be darned.

Mr. Hull: Never had a one!

Charlie Simmons: You're very lucky. Very lucky.

Mr. Hull: And we went by a...something like an orphanage where they took the children that had been to these bombs, and they wheeled them all out and made us stand in front of...and watching and they were sitting there in their...wheelchairs with their legs and arms off.

Other Person: Oh.

Mr. Hull: And that was...the saddest sight I ever saw in my life. They would go along and make you look at them. They would...a German officer would walk along in front of you and...and we stood there for nearly an hour; that was about our fourth day out.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm!

Mr. Hull: Ah well.

Charlie Simmons: That's...that's an interesting fact that I've never...heard that story before.

Mr. Hull: Well, anybody that was on that walk...will remember it. My crew remembered it.

Charlie Simmons: So, where...where did you...where did you start from? You started at...

Mr. Hull: From Stalag...

Charlie Simmons: You started at Stalag-7A...

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: ...which was...which was...

Other Person: Nuremburg.

Charlie Simmons: ...and where...where were you...what was your destination?

Mr. Hull: They...they were trying to take us to...we thought to Switzerland...for booty (?). So, we went around on the east side...west...west side of Dresden, we were west of Dresden.

Charlie Simmons: So, you're west of Dresden, okay.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, we were west of there 'cause Moosburg was east of there. So, we went on the west side...and...

Charlie Simmons: This was...this was like...in...late March of 1945?

Other Person: April, wasn't it?

Charlie Simmons: Or...or... 'cause you got shot down...what...March 2nd?

Mr. Hull: Yeah, this is in April, and we were liberated the 7th day of May...or the 6th day of May...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...day the war ended; we were liberated the sixth day. This was about...well, pretty close to the 1st of May or the last of April.

Charlie Simmons: Okay. Okay, so it's well into (unintelligible) you've been...you've been in German for almost two months then, over six weeks anyhow. Okay. Just trying to my...my time here. And you were west...you went west of Dresden then?

Mr. Hull: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: I was thinking the line was further...

Mr. Hull: Well no, we went around...Munich. We went around Munich and then back to Moosburg.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay.

Other Person: So, you made kind of a...kind of an arch.

Mr. Hull: Uh no, a fish hook.

Other Person: Yeah, a fish hook.

Mr. Hull: Uh, here is Munich. We went around Munich like this and then they were...Allies was pushing us back.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Pushing, and back and we went in; the Russians are over here. So, when we got to Moosburg, the Russians are only one or two days out and the Americans are only one or two days on the other end.

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: Patton came through with this Third Army and liberated us on the...6th day of May.

Other Person: That was the Third Army, right? That was the Third Army?

Mr. Hull: Yes.

Charlie Simmons: And...so, you had been sleeping on the road and...had you had...you had...just a few German...guards that...about fifteen hundred prisoners or

so...sounds like...you had three groups of about five hundred each, I think you said, or...five hundred...

Mr. Hull: It...we were probably spread out over a period of ten mile.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Ten or fifteen mile. Uh, it...this isn't the name, it's not Hamilton or Hampton, it's a German name, but it's like Hamilton or Hampton...and that's where General Patton's son-in-law was...interned as a prisoner of war.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And while...he broke through while we were on this march...there are just four of the march actually...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...in April he broke through and he got into this camp in Freedium (sp?), and he said...they said to him, "How wide is your front?" And they...he said, "About one rod wide." Just a tank.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: "And about twenty kilometers long." And there's...and it's spread out.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, they just punched right into that...

Mr. Hull: And that's where his son in law lost his eye...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...in that battle and they're fight for...they first captured the camp and then the Germans recaptured it. And so, Patton's son in law was in our group, but he was a...further away back from where I was.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: But he lost an eye in that fracas.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: That's what they said. Now, by the way...

Charlie Simmons: And by the way, were you in the camp, that camp that...?

Mr. Hull: No, no.

Charlie Simmons: Oh okay, 'cause...

Mr. Hull: Now, Colonel Matthews was our commanding officer, Colonel Matthews. He was a Lieutenant Colonel because, you know, from...Colonel...on Full Colonel Generals were in special camps; they weren't in camps like we were in. Colonel Matthews was our...

Other Person: Senior officer.

Charlie Simmons: Okay, this is...April...6th, you said?

Other Person: May 6th was when they were liberated.

Mr. Hull: No, we were liberated...the 7th day of...6th day of May.

Other Person: Yeah, that's what I...

Charlie Simmons: Oh, oh I'm sorry...that's...okay, this is...6th of May.

Mr. Hull: I could tell you a lot of things that happened, and I don't think I will. They had horses to pull the German supplies.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And one day one of the horses dropped dead in its harness, and immediately we were stopped...immediately we were all over that horse trying to salvage part of it for food. And the Germans wanted to started coming in with the rifle butts. And they had had that horse down to where the hide was off and there was some meat on its ribs and it was pretty rough, and I ran through...wrapped part of that meat around my shoulder and under my arm and kept on running and I pulled it lose and I had horse steak for supper.

Charlie Simmons: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: And I shared a little of it with my friends.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, tasted pretty good, I bet! So...so you were pretty much...you were on the road...you...you were moving just about the entire period of time then?

Mr. Hull: Twenty one days...from the time we left...Stalag 7A till we got to Moosburg, twenty-one days.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: Now, some got there in twenty 'cause (unintelligible) 'cause I...I've heard some other people tell their experiences.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Some got there in twenty, but it took us twenty-one 'cause...like I say, we were spread down this road for...ever!

Charlie Simmons: What happened to the men that could not make it any further?

Mr. Hull: You know that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, but we want to put it on the record.

Mr. Hull: Well, put it on the record; the German SS troops them up.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: You know, I got credit for reserve time...after I got out of the war, so I went around and told this story at the time and a few other places and I got a few hours of credit which the government gave me toward retirement; I never did finish up getting my retirement...

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: ...'cause I was in sixteen years, but I lost my training site; they'd moved it down here to Alabama and Georgia...

Charlie Simmons: Uh huh.

Mr. Hull: ...and I was living in Cedar Rapids in...and I was too poor a boy to go down there, and...and give up work while I was there.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Yeah, you know they cleaned them up. And I knew this for a fact, and my friend, Frank Perkins from Beulah, North Dakota, witnessed it.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And...there's a number of others beside me, so I'm not the first one that told on the SS troops.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They'd cleaned up the ones that was so sick with the dysentery...they couldn't keep up. They took them off the side of the road and shot them.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And this...now this figure I got from the government...when I went and got...I did my little (unintelligible words)...two times. It...I thought it might go on for a long time, but it didn't. I just got called into another

little place and that was it. But they...this is what the government supplied me with, the figures. They said...that all of the prisoners, Allied prisoners of war...of...I...I...it could have been U.S. rather than Allies...that was lost and died in prison camp...happened the last sixty days of the war...when they was moving...and half of them were gone in those last sixty days.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: So, that's the figure I got from them.

Other Person: Well, you know, they were out of food; they were out of medicine and...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, and a...a lot of it was the...the Germans, of course, they were mostly air force...

Other Person: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: ...and they were in camps a lot of them from...you know, the early days...'42 on and...uh, then they started moving those camps as the lines getting closer and those...put them out on the road. I've talked to...to several other men that were in prison camps that...that, you know, when the Russian...especially when the Russians got close the...the...they...they made them start moving down the road. Now, if they were close to the U.S. lines, the Germans...would sometimes bail out and go to...go over...surrender themselves (chuckles).

Other People: (Uh hum)

Charlie Simmons: ...and...and lead the guys into camp. But in Russia, they...they moved the prisoners with them...seemed like, so...so...so, you spent twenty-one days on the road; I guess you drank...whatever water you could get hands on?

Mr. Hull: I drank raw water one time. I found a Scottish biscuit tin...after we got started...after the second day out, they distributed...Red Cross food.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: I'm...I'm going to tell you this because I know it can be backed up, and they gave one, seven-day emergency ration to every two men; you had to get a partner, and they gave you seven days. You could divide it up in a box or what...it was seven day. Most of us...dried food, dried (unintelligible) food, or most of it was.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: And a few cigarettes in it. And then we used that for trading. But...we had been on the road I wanted to say about...fourteen days and nobody had any food left, so we scrounged the rest of the way. I guess you know what scrounge is? One of them is...we...found some German...potatoes that they had cut up for seed potatoes. They was waiting for the weather to break 'cause the ground was still frozen.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: They don't plant potatoes in frozen ground. He got in...now, those potatoes, a lot of them, had been soaked in their manure. And you know what the honey carts are?

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Lot of them had honey cart treatments. That honey cart is human manure.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Feces. They did that for...

Other Person: Fertilizing.

Mr. Hull: They used...they used honey carts for potato fertilizer. So, you can see why they had dysentery. So, that's what scrounging is. There's another plant that grows and that is a wild thistle; it'll grow all winter and they were out here in any...any winter...any...up in Iowa...they had them up there, too, and they...stayed green in the winter time. Those got eaten on the way on...on the way back. People would break into farmers stores for cow beats...to feed their cows. They would take a beet...they get this big, they'd take those beets and they'd cut them up and dry them, and the cows would eat them for...for (unintelligible).

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: Some of the fellows...were able to steal cow beets.

Charlie Simmons: Now, what were the German guards doing when you were off...doing food...(unintelligible)?

Mr. Hull: They couldn't...they couldn't keep track of all of us.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Okay.

Mr. Hull: Now, another thing. We had a commitment with the Germans. After we got hit by our own planes and a...and a few other attacks, we...the ones that came forwards and signed an oath, raised their arm that they would come back after an attack of any kind...which happened, then we'd would reassemble. And the ones that wouldn't take the oath, they had a few guards over them, and oh boy, they were...I would imagine...I wasn't in that group, I imagine they clipped a tail on them.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: But aft...after, you know, we...we had...we had...well, oh, probably this many raids...various of times. We had...uh, two of them...one of them by our own planes...was real. One of them was just a mock; it wasn't one...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...but we thought it was and we...everybody ran, and then we had another one which was...our artillery got too close to us and we had to break up.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Easter Sunday we had service. We had a guy that was probably six foot, four and...skinny as a rail...that conducted that service, and we were so close to the...both lines, now this was at the tail end, we were just about there...an artillery shell went off and...it shattered so loud...it was terrible loud, every one of us hit the ground...except him. He never flinched, he stood still as a board.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: Kept right on with his sermon. And that...that noise would just about shatter your eardrums it was so close.

Charlie Simmons: Wow.

Mr. Hull: That was Easter Sunday, that happened during that time.

Charlie Simmons: Well, were you...did you have any of your crew members so that...that you were still with or did you get split up?

Mr. Hull: Oh, we saw them at different...we saw them at...when the tanks came through. I want to tell you a little about liberation.

Charlie Simmons: Okay.

Mr. Hull: (Throat clearing). The Germans always use a church steeple for observation 'cause they was the highest building around. They would put one of their poor observers up in that tower and the first thing that got shot off when the tanks came was that observation tower.

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles)

Other People: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: So, when that guy climbed up and got in that steeple, that was his death warrant.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He knew he had...just minutes to live. So, when they came into that camp, the first...the...the church was...from our camp was maybe, oh, it was...sight...easy sight, maybe half a mile...away. You could see it. But first, we just kept watching that church. And well, some of the guys had been in the infantry said, "Now, watch that church steeple." When...he came...when Patton came in with his army, *Kabang*, that church steeple went off! He said, "There went a dead observation German, and he knew when he went up there, he was going to die." Okay, that...now, after they went through the second day, somebody said, "How about food?!" The guy said, "Well, you have never heard anybody...in the American Army...starving!" So boy, we thought, "Food's imminent." Next day...no food.

Charlie Simmons: (Chuckles)

Mr. Hull: Next day, no food.

Charlie Simmons: No kidding?! The first guys that...

Mr. Hull: No, we...yeah.

Charlie Simmons: ...the first Americans that came through wouldn't even give their C-rations or anything?

Mr. Hull: Yeah. No, they...they were there...to take care of their business.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They were taking care of their...the third day we said, "Enough of this; we're going out and...we're going out of this camp and we're going to

scrounge.” So, I and three other guys went and started scrounging. We got out...and we’d run into some of these half-tracks and jeeps and everything and we’d go around and we’d stop and say, “Have you got anything to eat?” So, we...we picked up a pretty good little supply.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And then we turned around and the guy said, “The camp’s over this way,” and..., “No, uh uh, it’s not there.” And they said, “Well, it is.” And I said, “Well, I’m going this way. Now you can go do whatever you want to.” So, I went back to camp. I...I knew my way back...I got back, and pretty soon here...I looked back here; they were following me.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They had staggered around. And we...and we had holes cut in the fence by that time and everything.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: But I was still ashamed of this...to this day...that I never shared that food.

Charlie Simmons: Huh.

Mr. Hull: I go down to my grave...thinking about that.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: I hung on to that just like...

Charlie Simmons: Well, a war does such...strange things to you.

Mr. Hull: I...I’ll tell you, I never shared (unintelligible).

Other Person: Well.

Mr. Hull: And I...I’ve agonized over that.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: To this day, I think of it...when we have our little food storage.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah. Yeah, (unintelligible words).

Mr. Hull: And I never shared that food.

Other Person: Well, if you didn’t, I might not be here, so I’m glad you didn’t.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Mr. Hull: Well now, Frank Perkins got a little; I’d say, and...

Other Person: Was Ward with you or did they...

Mr. Hull: No, no, no he was on the side of the Rhine river in a hospital.

Other Person: Oh okay.

Mr. Hull: But there was about three people I shared with.

Other Person: Well, you shared...a good thing.

Other Person: Oh, so you did share!

Mr. Hull: Oh, just a bite.

Other Person: Well...

Other Person: You know. I mean, you could probably have given somebody one bite of everything and then you'd all be back in the same position again.

Mr. Hull: No, I could have done better.

Charlie Simmons: Well, that's...uh, we...we all...sometimes do things under duress that we...in retrospect we...

Mr. Hull: You don't know how much that's hurt me through the years.

Charlie Simmons: Well...yeah. Well, but most of the guys that you were with, at that time, but...but that were still there at that time made it out okay, right? I mean, they were...you were...?

Mr. Hull: With one exception. The guy I went to school with, George Johnson (sp?) from Taintor, Iowa...

Other Person: That was weird.

Mr. Hull: ...was a ball, turret gunner and I...now I hope his folks don't...his folks are gone now

Other Person: (Choking sound)

Mr. Hull: ...Leonard (unintelligible)...he lost a leg and amputated it and he was in the hospital there. He died while I was there.

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: George Johnson, he was one grade behind me...walked to that same little two room school...for seven years...seven and a half I walked to school with him. He was...one year behind me.

Charlie Simmons: And he was on that march from...Stalag 7A?

Mr. Hull: No, he died in...

Other Person: The hospital.

Mr. Hull: ...the hospital in...Moosburg....Moosburg...in the prison camp...

Charlie Simmons: Uh hum.

Mr. Hull: ...where we were liberated; he died there. George Johnson

Charlie Simmons: Well, you mentioned that your brother, uh, did make it out of the war. What happened to your brother?

Mr. Hull: He was in the gliders.

Charlie Simmons: Oh.

Mr. Hull: And they relieved an English unit...up near Kassel...

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: ...up near there. And evidently German intelligence found out and they put some poles, like a...telephone poles out around this field where they was...come in and...glided.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: They came in and cut him lose and...nearly every one of those gliders had damage.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: Some of them...bad. Tore the wings off. Killed a lot of the people.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: He got down on the ground, but he was killed the next day...with a rifle bullet in his head.

Charlie Simmons: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: The only...good part about it was...it was quick.

Charlie Simmons: Wow.

Mr. Hull: But he had a twin sister that was born July 3rd, 1923 that never celebrated her birthday after that.

Charlie Simmons: Hum.

Other Person: She didn't celebrate her birthday?

Mr. Hull: He was named after my dad...

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Hull: Dwight was, Dwight Arsel (sp?) Dale.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, I'll tell you, those helicopter pil...uh, those glider pilots...they...they have some amazing stories...I...I interviewed. But we...we...they had a reunion in San Antonio, and I interviewed several glider pilots that were...that were on that...that mission up to...to...near Arnhem and it just...incredible...some of the things those guys went through. I mean, I thought that the...people, you know, flying the planes had it bad, but, you know, you're in a...in a glider...and you've got...

Other Person: You've got...you've got in a plane...go down.

Charlie Simmons: ...you're in a plane...you're in a plane with no engine, and they turn you lose at seven hundred feet, you know.

Other Person: Yeah.

Charlie Simmons: You're not flying up at...ten...ten, fifteen thousand feet (chuckles)

Other Person: Geez.

Charlie Simmons: That's...

Mr. Hull: Well, I'll tell you, an interview of him would have been great, and he could get them through your son (talking to someone in the room.) He was an avid writer; he wrote a letter in a diary every day in his diary and he sent these back. He sent everything he could through...regular channels which was allowable.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah.

Mr. Hull: And he had a suitcase full of letters that he had written and the government sent them back and I can never...I opened one letter and I started to read it and I couldn't.

Charlie Simmons: Hum!

Mr. Hull: I could not read it. I put it back in the suitcase, and I gave it to his son who is kind of an historian, and he's got a suitcase of Dwight Hull's letters.

Charlie Simmons: Well, it sounds like a good start for a book there. Well, uh, Glynn, I think we could go on quite a while. We've been at it for two hours; you've been in it for two hours.

Other Person: (Laughter)

Charlie Simmons: I know there's...got some more stories in there that...that we...I'd love to get out of you, but I think we've probably got enough for this session here. Maybe we can get back together and just talk a little bit about, you know, maybe the end of your...of your stay with the...your visit with the Germans here at some other time when we have a little more time. 'Cause I...I know you must be getting kind of weary of talking, and I'm kind of...I'm kind of running down, too, so...

Everyone: (Laughter)

Other Person: Yeah, he's got a lot of stories.

Other Person: Yes really.

Charlie Simmons: Yeah, okay, so I'm going to wrap it up here I think.

Other Person: Okay.

Charlie Simmons: And I want to...I just want to say thank you very much for...for the time today. This...you've got some wonderful stories there, and I...I appreciate your time today and I appreciate your time...back in the 1940s when you went over there...did what you did for us. So, for...on behalf of my own self personally, but for the Museum, too, I want to thank you.

(end of interview)

FINAL copy
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