

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH DE LUCCIA

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

ERIC VIVINO

and

DANIEL RUGGIERO

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Joseph De Luccia on October 27, 2008, in Saddle Brook, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth.

Eric Vivino: Eric Vivino

Daniel Ruggiero: Dan Ruggiero.

SI: Mr. De Luccia, thank you very much for having us here today.

Joseph De Luccia: Quite welcome.

SI: To begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

JD: Born in the Bronx, New York on May 19, 1924. My parents lived there for only two years, and then, they moved to Paterson, New Jersey and I lived there until I was inducted into the service in February of 1943.

SI: What were your parents' names?

JD: My father, Frank or Francesco, was Italian and my mother was Theresa.

SI: Now your father was from Italy and your mother also was from Italy?

JC: Both born in Italy, yes.

SI: What area of Italy, were they from the same area?

JC: Both in the same town, in fact, we visited that town a few years ago to find family. My father was in the service, Italian Army, and he was a prisoner of war and while he was a prisoner of war he'd met a young fellow that lived in the same town that he lived in and when they got home after the war was over, that young fellow introduced my father to his sister and they got married.

SI: Great. Did your parents ever tell you any stories about what it was like to grow up in that area of Italy?

JC: My mother was the talker, my father was quiet and we knew practically everything that went on in the family in Italy. My mother had brothers, she was the only female child in the family and they were property, I would say property rich, because there as she always said that when harvest time came they used to have to hire people to pick the olives and whatever else that they were growing on the property. So, they were pretty well [off]. My father came from a very poor family and while we were there we actually saw my father's house and my mother's house and a lot of other things I could get into, but not having to do with what we're here for and my brother and I and my son went to Italy three times and we were extremely successful in finding relatives on my father's side and on my mother's side. In fact the surprise of all was that my father's sister,

who was twelve years younger than my father, was still alive. She's ninety-five years old, but senile, and she may outlast me, but we were extremely successful.

SI: Did your parents, maybe your mother, ever talk about why they made the decision to come to the U.S.?

JC: Oh, it was the lack of opportunities for my father in Italy. He knew people in this country, [people] he was corresponding with and they told him that there were plenty of jobs here for people if they came here and my father really didn't have any. He's relatively a farmer there and he loved farming and he kept doing farming here on the side, anyway, I mean growing vegetables and everything, but he came here and went to work, and in fact, he worked in New York, and then, came to Paterson and worked in the silk processing plants that they had all over Paterson at the time, but he had no problem getting work, but at the same time, he still carried on his trade of planting and growing vegetables for the family, which was his love. He really enjoyed doing that.

SI: If you guys have questions just jump in. Did they ever talk about the actual trip over to the U.S; if it was difficult or where they came in?

JD: No, not really. I don't remember. I do know one thing; my mother was very reluctant to come to this country. In other words, she had family there and my father came because it was very necessary for him to come here and I think she was very, very unhappy being away from her family. I think that affected her life considerably while she was living here. As far as my father is concerned, he loved it here and he had a lot of opportunities and seemed quite happy here.

SI: Did any of the family follow them over to the US or did they ever go back to visit?

JD: My parents never went back because of a problem, really ridiculous. They had intended to go and they sent money to my mother's brother. He took that money and bought property there. In fact, we saw the property that he bought and he and my mother really went through the ceiling when she heard that, because the money was gone and they couldn't afford to go to Italy, but she cursed him, I mean really cursed him. When we went back--we had pictures of--we got pictures of everybody that was there, also the picture of my mother's brother and I always tell my sister, my mother never would've allowed that picture in the house if she was alive today, very handsome man too, let me tell you, a real pip.

SI: So, the first two years of your life were in the Bronx?

JD: Yes.

SI: Do you have any memories of that time?

JD: No, I was a baby, two years old, left there and my sister was one year older than I and we settled in Paterson, which is only about three miles from here and we lived there in a rented apartment there all that time, until my father bought a house and renovated it and lived there, in

fact, my sister and my brother still live in that house. It's a three family house. My sister has the center floor and my brother lives on the third floor and his daughter lives on the first floor.

SI: You're one of four children.

JD: Four children, yes.

SI: What are your siblings' names?

JD: My oldest sister, Angelina, she passed away. My brother (Emil?) and my sister Ida are still alive, and they live in Paterson.

SI: And you're the second oldest?

JD: I'm the second oldest, yes.

SI: When was that, when the family went from the rented apartment to the house that they purchased?

JD: When, oh, it had to be, well, they came over in 1922, so they spent two years, around 1924 they settled in Paterson.

SI: Okay, alright. So they purchased the house fairly early on?

JD: No, no, they didn't purchase the house. They lived in a rental until just before, oh, during the time, yes; my father bought a house right after I entered the service, so it was after 1943, because when I came back I didn't come back to the same house. I came back to the one he purchased.

SI: Was it always the same apartment that you rented or did you move around much in Paterson?

JD: No, they stayed in that apartment until he bought the house. No, no moving around.

SI: What are your earliest memories of growing up in Paterson?

JC: A very, very busy city. It was the silk city of this country. In other words, it was the main processing plant--city in this country and actually the sister city of Paterson, New Jersey was Lyon in France because they did the same thing and both of these cities were known to be at that stage of manufacturing. They used to import all of the silk from China that I used to remember as a kid. We'd have factories all over the place. Actually, we lived in a heavy industrial area of Paterson, which is the northern part. Right now it's still very, industrial, there's a lot of factories that have been you know changed over to the kind of manufacturing that they do today, but at that time it was processing of silk and rayon and all that other material that they made. They'd have weaving companies there that used to weave the material and all that stuff used to be shipped to New York and I remember as a kid going on a truck with the truckers that were

bringing them into New York and going across on the ferry, and then, going underneath the buildings where they would process, and I mean they would actually make clothing out of this material, but it was very, very heavy industrial city, still is today.

SI: Do you know what your father would do in the factories, what his job was?

JD: He worked in a dye shop where they would dye the skeins you know the original skeins into different colors, and then, from there it would go to a weaving plant and the name of the company is the, what is it now, let's see. I forget the name, but the building is still there, but it has been subdivided for a lot of companies, it's right across the river from the northern part of Paterson, in fact, directly across the river, at that time it was one of the largest factories around. I mean we're talking about acreage and it's still there, but it's been subdivided for a lot of companies. That's what he was involved in most of the time.

SI: The area that you grew up in Northern Paterson was it primarily Italian or was it a mix of people?

JD: I would say predominantly Italian, yes, and I would say a good part of Paterson was Italian, yes, but later on, well, I think when the war production was going on, then we got people from other states coming in to work in these factories and a lot of them stayed, they bought property in the surrounding cities here, and, in fact, there's still some of the houses that I remember that were put up to house these people are still being used today.

SI: Growing up there in an Italian household did your family maintain any traditions or maintain the language?

JD: Oh, yes, my mother being the talker, the Italian that I know or I can remember my mother speaking it. I know what she was talking about and it helped me a lot when I went overseas to Italy, but the speaking between my mother and father was mostly in Italian, yes. We got our English; of course, school, and then, we had radio. You'd pick up that radio, but the people in the neighborhood, most of them could speak English and Italian.

SI: Were they from all over Italy or was it like grouped by where you were from in Italy?

JD: No, they were all over Italy. My mother-in-law was from Milan and I remember a neighbor up the street was from Tuscany and Piedmont; they're from all over parts of Italy, yes, where we're known as Sicilianos, but where we lived in the area, my parents came from the area what they called Campania, which is a very, very park like place, not settled as much as the rest of Italy and practically all the houses were built on the sides of mountains, because it's all mountains like that all the way, that section was, and a beautiful place, I mean absolutely gorgeous, make sure you people go there to visit some day, it's worthwhile.

DR: What did you like to do when you were growing up? Did you have any hobbies or sports?

JD: Oh, yes, the hobby I had was extremely interested in electronics. In fact, I remember we had a neighbor, whose sons had magazines and I'm trying--oh, *Popular Mechanics* magazines

and they had a little electronic section in it and I used to--they invited me in to read the newspapers and read the magazines and I remember seeing articles about electronics and I was very, very interested in electronics and I remember when it was possible at that time to pick up old radios that people were throwing out and I remember taking parts from them and I did make a shortwave receiver. It's a one tube shortwave regenerative receiver that ran on batteries and my father used to listen to Rome, the news from Rome, with headphones on and electronics was my love from that time and to this time. I never got away from electronics as you'll find out with the future questions.

SI: So, your postwar career was in electronics?

JD: Always, always electronics.

SI: So, you really taught yourself a lot.

JD: Oh, it's all self-taught, yes, all self-taught.

SI: What about your early education? Where did you go to school?

JD: [I] went to School No. 18 in Paterson and it was the, I think, grade one to six, and then, School No. 10 for seven and eight, and then, from there to Eastside High School, which was the famous high school in our town we had in Paterson, had terrific football players and the other high school was Central High School. They were always playing against each other. [It] was on the other side of town and actually, when I graduated high school, I worked in defense plants until a matter of let's see, seventeen, a matter of two years from that, I was inducted into the service.

SI: You mentioned that the Italian language was kept up at your household. Were there other traditions like holiday traditions?

JD: Oh, absolutely. The cooking my mother did and the stuff we did during Easter and Thanksgiving and Christmas were really traditional stuff except for the turkey. When we had a Thanksgiving meal, we would not only have maybe a twenty-five pound turkey in the middle of the table, but you'd have two platters of lasagna, because my parents always wanted pasta, which is what some of our--that's the way our meals, in fact, I remember the last Thanksgiving that my father had before he passed away, more than about three months later, yes, we had a very big Thanksgiving. I had a brother-in-law that worked at one of the golf courses and he had a twenty-five pound turkey cooked there and he brought it down, we had another turkey that we made. We had two turkeys on the table plus all the Italian stuff, so we had about fifty pounds of turkey sitting on the table plus all the trimmings. You should have seen it; we had a table set up double this size because we have about three, four families, my brother, my sister, and so, it was really something, but all traditional stuff. In fact, one of the trips we made to Italy was during the Christmas week and we had a meal with two families there and the way they cooked there is the way my mother cooked. They had certain things that they made on Christmas and certain things that they made on Thanksgiving, and so, my mother was an excellent cook, excellent cook, but all the stuff that they made there, a lot of vegetables. My father was crazy for vegetables.

SI: He raised them all himself?

JD: Well, in season, yes, but canning was a big deal in those days. We never bought canned tomatoes because my father canned a couple of hundred jars of tomatoes and we had a lot of stuff that was canned, peppers were processed and canned, and just once my father made a barrel of wine which was the most delicious wine in the world, terrific, and he was not a drinker, but it's just like the old country.

SI: Within the community was there a lot of community wide things related to Italian traditions like celebrating festivals?

JD: Oh, yes, the church, the Catholic Church, had festivals and yes, had the traditional parades, like the Easter parades where they carried the cross, which if you saw the Godfather, it's just exactly the same thing, and, oh, yes, all that stuff was carried over, everything, and they had the block parties in those days, which you don't see today and it was a big difference, big difference.

SI: Would those be thrown by the Church or just spontaneously come out of the community?

JD: Well, the Church would have the parade, but there were certain festivals they had proclaiming saints and they would have get-togethers, food and everything, more like a carnival and a religious situation. In fact, we still have that in our town here. They have a carnival set up right outside the property of the Church there and they collect money that way too and they have all the Italian food, pepper and sausage and all that stuff. You have the Ferris wheel and they also have lotteries too, and it still goes on today in a lot of towns.

SI: Did the Church play a big part of your life growing up?

JD: No. My parents weren't involved in going to church and neither were we as children. I personally was never involved. Let's put it this way, at a very early age, I did a lot of reading and some of the reading I did was about the Catholic Church and what bothered me about the Catholic Church, it's one of the richest entities on the face of the Earth, money wise and property wise, and it bothered me that you should have a church that rich and also getting richer because money was always being funneled from parishes to Italy and never the other way back to help out the parishes that actually needed it and I think, as far as my religious principles are concerned, I could not understand an entity like that representing God and I still feel that way today.

SI: Do you remember anything in particular that you were reading that taught you about that?

JD: Yes, there was a book at that time, I don't know the title of it, but it was an exposé of the Catholic Church. I don't, it's, I'm sure if you look it up, the name escapes me, but at that time it was a very big deal to have a book like that come out, because people that are religious didn't like it, but it gave me all the information that I wanted, which I figured out myself before I even read it, but I didn't know the extent of what went on in the Church. You have a lot of people that I remember in the area, if they had property, they would turn it over to the Church; will it to the

Church. So the Church in many ways, even in this country, went into competition with local businesses because they had businesses also. So, that was one of the [reasons] and also the tie in of the Church with all of the cemeteries and mausoleums that you see going on today. That bothered me, yes.

SI: It's interesting that you were doing all this reading on electronics and also social issues.

JD: I haven't stopped. I probably have done more reading than you three will do in your lifetime, let me tell you, and I believe that, that I haven't stopped. There are twenty-one libraries in this county. I go to all of them and I go to other counties too when I want to. I get on the computer and if there's a book that I want, I find out where it is. I read continually. There's books all over the house. I've got three bookcases downstairs that I hope to finish before I die, because I'm eighty-four years old now and I subscribe to about eight magazines, some electronic and some business magazines. I don't read fiction magazines, no. I'm not into that at all, all non-fiction.

SI: Did you find that your schools in Paterson could keep with your intellectual desires? Were they good schools?

JD: Oh, the schools were excellent. With what I picked up that I used a lot in my work, I remember mechanical drawing was terrific, which I used in my work continuously and mathematics, my God, learning how to use the slide rule was one of the biggest things in those days and I used that at work because you didn't have the calculators yet. I remember getting my first Texas Instrument Calculator, but before that it was the old slide rule and science, I'm into that continually. I've never stopped with that; get all of my science on the TV, *Nova*. I have a lot of tapes of the programs of *Nova* and watch the *History Channel* continuously, yes.

SI: Did you make a lot of use of libraries when you were a child?

JD: Oh, yes, absolutely. We had a very good library in Paterson, the main public library, and I used to go there. In fact, they had, well, I used to go there so often they knew me and they would allow me to go into their private area to look for books, which normally you would have to write it down and they would go look for it. So, I practically lived in the library. I got to all the surrounding libraries in these towns, Saddle Brook, Maywood, and Lodi, all of these libraries I go to, sometimes two or three libraries a week. I only go there to look for new books, because what's on the stacks, I've gone through. There's not anything I would need there. In fact, I remember once the library in Paramus was renovating and the electronics section there was pitifully out of date and I told the librarian. I said, "You know, everything you've got there, I think Columbus brought over with him." "You've got to get rid of it," because tube stuff. I mean it's not tube now, it's all transistors and integrated circuits and all that stuff. So, they did. They got rid of everything and now it's pretty well set up.

SI: Were there other outlets for your curiosity like museums or things like that?

JD: Well, as a young person I was a home body. We didn't do any trips or, well trips--picnics and stuff like that we would do, bringing our food from home and picnic tables out. I think one

time we went up to Bear Mountain and there's a lot of other places locally that we used to go and my father--we used to go on trips through where there were mulberry trees and we used to come home with a bushel of them, put the sheet on the ground and shake, all the ripe ones would fall, and we would--no, we got around. My father used to go out for mushrooms when the season was open, well, a lot of Fair Lawn was New Jersey and New Jersey was woods at one time and we used to drop him off with a couple of bushels that he would carry with him and pick him up five o'clock in the evening.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JD: Very frail she's in a lot of problems, but hanging on.

SI: So, even though Paterson was very industrialized area, the surrounding areas were still very rural?

JD: Oh, absolutely. Yes, I remember Fair Lawn, New Jersey and East Paterson, which is no longer East Paterson, its Elmwood Park now. All the surrounding towns around Paterson and also the surrounding towns around Hackensack, which were the two major cities, there was a lot of truck farms, you used to grow vegetables and also I remember Teterboro Airport, when I used to go around there, there were truck farms completely surrounding the airport. It was a very level area and now they practically built right up to the fence. Now they complain about noise. But slowly but surely then they started building, especially when everybody started coming home from the service, everything just mushroomed all over the place, yes. Right now you don't have borders anymore; your next town starts on the next side of the street. It's just, it's a continuous city, subdivided by governments, that's about it.

SI: When you said you were going up by Teterboro was that when you were younger or later on?

JD: Oh, I used to go there to watch airplanes fly, that's one of my major interests also. I was very interested, in fact, they used to build model airplanes, not with gas power, but the elastic band power and I used to read a lot about them and I know airplanes quite well.

SI: When you were going there, did they still have like the barnstormers or those types of things?

JD: Oh, yes, oh, yes, we used to have that, yes, but at that time they had single-engine airplanes. We used to call them puddle jumpers. That's all there was around there at that time. You would see biplanes flying over sometimes, but occasionally you would see a glider in those days, but not too much air traffic in those days. I've always kept up with airplanes. In fact, one of the models I built, which was quite a beauty, it was one of the racing planes that the Italians used. The plane was called a Machicastaldi, big pontoons on it and everything; it used to win races in Europe. By that time building model airplanes was quite popular, yes. So, I was always, besides electronics, aeronautics was quite interesting to me, which of course is what I ended up doing anyway.

SI: Let's see. How did the Great Depression affect the Paterson area and your family particularly?

JD: Well, it was a little tough. We had no problem. There always enough food and enough fuel and everything. It didn't bother us too much because my parents always say, "A depression here was pretty much what it was in Italy," so there was basically no change, I don't think. The people that had problems were the ones that owned property and had to pay taxes and stuff like that, but the majority of people living in Paterson were renting, so if you had enough food and you could go to school, you had clothing, it really wasn't a problem. I don't ever remember us having any problem. Well, the thing is that most of the time when I was young was almost like a Depression time, but once the war started then everybody was working and plenty of money around.

SI: Was his job ever affected? Was he cut back?

JD: No, no, because a lot of the stuff that they were manufacturing was used by the service, a lot of it.

SI: Or even earlier in 1930s when the Depression first started?

JD: No, he worked. He kept working. I don't ever remember my father being out of work, always working, yes.

SI: Do you remember a lot of other families having to deal with unemployment or losing their homes?

JD: No. I don't think it was that bad in our area, it could have been in other areas.

SI: Did you remember seeing hobos coming through?

JD: Well, yes, I do remember them coming through, but there was also in, what is it, in Hawthorne across the river from the northern part of Paterson, there was a hobo camp there. I remember that because the railroad went through there. It was a lot of open property, pardon me, but you're right, that occasionally we they would come through, but there were people out of work, there's no doubt about it, but not in the area that I know of. Of course at that time they had the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps], so a lot of young men got off the streets and went to work with that outfit, which was a very good thing to have and they also had the WPA [Works Progress Administration] for some of the men that didn't have a job, so it was not too big of a deal. [Editor's Note: The CCC and the WPA were New Deal agencies created by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The CCC was a public relief program that focused on employing unemployed, single men. The WPA focused on employing unemployed, unskilled workers to work on public works projects.]

SI: Did you see WPA, for example, doing work in your town?

JD: Oh, yes, I remember--well, I don't know, you don't know the area, but there's a highway that they dug up and had ready for paving and everything from Paterson all the way up to Oakland and they got it all ready, but it sat there for years because there wasn't any money to continue to finish it. In other words, they did all the grading and everything, but they finally got it finished as soon as the war started, because they had to have it because they needed the roads, but they did a lot of work all over the place and I remember the CCC because I was into hiking also later in my life and some of the stuff that was in the hiking areas they had done, they had made up dams and built shelters and graded, made hiking paths and all of that stuff. It kept them busy.

SI: Were most people accepting these New Deal programs and Roosevelt's programs?

JD: Oh, yes.

SI: Was there any stigma attached to doing that?

JD: No, no, hard work was not a stigma in those days. That came a little later.

SI: How did you and your family view Roosevelt and his administration?

JD: I personally, well, I think my parents were not involved. They didn't have any interest in that, but I remember Roosevelt and the one thing that I know is that because of the war and the way the government was being run because it had to be run that way, that I always felt that he was the first and only virtual dictator in this country, and this is what we needed, we needed somebody like him, a tremendous man to steer and to do the things that this country had to do in time of war, and there was no problem in getting it done because everybody knew it had to be done and therefore you had a central government there that did a fantastic job in getting things done when it had to be done without any quibbling or no politics. There was no such things as politics in those days. Things had to be done and it worked out; you can't have it any other way, but he was a tremendous man and a great loss, let me tell you.

DR: When you graduated high school and went to work in a war plant, what did you do?

JD: I worked in Western Electric, which was producing the same equipment that I used on the B-17, believe it or not.

DR: So, you knew it pretty well then.

JD: Yes. I used to test and calibrate the 274 receivers and the only thing I had on the B-17 was a shortwave receiver which was manufactured by some other outfit, but on most of the other equipment, the longwave and shortwave receiver--it was stuff that I worked on just before I went into the service, so get on the B-17, there's this stuff sitting right there, yes, and I worked for them and it was only about a year and a half, really, before I was inducted, but it was all electronics.

SI: Were you just assembling the components on a line?

JD: Well, they had an assembly line, and then--my first job I remember was inspection of the (soldering?) joints, this was on the sockets, the whole what was underneath the chassis of the equipment and within a month or so they trained me to test the equipment and that's what I did from that point on, was testing and calibrating. Calibrating was setting up the frequencies so that they matched up on a dial and make sure that it was working. Actually, I worked inside of a cage about the size of this room, which excluded any radiation from the outside, we're talking about radio, and so, inside that cage the only signal that was being produced was the equipment that I was working on so there was no interference from the outside and with the signal generators that I used to calibrate, you could do it without any outside interference. It was a double layer of wall like this and between each and there was like a copper mesh and in between these two copper meshes there was like a direct current voltage on them so that if you touched both of them, not enough to hurt you, but it really improved the keeping out the radiation. We used to, just for fun, used to swing the door open. It was like turning a volume control. You close the door and you hear nothing, you open the door and all hell breaks loose, it was very interesting, but that's what you had to do when you're calibrating and testing also, when it was all done. It had to work. This stuff was inspected quite a bit.

SI: Did they have people from the military in the factory?

JD: Oh, yes, oh yes, sure. They had engineers there and everything. I was involved with engineers in my work later on too.

SI: Had you had any jobs before that, like in high school?

JD: No, nothing in high school, no.

EV: Do you feel that all this background experience helped you when it came to military training for you?

JD: The military training for me was great. The one thing, it was no problem for me, basic training, it wasn't any problem. The one thing that I remember is getting people from all over the country going into basic training, at least into our group, and it was amazing at the attitudes of these different groups. You get the groups that bitch all the time and you get groups that were so poor, when they were on the outside, before they got into the service, some of them never had a pair of shoes until they came into the service and I always remember that in the barracks at night before we would go off to sleep, they would talk about their background and I always remember one in particular that he said they lived all winter on beans because there wasn't anything else to eat then. You're talking about the farmers and some of them, they thought that the Army food was some of the best food that they ever had, whereas three quarters of the people would say it was garbage and it was very interesting and not everybody took to that kind of training; I'll have to say that, especially the relationship between the non-commissioned and the officers, that was a sticking point for a lot of GIs.

SI: So, a lot of people didn't immediately take to taking orders.

JD: Yes, that, well, we were an undisciplined group that got in there and the Army is like, it's a different lifestyle, and a lot of young men weren't used to being dictated to. It took a while, some of them never made it, some of them were thrown out and some of them made something of themselves. It changes you; you're not going to be the same as when you were a civilian.

SI: Well, before we get too deep in your military experience, I want to ask before Pearl Harbor, given all this reading that you did, did you know a lot about what was happening overseas like with Hitler taking over Germany?

JD: Oh, yes, I knew all of that, absolutely. I had a good background on all of that stuff, yes. It was known.

DR: Did you anticipate that the U.S would be in the war eventually?

JD: Well, when I started hearing about what was going on in Europe, I took it for granted that it was going to happen, but I was surprised that it happened out in the West, in Pearl Harbor, but what was going on in Europe was, of course, we were an isolationist country at that time and I remember Roosevelt saying, "We're not going to go to war, but the thing is that we had to, whether we liked it or not, and it's a good thing we did. [Editor's Note: The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was orchestrated on December 7, 1941. It brought the U.S into World War II as a combatant.]

EV: As an Italian American, how did your family view Mussolini and what he wanted for Italy?

JD: I remember hearing a lot about him and he wasn't too popular, even amongst the Italians here. In fact, it got to the point where he was an embarrassment and I think the Italians that I know of were not patriotic to their country at all. That's the old country, they're embedded in this society, although there were some, but I don't remember any complaints about--nobody that I know of went around saying that Italy is the best thing in the world at that time, no. They kind of were smart enough to realize, you have to realize that they were so much better off in this country.

SI: Was there any anti-Italian sentiment as the war broke out in Europe and after America went to war with Italy?

JC: Well, there might have been between nationalities in this country, but I don't think we ran across any [discrimination]. Of course, we had a lot of different nationalities coming into this area to work in the war and believe me their mind was on what they were doing and I don't think you had any of that. I really don't remember anything. The one thing I did hear is that there was something about the Italians have to make sure that their radios didn't have shortwave on it and that's about all I know, because then you could listen to the old country, but there were a lot of Italians who didn't have shortwave radios, but they came a little later.

DR: How did you hear about Pearl Harbor? Do you remember where you were?

JD: I really don't remember where I was. No, I can't say, but I remember it was a big deal, a really big deal.

SI: Were there any changes right away? Did they start putting in the Civil Defense rules?

JD: Oh, I remember your outfit set up, in fact, it's in a place where we could go and learn the electronic theory.

SI: Rutgers University?

JD: Rutgers had a course and I took the course and that's actually the only electronic course I ever took, which was certainly enough to get me into what I was doing in the service. It was the only background I had, but then I always had theory books on hand, which I taught myself electronics. I've got a whole bookcase full of it in there.

SI: Did you find it was a good course? Did it teach you things you didn't know or was it all stuff you had already taught yourself? Was it all stuff that you taught yourself already or was it new material?

JD: Oh, there's a lot of new material that I had to pick up after that. Some of the stuff there, taught myself about transistors, taught myself about integrated circuits and actually put them together and used them, looked on the scope. I'll give you a peek in that room, it's in shambles, but you'll see the equipment that I have in there.

SI: Was it a Rutgers professor or was it a staff member that came out and did the course?

JD: Staff, I can just barely remember it, but I remember taking the course and taking the exam.

SI: Was that while you were working at the factory?

JD: Yes, it had to be then, yes. It was a short two years there from school to being inducted, so it's very hard for me to pin it down, but it was during the war, that's for sure and I remember it.

DR: Did you have many friends going overseas during this time period or were they still around?

JD: Are you talking about while I was in the service?

DR: In that short interval.

JD: Oh, well, everybody was being inducted that were turning eighteen, and then, they just disappeared. I don't know where they all went, but some of them went into the Navy, some went into the Army, most of them went into the Army, went to Camp Dix, [Fort Dix] and then, I went to Camp Dix for basic training, and then, of course, they sent me down to, what do you call that, Florida, Miami Beach, yes, and I remember it was one of the big hotels at that time is where we had our basic training, marching on the sand, which was pretty rough, but we were sent all over.

We were sent all over the country, these people, places out in the Midwest, places down South, all over the place, yes. I've been all over the place when I was in the service too before I was--I went to England, so we went all over, training all over the place.

SI: Had you really had an opportunity to travel much outside of the Paterson area before the service?

JD: No, no, just more local than anything else. I think the furthest I ever went was New York City, that's about it. No, well, number one, nobody in our family had a car. My father never drove, we didn't have to, we got everything, we had everything there locally. There was no reason to have a car. The car that my brother, who became a mechanic, I think he had the first car in the family, way back, and I think I had a car just before I went into the service. It was a '38 or '39 Chevy or something like that, that's about it.

SI: Just a couple more questions about the factory. Did you see more non-traditional workers coming into the factory like women or African Americans?

JD: Oh, yes, all nationalities. We had people from Pennsylvania, from New York State, the South, all over. They came here, and women, women were the majority of the employees because the men were gone, the young men were all gone, practically, I would say. I worked in the Western Electric Plant in Clifton on Main Avenue, it's a building that's, I would say, two city blocks long and I can't tell you how many thousands of young ladies were in that building, I mean we're talking about, there's an aisle down the middle of each floor there and from there to the wall, hundreds of them on each floor, and it had to be three or four thousand young ladies in that, and very, very few men, because we were all less than 18 years old and I remember, they used to do, one they used to do all the wiring, they used to do all of the stuff like that. The men that were around were doing the inspection and troubleshooting and calibration. I would say the ratio of men to women was like maybe five hundred to one, at that time, so, there were just no men around. As soon as they turned eighteen you were in, you got that letter, "Greetings."

SI: Did you make any plans in regard to what you would do in the service or just wait to be drafted?

JD: You don't make plans. You go in and according to your qualifications you get placed somewhere you're going to do them good. If you qualified for something they'll get you in. If you have a degree, a college degree and if you get, I guess they gave us an IQ test also, and most of the fellows that went to Officer Training School had college degrees. If you didn't have a college degree you didn't go to Officer Training School, but the rest of us, whatever we were qualified to do, we were mostly funneled into those jobs. When they found out that I knew electronics and I was interested in airplanes, I was in the 8th Air Force right off the bat after I got out of basic training.

SI: You talked about how the different groups had problems or different experiences in basic training. What about your own experience? Was it jarring to go from civilian life to the military?

JD: No, no, I'll tell you, I can say I mostly enjoyed myself. I think it matured me and it matured me in the respect that I realized that you could get a hell of a lot of good out of what we were doing, which was a hell of a lot different than what you would do in civilian life and it was quite an adventure, at least it was for me, quite an adventure and I would do it again, I really would.

EV: How did your parents feel about you entering the military?

JD: Well, my father was concerned because he was a prisoner of war; he knew what the hell was going on there, which was not good. In fact, I remember he used to say in order to stay alive, they used to have to go out and steal potatoes, and to this day he never ate potatoes anymore, but it was rough for him, but the family, of course, was concerned. I always remember that when I was flying in combat, we were always interviewed by the press and some of the stuff got into the papers at home. In fact, I have some clippings that my sister kept and they were not too happy about what I was going through, in other words. I survived anyway, but they knew, pretty much knew, what was going on, but everybody else was gone and I remember hearing from them that some of our young men in our area had already been killed in the war, yes.

SI: Do you want to take a break?

JD: No, I'm fine if you want to keep up; if you want to take a break, anytime you want. Whenever you want a coffee let me know.

EV: You said you entered the service in February of 1943. Is that because of your age?

JD: Yes, I turned eighteen, May 19, 1924, let's see, well, yes, I turned eighteen and I got in at February 1943, is when I was inducted.

SI: Were you looking forward to going in the military? Were people who were not in the military at that time looked down upon?

JD: Well, I would say the majority of the young fellows were not that happy to be conscripted, but to me I knew it was coming and it didn't bother me at all. My attitude was we're going to do a lot, I'm going to learn a lot, going to get away from home and see the world and that's exactly what I did. I wouldn't change it for the world. I had, as I say, a mature attitude about it. Whatever I did in the service certainly helped me a lot in my civilian life. The one thing that I can say is that what I had been through frustrates me a lot by what I see in the waste of talent of what's going on with the young people in this country. I would say that a majority and I see a lot of young fellows around here, young ladies too; they just don't have a clue as to what's going on in the world and they really don't take education very seriously and to me it's a shame. I think a lot of them don't have hobbies today, they don't have interests in practically anything today and their main interest today, which unfortunately, is sports. I mean the fathers want their children or their sons to be football players, basketball players, and you name it, hockey players, but as far as interest in school, you'll find a very small percentage of these young people going to school that really know why they're there and the rest of them don't. That bothers me.

SI: You went in, you were at Fort Dix, and then, you were sent down to Miami Beach.

JD: Yes.

SI: How long were you at Fort Dix for?

JD: Not too long, I would say less than a month, with all the processing that goes on, you've got to get shots, you've got to do this and that and finally get on the train and you're down to Miami Beach. Miami Beach, I don't know how long, what do you call it, the basic training was. It wasn't too long, maybe two or three months or something like that.

SI: Were you in the hotels down there?

JD: Yes, one of them, yes. I'm trying to think of the name of the hotel. It was, I think, the largest hotel on the strip, I don't know. I really don't remember the name of it, but you it's not there anymore, it's gone. It was just like a three-story, very long building where we were all housed. The Air Force took over the whole place. I remember there was also a section there where they were training the WACs [Women's Army Corps] and the WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] and all that, but the whole town was taken over, nobody was going on vacations. They took over everything. They did that in a lot of cities too, wherever there were camps around and all that. [Editor's Note: The WAC was created as an auxiliary unit in the Army on May 15, 1942. The WAVES were created as a division of the Navy on July 30, 1942.]

SI: Was it mostly physical and weapons training or was there some radio training there?

JD: No radio training there, no. You learned how to parade, you learned how to march, you learned a lot about what was required of you in the service, all the rules, what you can't get away with, which is not much that you can get away with, and you start having a relationship with people that train you, but I always remember enjoying the parades, I really did. I can't say that I was patriotic, but I fell into that kind of life very easily. I didn't have any problem with that. It was interesting for me. The one thing, I realized one thing, is that the separation between the officers and the enlisted people. I consciously wished that I was qualified to be an officer. They had the job of delegating. When you're in the war, you have to be capable of delegating sensibly so you don't get your men killed and that's a responsibility and I did understand that you had to be educated properly in order to do that kind of a job. So, I had no reason to bitch about it, you know what I mean, but being self-taught, I learned a lot from the system. The reason they are what they are and the reason we are what we are is because we don't have the capabilities that they have. They have responsibilities. We have the responsibility of doing what we're told that is absolutely necessary with no ifs ands or buts, that's the system you're in, see, but I understood that. It didn't bother me that they were better off than we were, but I realized why they were the way they were and I realized why we were the way we were, but that wasn't true for a lot of men, there's a continual.

SI: You said they chaffed under the system of order?

JD: Oh, sure.

SI: Do you remember any examples of that? Were people heavily punished or washed out of training?

JD: Some washed out, some of them, they wouldn't even get up in the morning to be counted and some of them were so undisciplined that they wouldn't take orders and it was rough on them to be that way, but you had to be on the ball. You were completely structured as to what you did from the time you woke up until the time you went to bed and if you didn't adhere to that you had a problem. There were a lot of fellows that fell by the wayside. They would be doing KP [Kitchen Patrol], not that they were kicked out, they would be doing something that they wished they didn't have to do, but some of them even ended up in jail, but the majority of people, even though they complained, they went along with it, but there was bitching all the time.

SI: Do you think the drill instructors and officers were very strict?

JD: Yes, they were what they were supposed to be. When you realized that in the long run, when you realize that your ability to come out of this war alive depended on you doing what you had to do, doing it properly, and if you didn't know that, then you have a problem, but to me it was--I got more education in the service than I did at any other time. I matured. I matured a little bit too much.

EV: What was the average age of the enlisted men that you were serving with? Were you the youngest having just turned eighteen?

JD: No, we had all different ages, no, all different ages.

EV: Did age affect people's maturity level?

JD: Oh, I would think so, yes. The age difference wasn't that great. You have to understand that you were conscripted from the age of eighteen up until the age of thirty-six, thirty-five, thirty-six, so that some of the older people that were conscripted had more background, were funneled into other things, but as far as the 8th Air Force or the [Army] Air Forces were concerned, you had to be young, I mean young. I always say that at the age of eighteen you only have half a brain, because if you had a whole brain you wouldn't be doing what you're doing. That's what I always used to say and I believe it sometimes, especially when I was flying.

SI: So, after Miami Beach you went through the circuit of radio training schools?

JD: Yes, then we went to gunnery school in Laredo, Texas, radio school, it's all in here, and went to Chicago, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, went to Laredo, Texas, Dalhart, Texas and a few other places, but each time, getting together, getting a crew together, and then, flying practice missions in the States until the time came when we got on a convoy and went overseas.

SI: So, you went over as a unit, not as a replacement?

JD: We went over. Four crews went over together with [each other]. My crew and three other crews went over together on the same ship and I don't know where the other crews [were], the other crews were probably on other ships too. We went on the largest convoy of the war just before D-Day and we landed in England, I would say, maybe a week-and-a-half or two weeks before D-Day and I remember walking out of the barracks on D-Day and boy you can't believe the air traffic that day, can't believe it.

SI: Before we get into England, does anything stand out about all these different places where you served in the U.S ? Like how was Chicago like during the war?

JD: Well, Chicago, when we were in Chicago, we were in the largest hotel in the world at that time, it was the Stevens Hotel. We were in hotel rooms. I mean this is a monster of a building and we had radio classes. We had two radio schools we went to, Sioux Falls, and then, we went to Laredo for gunnery school and after that we went to Dalhart where we finally got a crew together. Then we started flying on a B-17. The first flight we did, well, when we were in Sioux Falls, the first flight I ever was on was on one of these single engine planes two passengers, one behind the other and flying over farm country. That's the first flight. I didn't heave my guts out either, but I enjoyed it and the tragedy of that one was there was another pilot with a student on board and they screw around sometimes. He was flying alongside of us and we were down pretty low. He hit the top of a haystack with his landing gear and knocked it off. So, here he is with a student that never flew and no landing gear. So, of course, they land at sixty-five miles an hour, it's not slow, but I remember that because I had to go and tell what the hell went on and of course the pilot got sacked for that, but that was my beginning of flying. Then after that, while we were doing the gunnery, we went up in one of the other pursuit planes, the old ones with the machinegun in the back behind the pilot where he swings around and all that, and then, the fresh air besides cold as hell, but after that, all of our training was on the ground and it was a matter of learning gunnery and knowing the caliber fifty machine-gun that you were going to be using and learning how to, doing target practice, practicing, which was done first, we learned how to skeet shoot. You know what skeet shooting is? It's a good way of learning how to lead a target, a moving target and I was very good at that. Well, the main test there, they would put us on a flatbed truck with a railing on it and you had a shotgun in your hand and you went around a circular course that had twenty-five hidden skeet houses, in other words, they would come out in all different directions, either at you, this way, that way, and you had to shoot at them while the thing is moving. I got twenty-two out of twenty-five, which was a miracle. So, I was a good gunner, but the thing is you have to get the stuff in your head and once you practice in your head you do it automatically, because you don't have the time to gauge. It's got to be in your subconscious mind that when a plane is going this way and you know you have to shoot over here because your bullets are going to meet them at the same time. So, that has to be automatic. A lot of guys were hunters. In other words, they made a living out of hunting game and some of them were crackerjacks. They knew it. They don't wait for a deer to stop, if the deer is moving, you shoot and you kill him because they learned how to do it properly because it meant meat on the table for the family, see. Rabbits are the same thing. So you had some real experts there, but if you know the theory about how to lead a moving target, it was all automatic and especially in combat it'd better be automatic because things happen fast.

SI: Did they ever bring people in who had been through an earlier combat course to teach you about what it would be like when you got overseas?

JD: No, absolutely not. Well, the only way we found out about what was going on with crews, okay, was we were interviewed by two fellows that were shot down in England, over Germany, and managed to walk out. They parachuted out and with the help of the French Underground they walked them over to the Pyrenees over into Spain and of course Spain was neutral and they were taken back to the States and we listened to these guys and let me tell you it was amazing that these guys were able to survive what they did, yes. [Editor's Note: After the fall of France to Germany, a number of French resistance movements formed to fight the German occupation and the collaborationist Vichy regime.] So, we knew we were getting into something rough, but not until we got there as much as we thought, yes.

SI: Well, I mean while you were in training that was when the 8th Air Force particularly had some of its worst months.

JD: Oh, yes, well, yes. All that was going on in this country was to get the crews operating in England there from 1943, more or less, I would say the Summer of '43 on until the end of the war so that there was always groups going through these schools and being shoveled to England and flying continuously and of course the attrition rate there was so high that they needed a lot of replacements, which I'll get into later, yes.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your crew and what it was like getting to know them?

JD: Our crew came from all over. We had three Mormons, the pilot, the bombardier, and the navigator. There were three Mormons.

SI: So, all the officers were Mormons?

JD: No.

JD: Three officers were Mormons, and very nice people and I'll tell you great, and as far as the rest of us, one fellow worked in the coal mines in Pennsylvania. He was, believe it or not, the oldest guy on the crew and he was flying, I think, at the age of thirty-two, and let me tell you, a thirty-two year old guy when he flies missions, his ass drags because he's almost too old for that job and I felt sorry for the guy, although he survived, but I always felt sorry for him. What was the question again?

SI: Just about the crew.

JD: Oh, yes, and the rest are from all over the country, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Concord, California, oh, and the officers were from Idaho, Salt Lake City, and a few other places out there, but they were from all over the country. Oh, we had somebody from the South too, Southerner. I don't know where he was from. So, we got along very well, yes, no problems there.

SI: You hear about it on bomber crews that the officers and the enlisted men get a little closer than they were with another unit.

JC: Oh, yes, there's no rank. We never had to salute our officers, not in England, no, not in England. Of course, if you were on--say if you took a trip to London, you got a day off, you had to salute any officer that you saw, but while you were on the base, we're talking about within the crews, but if you were on the base and there was other officers around you had to salute, but your own crew, no way. There was no rank at all within one crew, there's no rank really, but in between, yes, but generally, everybody within the crew as I say was very loose in the respect that.

SI: There were no regular Army Air Force people there? They were all draftees or enlistees, people who were just in there for the war?

JD: You're talking about whether they stayed in after the war?

SI: Anybody who had been in before the war?

JD: Oh, no, no, they were all inductees, every one of them. I'm sure they all got in, and they were all young. My copilot was my age. He's pushing a four engine plane around and I think the, what do you call it, the pilot was maybe I think two years older than me and our age group I think, except for the that waist gunner, were all I think between nineteen or eighteen, at the time we were in England, I'd say between nineteen years old to maybe twenty-three, twenty-four, that's the group of ages except for the waist gunner who was quite old.

SI: Did you feel that you had adequate time to train together as a crew?

JD: Oh, yes. We did a lot of flying in the States. We would get up there and make practice bombing runs on some major cities. Yes, they did that, did a lot of flying. I enjoyed the flying. I thought it was great.

SI: Would they do missions just to give each crew member a chance to practice what their role was? Would they give a special mission just for problems for radio?

JD: Well, radio operators would be, while we were flying, of course, there were other crews flying at the same time, radio operators would be contacting each other and contacting the ground at the same time and the others, the gunners really didn't have much to do because of that, but they knew their job. They got the training, of course, the pilot, copilot, navigator got his. He had to plot the course and the bombardier had to drop the bombs and the pilot, copilot had to do their job, but as far as the gunners, they got most of their training on the ground.

SI: And you also manned a gun on the plane.

JD: Well, I was qualified. I went through gunnery school, but my main job was radio operator, but I was qualified to take over all the positions on the plane in case somebody got killed or hurt and gunnery is, a gun is a gun, the same gun, a different turret, that's all. The only one I didn't

like very much was the ball turret, because you're hanging halfway out the plane and it's completely confined. You're confined into an area about half of this table right here; you're curled up with the gun between your knees. I got in it once and I was just praying that nothing ever happened to our ball turret gunner and something almost did happen to him, but that's next. That's another story we'll get to.

SI: Was that in training when you got into the ball turret?

JD: Yes, yes, not overseas.

SI: Would your crew train each other to do each other's job in case?

JD: No, no. Each crew member had their own job. If you're a ball turret gunner, if you're a waist gunner, you had yours, tail gunner, upper turret gunner, then you had the chin turret. You know much about a B-17?

SI: Yes, a little bit.

JD: That's it, got a little dust on it.

SI: We're looking at a model.

JD: This is the model F; it doesn't have the chin turret. The G is the one that we flew on, okay.

SI: Okay, is this a model of the Memphis Belle?

JD: What?

SI: Is this the Memphis Belle?

JD: [Editor's Note: The Memphis Belle was B-17 bomber crew and was the first in the U.S. 8th Air Force to complete 25 missions in Europe and return to the United States.] Is it? It probably is, yes, my son sent it to me. Yes, this is the ball turret under here. This is the model F and the G has the chin turret, otherwise it's the same thing. I have pictures of the plane I flew on. It's got something you probably will never, never see.

SI: Is this your diary or the squadron's diary?

JD: No, the (diary of?) my crew.

SI: So, you told us you were on this large convoy going overseas. What was that voyage like?

JD: It was at the time when they had kind of gotten rid of the submarines and I always remember getting on deck and you cannot believe how many ships there were, I mean incredible, hundreds and hundreds of ships. Also, we had some what they called baby flattop aircraft carriers out there and also a lot of your destroyers going in and out and it was unbelievable and

also I remember some of the ships were carrying women, the women overseas, and it was fourteen days. We landed in Glasgow, and for me, landing in England was like coming home. I can't explain it to you, but England to me is just as much as home as the United States is to me, really, and I've been there a number of times, and we'll get to that, too.

SI: When you felt that, that was the first time you went there?

JD: Yes, oh yes.

SI: Was that because you've read a lot about it?

JD: No, just a feeling that I had, and oh, I knew a lot about England, I knew a lot about Europe reading a lot of history of everything, even the Orient and everything. Also, India, that area too, that's another one of my hobbies.

SI: Tell us about going from Glasgow to your base.

JD: Okay, we landed and took a train all the way down to our base which is an area called Glatton. It's actually not a town; it's an area like a village, houses. It's a farm area, the whole southeastern quadrant of England from here to the [English Channel] and from the top to the bottom was practically nothing but airfields. You had all the airfields for the B-17s, the B-24s, and all the fighter airfields were practically all in that one quadrant. It was about one quarter of England because that was a real flat area, it was predominantly farms. We had three runways. In the middle of our runway we had a farmhouse and a farmer that farmed that plot while we were flying continually during the war. Every piece of ground there they had to farm because they had to provide food for their own country, plus what we were shipping over there and the traffic was unbelievable as far as planes flying. That's not even counting the British bomber bases and all in there.

SI: So, you joined the 457th Bomb Group.

JD: 457th, that's where I went, yes.

SI: They had already been flying missions there.

JD: They had been flying missions from, let's see, oh, since around the end of 1943 until the end of the war, yes.

SI: So, you were joining as a replacement crew?

JD: Replacement crew, yes.

SI: What was that like trying to integrate yourself into the squadron?

JD: Well, when we got there, we didn't start flying. I started flying my missions twelve days after D-Day. I always looked at it as D plus eighteen, okay, and on that particular day, for some

reason, one of the crews needed a radio operator. So, I didn't fly with my crew that time, I flew with another crew and therefore I had one mission more than the rest of my crew and the target was Hamburg and that's where I found out how tough things were going to be, yes, because of the damage that we got. So, that's how it started and the rest of the missions I flew with my crew.

SI: In those twelve days between when you arrived and when you started flying missions, what did you do, just like training or getting acclimated?

JD: Just getting acclimated and watching what was going on, watching the planes go, watching them come back and they're all beat up and stuff like that. It was a preview of coming attractions. Have any of you ever watched that movie *Twelve O' Clock High*?

SI: No I haven't seen the movie the whole movie.

JD: If you ever watch it, it's the best movie that will explain what we went through because there's no baloney in it. That movie they made about the Memphis Belle was a frigging embarrassment. Its Hollywood crap, but the *Twelve O' Clock High*, you watch that.

SI: You mean the more recent Memphis Belle movie or the one they made during the war?

JD: Both of them, whatever they made on it was horrible, but the one that was made of the *Twelve O' Clock High* was the way it was, no baloney and I watch it sometimes. Go ahead.

SI: Can you tell us about that first mission?

JD: Well, the one I went on, I remember it was fairly uneventful until we got to the target and I was more as an observer because this is the first time for me, and I kept looking out to see what was going on. Of course, the getting over the target was really rough because you were in a flak area and they were shooting at you and I remember looking at the end of the wing and I saw something there, like the aluminum was kind of opened up, and there was a hole like that and got a nice few holes in the plane while we went over, but it was a what they called a maximum effort. A maximum effort means that every plane that can fly will fly and every crew that's there is going to fly and it means over a thousand bombers and plus maybe seven, eight hundred fighters are out there going to the same target and means the target really takes a beating and we also get to meet our friends the German fighters trying to knock us down and they do a good job too.

SI: So, you did encounter fighters in that first mission?

JD: You encounter fighters every time you go out and you get shot at every time you go out. I can boil it down to one thing. You wake up in the morning and hope you're alive at the end of the day because that's what happens every day, every day, every day, let me tell you.

SI: You want to take a minute.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JD: The empty beds in the barracks, the empty seats in the mess hall, you did not dare make friends with other crews because they would not be there. You may not be there or they may not be there. So, we made it our business and they told us, "Don't become friendly with other crews. Your job is to worry about your own crew," and it was true, because I flew my first Berlin mission, which was my fourth, and it was, in fact, I wrote it up as something that I could give a talk on. When I finished that mission, the three other crews that I started out with that I went overseas with, they did not survive the fourth mission. That's forty men, only ten survived after my fourth mission. By the time we finished, we lost one of our crew members and he was the navigator and this happened--I have flown only thirty-two missions and I'll give you a reason why later, but after I was sent home, I found out later on, that he was the lead navigator in our group that went to Munich and when they went over the coast, they ran across some antiaircraft fire. His plane received a direct hit with a shell, the plane exploded because we were loaded with bombs, and he's buried in the cemetery in Belgium. Okay, go ahead.

SI: So, when you got there, people, other crews, would not become friendly with you because of what you explained?

JD: Well, as I say, we were too busy, but they're in the barracks. So, you wouldn't even introduce yourself. You come back from a mission that lasted say six, seven, eight, nine hours and I've been on missions that lasted pretty close to twelve hours and I'll tell you about that too, but usually when you came back you're so tired and beat up and everything that all you wanted to do when you got to your barrack, and you'd better get to sleep because you're going to get up the next morning and go through the next [mission], go through the same thing. I think I averaged maybe three, four hours sleep a night when I could sleep, but everybody was within themselves really. It's not that we ignored each other, but the thing is, you always saw new faces, new crews, and what was the carnage that went on every day was pretty rough.

SI: Did they have fighter cover at that time?

JD: Oh, yes. Well, we did have fighter cover. Those that flew during 1943, they didn't have fighter cover because we didn't have the P-51 that would escort us all the way up to any target we were going to in Germany, but they only had to fly twenty-five missions and their attrition rate, well, their survival rate was only thirty-five percent at that particular time. [Editor's Note: The P-51 Mustang was a long range fighter that was primarily used as an escort for bombers during World War II] So very, very few crews made twenty-five missions, this one was the first, and when I was flying, they upped it to thirty-five missions because now we have fighter escort, but fighter escorts, they didn't really escort us. In other words, they weren't alongside of us, they were out there looking for German fighters to shoot down, that was their job. You have to understand that the fighters had one job. Their job was to knock down as many fighter planes, German fighter planes so that nobody would ever be strafed that was landing on the shores of Germany and they never were because by the time our Air Force got through with the German fighters, there weren't too many of them left. So, they used to leave us and go looking for them to shoot down as many as possible, that's their job. In Italy, their job was to escort the bombers, there were B-17s and B-24s in Italy also, but the fighters stayed with the bombers. Not one bomber was ever shot down by a German fighter because of that, because the fighters stood with

them, but then the length of missions there was a lot less than ours because they went into Germany from Italy and the mileage was not that great, but that's the way they worked it there, but we were subjected to fighters, that our fighters didn't see or there's so many of them around, but our fighters really racked up a tremendous amount of fighters that they shot down and actually, when I look at it from one way, we were the bait and they were the ones knocking down the fighters. That's the way it worked and that's the way it was.

SI: The targets that you were going after, was there any kind of pattern that you could see? Were they mostly going after airfields or oil refineries?

JD: Well, there was a whole mixture of different targets. You had all the major targets. You had Hamburg, you had Berlin, you had Ludwigshafen, you had Leipzig, you had Munich, they were major targets and a few others. Some of the targets were the marshalling yards of the trains, where the tremendous amount of tracks would come in from all places and you'd destroy that and you'd destroy, what do you call it, transportation. We also bombed a lot of the, where the V-1 would take off, the launching sites of the V-1s along the coast of the Netherlands and Belgium and also I was on one of the longest missions. I was on was a twelve-hour mission to Peenemünde, Peenemünde was the launching site of the V-2, the rocket that went like this and came down over England, London mostly. [Editor's Note: The V-1 was developed at Peenemünde Airfield by the German Luftwaffe during the World War II. It was a flying bomb that is predecessor to the cruise missile. The V-2 was the world's first ballistic missile and was also developed by Germany during the war. It was a liquid propelled rocket used to bomb targets at long range.] The British went there the previous night and bombed the barracks and the living quarters, where they were living, the engineers, and they killed off quite a few of them. We went there to destroy the launching sites and it was a twelve-hour mission, really long, long, long mission. It was very close to the northern coast of Germany, east of Denmark, where Denmark projects up, well, it actually was very close to Danzig, that's near the Polish border, very long mission. You see you don't go straight to a target. You have to evade a lot of flak areas, so you have to move away from a lot of major cities because you're going to hit anti-aircraft fire. So, you're going in like in a loop to come back, so it's a lot more mileage than straight miles. I remember the first Berlin mission. You know the small theaters that we have now, the multi-theaters that we have? Now you go to your multiplex, well, now you've got small theaters. We had a Quonset hut about the size of one of those small theaters. You had an aisle in the middle, seats on the side, you had a raised platform where the screen was, well, instead of the screen, what they had is a map of Germany and England and of course they had it covered with a curtain and we would all file in there and sit, and then, the officers would come down the aisle and get into their place and the commander would get up on the stage and open up the curtain. Well, when they saw the route to Berlin let me tell, you everybody moaned and groaned. That's not a good place to go to and you saw the route that we were going to take, and then, you had the briefing by the navigator, you had the briefing by the weatherman, had briefing by the other officers, and what to expect when you got there and all that, but that's the way it was. Everybody moaned and groaned, oh my God, oh my God, and we went and did it and let me tell you--my first one was the worst, two other times was pretty bad, but that was pretty bad.

SI: Were there other targets that would kind of make people shudder or moan?

JD: Well, yes. Well, Munich was a long distance. You had situations, if you were bombing in the north and say you got hit in the gas tank and were leaking gas or didn't have enough fuel to come back, you had a place to go and that was to Sweden, you turned around, head for Sweden, you would be interned and that was the end of the war for you. If you were going down to Munich, which you're almost down to Switzerland, you could see the Alps from there and I always remember that, but when we got done there I would always see a group of B-17s circling around south of the target and they all had problems that they couldn't make it home and they would get together and fly to Switzerland. The Swiss would send up a couple of fighters to guide them down into the landing fields there and they were interned there. So, if you were that far away you had a place to go, but if you were in the center, you didn't have much, you didn't have any place to go, but either parachute out, land or be taken prisoner, but quite a few. When you send out a maximum effort of a thousand plus bombers, I can give you an idea of what the attrition rate [was]. The attrition rate for over a thousand bombers is a loss of sixty bombers, that's six-zero, that means that you lose six hundred men, out of those six hundred men some of them land, parachute out, some of them never did, because their plane may have exploded or crashed or something like that and those that made it to the ground, they could either be picked up by somebody, a civilian, and if he was good hearted he wouldn't kill you and/or be picked up by the military and hope that they would bring you to a POW camp, so that you still had that to look forward to and those things did happen. Civilians did kill our airmen and some of the military used to that too.

EV: Were you given specific instructions as to what to do if you were expecting to go down?

JD: Well, no matter what happened, if you made it down and weren't picked up you were supposed to hope that the French or, as I say, if you made it into France you might have a chance of getting help from the Underground, French Underground. A lot of guys did make it out to Spain to be interned, but only one pilot that walked out was ever allowed to come back and fly in Germany, and that was Chuck Yeager. [Chuck Yeager was a P-51 pilot during World War II. He was shot down over France and with the help of the French Resistance he was able to make his way to Spain and eventually returned to England on May 15, 1944. Chuck Yeager was heralded for his skills as a fighter pilot and retired from the Air Force as a brigadier general.] Chuck Yeager was a fantastic P-51 pilot. His eyesight was so great that he could see German fighters before anybody in his group could see them and he really knocked down quite a few and the only way he got back to combat was to see Mr. Roosevelt because he was the only one allowed to go back, because the reason is that you send somebody back that got help from the Underground, and then, you were caught, they tried to get information out of you. So, nobody except him ever walked out and went back into combat, go to a different theater of operation, but not to England anymore. They made a documentary of a 457th Bomb Group crew that bailed out and they all bailed out safely and they ended up in a concentration camp. They were sent there and they made a documentary that I watched on TV, they had it on the *History Channel*. Well, some of them never survived the camp, but there were, I think, two or three other crews that were there also and one of the crew members spoke German and while they were there he saw a German air officer there and he got together all of the crews that could march and walked them over in formation and he saluted the officer and spoke to him in German and told him what the situation was, that they didn't belong there, they were flight crews. Well, out of the goodness of his heart, that officer went back and in a couple of weeks those guys were shipped to the prisoner

of war camp, those that survived, because the camp was so crowded and it was wintertime and a lot of them got pneumonia and died. They were sleeping under the building and there was no beds for them or anything, and the food, of course, was atrocious and those that survived went to a regular prisoner of war camp. It was like going to a hotel to these guys.

SI: That was Berga.

JD: Yes, but that was a documentary on the *History Channel*. [Editor's Note: The Berga labor camp was a labor camp where POWs were forced to work alongside people from the Buchenwald concentration camp in building an underground ammunition factory.]

SI: Was there any discussion among the flying crews, like what would you do if you were shot down if you had a Jewish crew member? Would you hide the fact that he was Jewish?

JD: Well, you couldn't hide that fact because it was on their dog tag. You've seen dog tags?

SI: Yes.

JD: Hold on.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JD: Jewish fellows, you had a lot of angry civilians in Germany, that's the only thing I have left, really, all my ribbons and everything. [Editor's Note: Mr. De Luccia is displaying his dog tags and ribbons from the war]

SI: So, it seems like you were flying missions fairly frequently given that you flew thirty-two in this amount of time.

JD: Thirty-two in four months. In the four months that I was flying I started off--I weighed 175 pounds when I started off, by the time I finished I was down to 135 and I'll give you an idea what-- number one, you get up very early in the morning, I mean real early. I can't eat breakfast at that time and you certainly don't have an appetite when you know what the hell you're going to do with the rest of the day and of course I'd never ate breakfast. We would be given two candy bars on the plane, no fluid because you're up at minus forty to minus seventy degrees, you can't even use a thermos, the candy bar gets frozen and so you want to bite it, it's like biting an iron bar so you have to slap it on the table and break it into little bits, and then, put it in your mouth, which I never ate them anyway, but that's the only way you could eat those candy bars. We got a Baby Ruth and a Butterfinger, which is nice, but I used to maybe eat it later on when I landed and after we landed, during briefing, we were issued legally a double shot of Johnny Walker's scotch. I would drink it, of course, have a hot cup of coffee and a doughnut and that would be all for the day and we'd go back to the barracks and get maybe three, four hours of sleep and get up and do the same thing. Many of our missions, the weather there in England is atrocious. I would say that maybe one out of three days it's raining or cloudy and of course if the weather is miserable there, because weather moves from west to east, it's going to be miserable over the target so you can't see the target. We've always had standby and scrubbed missions because of

the fact that the weather was bad. You'd be in the plane all ready to go, the next thing you know you taxi back, but every time the weather was good, we were out there flying.

SI: How did you feel about scrubbed missions? Were you happy or frustrated by them?

JD: Well, frustrated in the respect that you wanted to get your missions done. This is just taking extra time and that's the frustration part of it, but outside of that

DR: So, what did you do the rest of the day now that the mission was scrubbed?

JD: Rested, that's all I could say is rested. That's about the only time that I would be in the mess hall and get a meal, but otherwise on the days that I flew, no way, no way. I would not be able to eat at all.

SI: How many days in a row would they put you on missions? What was the most in a row that you did?

JD: Well, they would run two-three-four in a row. My first seven missions were all pretty consecutive, and then, we got two days off and we went to London. Went to London, got off the train in London there at King's Cross, which is the major hub of the underground, which is the subway and all the trains, train station is there and got off the train and there's steps going up to the sidewalk. We go up to the sidewalk and you hear putt, putt, putt and you look up in the air, a couple of hundred feet in the air is a V-1 putting along and sure enough it goes a couple of blocks away and the engine shuts down and it drops down and explodes and that's all you heard all the while that we were in London for 2 days, yes. All night they would be coming in and you didn't get any peace even there, but I got a beautiful view of a V1, big as life.

SI: What was it like being on the receiving end of bombing? Was it unique for you being in that reverse position?

JD: It didn't bother me, no, but in walking around London, London was in shambles. A lot of it was had been destroyed and all the parks there, there were all anti-aircraft guns pointing up at the sky and most of the civilians lived in the underground there, they had all beds set up, in fact, when we were walking up the steps, we were gawking, looking, and the rest of the population was running for cover, because we didn't know and it didn't bother us anyway. It didn't bother me to walk around, but the place was pretty well armed, but pretty well beat up also at the same time and as far as food for us, there was certain places that we would go to, to be fed, everything was rationed there and there were no restaurants open. You could buy fish and chips on the outside, but you couldn't go to a restaurant. There's a lot of bars, you want to drink, it's all over, bars all over the place, but food, you had to go to couple of places in London to get food there. Of course, you could get stuff on the black market, but it cost a lot of money. I think a bottle of scotch went for ten pounds, and that's a lot of money in those days.

SI: Did you get a chance to interact with a lot of British civilians or build any relationships?

JD: No. There was one young lady that used to bicycle past where we were billeted and I used to talk to her, and all the young ladies had jobs. They were conscripted even if they were civilians and there they had jobs. That's the only, I think about the only one that I ever talked to and I used to see her go to work and that's it, but outside of that I didn't have time, we didn't have time, to go out off the base to booze up at a bar or anything like that. I know the officers used to do that, but then they had their own. We could get beer on the base and all that, but I don't think I ever went off base except on our time off, like during the evening I never went off. Some of them did, but I didn't.

SI: Do you recall if there was a problem with people refusing to go back up?

JD: Okay, that has happened. I think there have been some men that couldn't take the mental part of it and the way we operated is that if you could not do it, you could say, "I can't fly anymore," and you would be reassigned without prejudice, because number one, if you couldn't do it, you're not doing your crew a favor by staying on because your lives depend on each other. You would be reassigned and a replacement would come in and that has happened. Of course, you had wounded also, but some guys did go mental. The English had a little different. They didn't tolerate that. If anybody decided, and they had it rough. If they decided they couldn't fly anymore, they would stay on base and they would give them a menial job on base and they were all looked down on as cowards really, which is too bad they did that, but they went through their hell also, the English. There weren't very many of them left when the war was over and if you think that we had it bad, they had it worse, because the boss of the bomber system that they had there had it in for the Germans and he pushed his men as much as possible to destroy as much of Germany as they possibly could, and in doing that, they lost a lot of the young men, a lot of bombers, a lot of bombers.

SI: You mentioned that the Peenemünde Raid, the British hit first, and then, the Americans came in and hit it. Were there other raids that went like that where they tried the round the clock method on a target?

JD: Well I think the only other one that, let's see, oh, yes, there was one other one which was the Dresden. You remember the one about Dresden? The English went there, that city was never touched.

SI: That was after your tour?

JD: Yes, after my tour. That city was never touched because there was a reason then and I don't understand it, but this is what the way it was explained in what I have read is that it was one of the last targets that was ever really bombed that heavy and the story I heard was that the British Bomber Command left it untouched and so did we, but I don't know whether we had the same reason, because when the war was almost over and the Russians were close enough by to see what we were doing and what was going on, is that they destroyed that city to demonstrate to the Russians of what our capability was with our bombers, so that they had an idea that we were somebody to contend with and that's what I understand happened. So, we went there. I understand that the English went there at night, and then, the Americans went there as they were returning home and that target had about fourteen hours of continual bombing. Now if you take

a thousand bomber raid going to Berlin and you have, say, like a two minute interval between groups, you get a group of thirty-six and another group of thirty-six and a group of thirty-six all lined up behind each other going, you end up with about one and a half to two hours, depending on how you straggle in, but the group stays together and they end up with an hour-and-a-half to two hours of continual bombing. It's not that we're all, no room for you. The time that you're over the target is sometimes like twenty-five, thirty minutes depending on the size of the city and let me tell you their gunners were good. They're great gunners. I found that out on my fourth mission.

SI: What happened there? The other three crews, you mentioned that part.

JD: Yes, well, we got to the target, we lost an engine from antiaircraft fire as soon as we entered the area, lost a second engine as we were just at the point of where we were dropping our bombs, the third engine, both of those engines were shut down, okay. We had one engine that was damaged, but not damaged enough to be shut down; we were getting about seventy-five percent power out of it and only one engine working at a hundred percent. This was shut down, this was shut down, this one here this was a hundred percent, and this was seventy-five percent and that's how we left the target. Of course, we had a lot of holes in our ship because of that. Now, we're six hundred miles from home, okay, and you don't go home straight either, you've got to evade all the way through. So, naturally we can't keep up with the group. We don't have the power, we're descending slightly, God bless this wing, it helps you get home, because with two engines, and especially with one engine a hundred percent and one at, what do you call it, seventy-five percent, we lost altitude very gradually. We dumped everything overboard, all of the ammunition, even the extra parachute, the parachutes that we had in the bag, flak suits, which we wore when we were over the target, all of that went over. Then a little later on we dumped the guns out of the waist because they were loose, you could pick them out of the mount and just throw them the hell out. So, we got rid of practically all the weight that we could and all of our groups are passing us. Thank God there weren't any fighters around because they had just so much gas and ammunition that they didn't bother us anymore. Our only thing we could do is just to keep going. If we reached the area that we had already liberated along the German coast, we could crash land there or land if we could, we could ditch in the Channel if we get there or we could make it over the Cliffs of Dover, where the landing fields are. Well, we kept going, kept going and as soon as we got over the Channel we were high enough to make a try for the coast. We got over the coast at about, I would say, three hundred feet, landed at a Lancaster bomber base, those guys, crews were all sleeping. Of course, the other fellows all came running over, they had to see this wounded bird coming in. They took care of us, they fed us, gave us a place to sleep, and the next day a truck came down and picked us up and later on they sent the men down to repair it and they flew it back. So, we had our own plane issued to us, which was what they called, it was the Elizabeth Ann. It had been flying missions already. It was painted olive gray and more than one crew flew on it, but whenever it was damaged and had to be repaired, we would be always issued like a brand-new unpainted aluminum B-17, which was nice, brand-new, but we would always get the other one back.

EV: Where did you sit during the missions?

JD: This is my area, this is one of my windows, the window over here and all of this. So, I could see everything going on. [Mr. De Luccia is pointing to his model B-17]

SI: Mid-fuselage, I have to describe it for the tape. It's the mid-fuselage.

JD: Okay, it was an area behind the bomb bay door, this is the bomb bay right here, the door was here, and another door here with all the bombs hanging in the bomb bay area and this is the upper turret, was practically leaning up against it, and the radio room was from here on back. It's practically to the edge of the trailing edge of the wing.

SI: So, you could really see everything that was going on along those windows?

JD: Oh, not anything below me, but I could see everything horizontally and higher. This fellow down here could see practically everything from horizon all the way down, all the way around and down. So, he got pretty much the best view. This one got not too much view, he's looking up and back like that, and anybody sitting here is limited to a cone like that. He rotates, he can see everything on top and this one rotates and he can see everything on the bottom and down, guns go down or all the way around or anywhere in-between and the same with him.

SI: Can you describe for us the working environment of when you're out on a mission; you're at the altitude, is it very cold, noisy?

JD: It's very, very noisy and very, very cold; I'll give you an idea how we're dressed. See the way I'm dressed right now? If you put a jumpsuit on top of me, and then, you put an electrically heated suit on top of me, and then, on top of that we put on a fleece-lined leather leggings and jacket and silk gloves, electrically heated gloves on top of that and the wool fleece glove on top of that, you had 3 gloves. In order to do anything intricate you stayed with the silk because if you did take them off and touch metal, forget about your skin, it's gone. You're going to end up with raw flesh, okay. So with that, in other words, if you had to field strip the gun you could take off everything, but the silk glove and you were also plugged in for electricity for your electrically heated suit. You had, of course, the oxygen mask on and you had fleece lined boots on, and electrically heated boots inside of that, and you had the, what do you call, it the hat, or whatever.

SI: The helmet?

JD: The helmet, which was the fleece lined [hat] and that really kept you--we were warm, but as far as the temperature, you were minus forty to minus seventy depending on the altitude and we always flew anywhere from twenty-nine, thirty and thirty-one thousand depending on what element you were in, twelve bombers here, twelve bombers here, and twelve bombers here and with a thousand feet in-between and staggered this way depending on how you're looking at them. So we were always up there high and it was noisy as hell, smelly as hell, and the fumes and also you got the smell. Sometimes the fumes from the antiaircraft shells, you're flying through all of the cloud and also you hear the shrapnel hitting your plane sometimes, but that's the name of the game.

DR: Now when were you manning the gun, when you're over enemy territory? Were you on the radio the rest of the time?

JD: Well, I never manned the gun because everybody had their position and they were there operating, but if somebody got hurt or killed my upper turret gunner here, while we were over the target on one of the missions he put his head down to look at what the pilot and copilot were doing because they're right over here. Then, when he put his head up, there was a hole that big from one side of his turret to the other side. He would have had his head blown off if he had put his head there. This guy back here flying along on the way back from a mission, and getting off a target, he's got a camera in his hand. There's no fighters around, got a camera in his hand, some shrapnel came in and ripped off the clothing, the cloth right off the whole length of his arm, never touched his skin, just like that. Nobody got hurt on our plane, fortunately. I had a piece of flak come in from the side and bounce off my knee, but it was spent. I know I had kept it, but I don't know what happened to it, but we were hit with a lot of shrapnel. We had, I think, with one of our missions, we got over the coast and had a live shell go through our main gas tank and explode above the ship. Now, if you know about the way this thing operates, right under, it doesn't show it on here, but the main gas tank is right here and right over here is a red hot supercharger, the thing, the exhaust, turns it so fast and it makes it red hot and that's what pumps air into our engines so you can fly at altitude. They have this gas pouring out right alongside this thing. We're all lined up over here with our chutes on ready to jump as soon as if we could see any smoke, because if we saw any smoke that means the plane is on fire and we'd have to get out. Fortunately, all that gas just kept going out until it was empty. Well, we got back, had all the personnel coming around looking at that thing, you had a hole about like that, right next to the hot supercharger.

SI: Did you have gas in another tank?

JD: Oh, yes, you had plenty. The whole thing, the whole wing, would have different separate gas tanks, all your fuel was in the wing, yes, and they were turned on as soon as the other one's empty. They had all the controls in the pilot's compartment to run gas into different areas, yes.

SI: Were there any other missions where you had to fall out of formation and come back by yourself?

JD: Oh, yes, well, Leipzig, we came back from Leipzig once. We had been there twice and twice we got a lot of damage, but this one, the second time, we were damaged so that we had to fly straight and not deviate, because we didn't know whether we were going to make it home and it was the day that Paris was liberated and we had to fly over Paris at five thousand feet because we were losing altitude. Now, we were worried about one thing, that is that they didn't shoot us because the French, a little antsy. So, in order to prevent from being shot at, we put down our landing gears and kept our fingers crossed because that's a sign of we're in trouble, don't shoot us, please don't shoot. So, we got over Paris, but we got a tremendously beautiful view of Paris at that altitude, it was the cloudless day, I saw the Eiffel Tower sitting over here and the Seine River, which really winds out. We got a beautiful view of Paris that one particular time. We also had occasions where we had, what do you call it, an engine damaged where you couldn't feather the prop. If you don't feather the prop the propeller turns like crazy, it's free, it turns like

crazy and it's a real drag on the plane because it's like a door pushing up against this particular wing and what happens is the thing keeps going fast and fast and fast and finally the crankshaft breaks and in many cases you can get rid of it by slowing down the plane as much as possible, putting down your flaps so the prop wants to keep going, and then, it would flip out like this and go over the wing and take off. That happened to us once. It could damage the wing back here sometimes, but that would be the only way that you could get rid of it, but that's a pretty dangerous thing and it makes it pretty rough to get back home when you've got something like that or if sometimes you have fire in your engine and stuff like that. A lot of guys had to crash land and be taken in.

SI: On these examples you just showed us were you able to make it back to your base?

JD: Oh, yes, oh yes. We always were able to make it back to the base. There was a few times that we almost didn't. Do you remember the breakthrough at Saint-Lô, have you heard about that? [Editor's Note: Saint-Lô was a French town that was occupied by the Germans in 1940 because the town was a strategic crossroad. The town was almost completely destroyed during the Invasion of Normandy in 1944.] Well, we were on those missions; we did two missions over that. That was a real emergency and the next thing you know, oh, we got us up and we've got to go there and we had to fly there at twelve thousand feet and everybody said, "Twelve thousand feet! They're going to shoot at us!" They said, "Don't worry. The P-38s are going to be there and they're going to go after these anti-aircraft guns." So, we did two missions over Saint-Lô at that altitude and when we were done they just walked right through the town and kept going. The Germans had--there was a crossroad that you had, there's no other way of going and they had to get the Germans out of there and when we finished there weren't very many Germans left. Our men just walked right through, and so, we did two missions there in the same day.

SI: Was there any worry about friendly fire on that mission or other missions where you had a more direct ground support role?

JD: The only friendly fire you could get is from the caliber fifty machine-guns from other planes, but I don't think that was ever [an issue].

SI: Or accidentally dropping on other planes?

JD: Oh, you're talking about dropping bombs you mean, oh, well, there has been occasions where some bomber would be out of position and I remember, in fact, there are pictures of it, you probably see it on the *History Channel* where a bomb would come down and clip this off of a plane and it would go down because it could not, what do you call it--and there are occasions where also you see a B-24 that got hit by anti-aircraft fire right at this place and you can actually see the wing fold and the plane just go right down, you see that many times on the *History Channel* and I've seen others where this is practically gone.

SI: The tail.

JD: And they made it back because this part here, just about that much, was left and that's enough to stabilize it, but that plane can take a beating you can't imagine.

EV: Did the gunners ever actually shoot their own plane in these turrets here?

JD: Well, you couldn't hit your props, that's for sure, because you had cams on your guns, except for the waist, that prevented you from shooting a prop, but I don't doubt that that could happen, but the way the planes are stacked up in their formation, I can't see how that could happen, because they have a lot of room, a lot of room to shoot and I don't think that's a possibility, although it probably happened.

SI: How well did the equipment you worked with work? Did the radio equipment always function properly?

JD: I had no problem with the radio equipment. I don't know if you know it, but some engines on a B-17 were built in Paterson, New Jersey, my town where they came from, the Wrights Plant, and as a matter of fact my brother who was too young to go in, he used to go along the river there where they had the test stands for these, they would build them, put them out there, run them a certain number of hours, and then, ship them out, but all of these were built in the Clifton Plant, and then, the Paterson Plant, the Wright Aeronautical Plant in Paterson, every one of them, plus most of my equipment was built in Clifton and Paterson. The engine is fantastic, absolutely fantastic, real workhorses, and many a times you would get a plane in its lifetime, they probably had replaced all of the engines a number of times because they wear out too also and they also get damaged and you get new ones. I remember once we went out with a brand new B-17, I mean spanking brand new B-17, and we came home with a lot of holes and the crew chief, the guy that's got to repair them, he went crazy jumping up and down, "What'd you do to my airplane!" We told him, "If you're around the next morning, we were going to shanghai him and if he was going to find out what happens out there, but he never showed up in the morning anymore. He knew what we were going to do.

SI: Was there a good relationship between the ground crew and the flying crew?

JD: Oh, yes, yes. Hey, they were our buddies. We depended on them. They did a lot of work. We come back, they had to spend the whole night getting these things ready for the next day, everything. We had plenty of spares if the airplane took two or three days to repair. Let me put this--I've got pictures of my plane. [Mr. De Luccia is looking old photographs]

DR: Now did you write this diary while you were in the service?

JD: No, I'll get to that in a minute. This is the stateside, in Dalhart, Texas of the plane we used to practice on. This fellow and this fellow did not end up on our combat crew. We got replacements for them, which I'll show you a picture of those and the rest of them. These are our officers and one, two, three, and four of the original crew. These two fellows did not fly with us. See, this is the same model as this without the chin turret on it, that's the F model. This is the enlisted men on our crew, that's me there, that's the ball-turret gunner, upper turret gunner, waist gunner, the old guy, tail gunner, chin turret gunner. This fellow and I are the only ones alive today. Well, I don't know whether this fellow is alive now because I have to find out. When I came back from our reunion this spring, I went to England, I sent him a letter. Normally he

picks up the phone and calls me, because he's got Alzheimer's, he can't write. I didn't get any call from him. So, I'm going to have to call up to see if he's still alive. The rest are all gone. I visited him after the war, him after the war, and ball-turret gunner after the war.

SI: You want to say their names on the tape?

JD: Yes. Tony Collura is the upper turret gunner, (Glen Rogers?) is the chin turret gunner, and Kenneth Gordier is the ball-turret gunner. On the internet, I was able to contact the four and the other, the fourth one was an officer, which is the bombardier, but he had Alzheimer's and wasn't taking any trip or visit. So, out of the four that I contacted, three I visited. Two of them passed away in 2005, Anthony Collura and (Glen Rogers?) passed away in 2005. None of my crew ever went to a reunion. So, I was the only one that went to a reunion. This is our navigator, killed in action; mission Munster, which is Munich, Germany. He fathered a child while he was in England and I am in contact with that fellow. He lives south of London. I'm in contact with him, email, and we trade pictures and everything. This is the Elizabeth Ann without the war paint, okay. This is the Elizabeth Ann with 106 missions on it.

EV: Can you explain that, those paintings? You get like a check for every mission you're on?

JD: A bomb, it's a stencil of a bomb. If you count them there's 106. This plane existed for 117 missions before they had to crash land in France and they repaired it, sent it back to England, it got back to the States, what happened to it nobody knows. This is the Elizabeth Ann flying over England with all its insignias on it, the triangle U is our insignia. Remember the leather jackets? This is the back of it. I don't know. The whirlybird is a stupid little toy bird that my pilot had found somewhere, like a turkey and that's why we called ours the Worrybird Crew and we had it stenciled, painted on there, and then, all the bombs as we did our missions. I had brought it home and actually wore it out. That thing on E-Bay right now is worth two thousand dollars, I'm not kidding. This is the Elizabeth Ann that had to land at another airbase while some other crew was flying on it. This is me in England at Duxford, where the only flying B-17 exists, that plane is used to fly over during our memorials at Madingley, where we have the American Cemetery there, beautiful place, okay. 457th Bomb Group has a memorial set up on a piece of ground just outside the main gate of our airbase and this is the front of the memorial. We were, my brother, my son, and I were at this ceremony, the first time that it was shown to the public and behind it is all the information, which I will read off to you. 457th Bombardment Group H, H indicates heavy, 748th Squadron, 749th Squadron, 750th Squadron, 751st Squadron. 237 combat missions were flown from this field over enemy occupied Europe between February 21st of 1944 and April 20th of 1945. 16,915 tons of bombs were dropped with the loss of eighty-six B-17s and 739 airmen killed, missing, or prisoners of war. It's all back there in gold and this we go to see every time we're there. I'm going to read this off because this is going to tell you how I accomplished all of this, okay. "On June 12, 2003 my brother (Emil?) and I visited two of my crew members, Kenneth Gordier and Anthony Collura. Kenneth had written a diary of all his activities during his tour of duty in England, which included an account of the thirty-five missions we flew on. I asked him for a copy and gave him a promise I would only copy the account of the thirty-five missions, since some of the diary was about his personal activities in England. My intention was to type that section of the diary, make copies for myself and for the three other remaining crew members that I am in touch with. He agreed with my plan and was

very happy about my request. Since his ball turret rotated 360 degrees, Kenneth could see from above the horizon to straight down. He had the best view and the greatest viewing area of anyone on the ship. All other positions on the ship had a very limited view of what was going on outside the ship. As far as I know no other crew member on our crew kept a diary. Kenneth's diary is about his experiences and the rest of us have ours, or on what we remember, which is very limited by what we could see through our windows. We are very lucky to have a copy of this history. I did not edit this diary; I did not change the sentence structures, paragraph sizes, or punctuations. For purposes of clarity I substituted a few words. Joseph De Luccia." Now the only thing I added to this diary, I'm reading off the only thing that I added to the diary, this is the only addition I have made to Kenneth's diary. "Lt. John W. Tadge, our navigator and many times the lead navigator of our group was killed in action on 9/30/1944 on a mission to Munster, Germany. He is interred at the Ardennes American Cemetery at Neupré, Belgium." Sorry about that. [Editor's Note: Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial is home to the graves of 5,329 members of the United States military who died in World War II.]

SI: No, no, no take your time.

JD: I made up about fifteen of these. I have it in memory in my computer. I have a master copy, which I would take and copy and members of my family all have a copy. I have a daughter, a son and a brother and the members of my crew that were still alive. I even sent it to the bombardier that never answered any of the mail that I sent to them, but I knew the family was getting it and I also made a copy that I loan out to whoever wants to read it with the request that it be returned to me. I just sent it out, my son was out in the Boston area on business and he met one of the fellows he went to college with there at MIT and when he heard about the diary, he wanted to read it so I sent to him and he sent it back when he was finished. So, that's the only one I loan out. So, everybody has a copy and also a copy of this is at the museum in the Mighty 8th Air Force Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia and it's also in the library of the 457th Bomb Group Association. I am a board member of that association. So, we have a get-together every two years in England, at least I have since the year 2000, I've been there five times, and I started flying, started attending reunions in 1999 and I've attended every reunion since then. We have a reunion in the States every other year and a reunion in England every other year. The 9/11 time, we were all booked to go to Colorado Springs and when 9/11 happened I had to find out whether they were going to cancel it because of the flight problem and fortunately they allowed flying after that so we did get down to Colorado Springs. The airports were in chaos then. I mean, you can't believe what was going on. The only thing we missed when we were there, we go to different places and we were supposed to go to the Air Force Academy, well, they had shut that place down tight, nobody can get near it. Our next reunion coming up next year is the same place, so we're going to be able to get there. We went to a reunion in, what was it, oh, I've got to remember the name, oh Rapid City, South Dakota. No Rapid City. South Dakota, Rapid City, the big airbase there, is it Ellsworth? I think it's the Ellsworth Airbase there and of course they've got the new bombers there and they allowed us to take a look in the cockpit. The plane is pressurized, heated, they've got a microwave, they've got a toilet and they've got a place to sleep. Well, these guys get on that plane and they take a twenty-six-hour trip to Iraq, bomb it, and come back. So, we're having our reunion there and they have one of the pilots, he's going to give a talk. So, he's looking at the audience at us old guys and he's standing at the podium and he's looking out, he said, "I don't know what the hell I'm doing here. He says, "I'm looking at you

guys and I know what the hell you've been through," says, "I'm in awe of you guys," and he kept telling us about his trips and what he's through, but it was really something.

SI: In between when you got out of the service and when you started going to these reunions, did you talk at all about where you had gone in the service?

JD: Well, for the first twenty years after my service, the last thing I ever wanted to do was even think about what I was through. One day I got a letter from this outfit, the 457th Bomb Group, then I started getting interested in it again, and then, except for the fact, I couldn't get to some of the earlier reunions, I think they did about twelve of them. I couldn't get to any of them because I was found too late and when I did get the information about the reunion, the group being as a group, I had a case of colon cancer and I had to be operated on. So, that laid me low for the first one I wanted to go to. So, I managed to go to the one in '99 which was at Gettysburg, which was terrific, and I've attended every one since then and I will keep going. Right now, I think at that first reunion, we had well over about 240 veterans. In the States, we get more veterans showing up, but overseas, I think the first time in the year 2000, which was my first, we had about twenty-two veterans plus family plus friends, we have a lot of English friends there and we had about twenty-three, twenty-four veterans and the last one I went to was this spring and we had only about eleven or twelve. Number one, it's very expensive to go there and number two, there aren't very many of us left, so that it's getting less and less every year. My first time in the year 2000 was very traumatic. I never, never, never dreamt that I would be coming back to England. I know for the five days I was there, I had tears in my eyes, very emotional. To walk on the runway for the first time was unbelievable, all of us that go there and get off that bus, walk away and cry, have tears in our eyes, and we do that every time we go there. When we went to Madingley for the ceremony, there's a wall there over a block long with five thousand names on it of all personnel missing in action. There's a chapel there, and this is an American cemetery, there's a chapel there, the Air Force chapel that has an altar. It's a real chapel, has an altar and all the equipment there for a Mass, but on one of the walls is a façade of the lower quadrant of England and also the France, the map of France and Germany with lines going to all the main targets in Europe and France. They have a terrific ceremony there of a lot of notables from England, royalty, and speeches and we have a fly over of usually the only flying B-17 that's there, which is really something and we have a wreath laying of every organization in England and every organization that comes there for the reunion, which amounts to something like about two hundred some odd wreaths and they're all installed along that wall by military personnel in England, and then, we have a representative that goes up to our wreath and places it in place, puts it in place. It's quite a ceremony. The first time I was there, I could not walk amongst the crosses. Two years later I was able to do it but, not that year.

SI: Why don't we take a break.

JD: Take a break.

[TAPE PAUSED]

DR: I am curious why you flew thirty-two missions and why that turned out to be your last?

JD: Well, on the thirty-second mission I don't know exactly where we went, but all I know, it was a very long mission and when we got back well, we were attacked by fighters. We had some losses by fighters and when we got back I got off the plane and I was extremely tired, really, really bushed, and it was the first time that I talked to myself after I had flown, said something to myself, and what I said was, "Joe, you have three more to go and they're not getting any easier," that's what I said to myself out loud. So, I bent down to pick up my clothing and parachute to get on the truck to be trucked back to the barracks and an officer walked over to me, he said, "Sergeant De Luccia," I said, "Yes, sir," gave him a salute, he said, "You just flew your last mission." I said, "Thank you, sir," gave him another salute. Now you would think I would be jumping up and down with joy, but I'll tell you, I was so bushed it meant nothing to me, what he said. I knew what he said, but it meant nothing to me and all I know is I picked up my stuff and got on the truck. The next day I watched my crew take off, I watched them come back. The day after that I was on a train to Glasgow, got on the Queen Mary and came home, five days later. That's how it happened, amazing. The rest of my crew finished their three except for the bombardier and I'm telling you I am sorry that I didn't finish with them, it bothers me. Any other questions?

EV: When you returned home how quickly did you out process with the military and returned to civilian life?

JD: Well, the war wasn't over when I came back. I came back, we got off the boat and we were given our first quart of milk, because over there you're drinking powdered milk and powdered eggs and boy did we down that thing down. From there we got on a train and we're taken to Camp Shanks in New York State there and got our first T-bone steak dinner. We walked into that mess hall and guess who was there? The place was being run by Italian prisoners of war. They were cooks and bakers, the happiest guys you ever want to see, I mean it, and then, from there they took us down to Atlantic City, which they took over, that big hotel which no longer exists, I don't even know what the name of it is and we stayed there a few days, and then, we got a furlough to go home and I think it was about fourteen days we got to go home. Then from there I shipped out to Laredo, Texas where I stayed for the rest of the time. While I was there I went to gunnery instructor school, there were B-29s there and there was a gunnery school for the B-29 gunners. So, I went to the gunnery instructor's school to be able to teach them gunnery before they went overseas. We had tons of B-29s there; used to watch them take off all the time, big son of a guns, and so I went through the course and actually never got to teach anyway because I got transferred to a research department. The research department was working on training aids for gunnery, which involved towing a target with a P-39 that had electronic equipment in the glider that they were towing which would radio back where the bullets, the rounds were going either above, below or either side, it would be recorded on the strip, was a terrific training aid and it was being towed and the plane that was doing the towing was coming in the way a fighter would normally come in, different ways so the gunners would have different directions to fire and it worked out pretty well. While that was going on, there were a lot of B-24s on the base. Now the pilots there didn't have anything to do, much to do, and I don't know what they were doing there, but in order to get their flight pay they had to fly a certain number of hours and if they had to fly, they had to have a crew chief on board and a radio operator. So, I got a lot of hours on the B-24, beautiful airplane, really nice, I enjoyed every bit of it, saw a lot of the area there, I really enjoyed it, it's a very nice plane.

DR: What were your feelings on the radio compartment on the B-24 versus the B-17?

JD: Big difference, big difference you know same equipment, but bigger.

EV: Was it more comfortable on the B-24?

JD: Oh, the B-24 had a larger fuselage. It carried more bombs than the B-17, but never flew at our altitude, they were always below us. Like I always used to see them, but their problem was that they had a different kind of wing than we had. They had what they called a Davis wing. A Davis wing was very, very efficient at flying speeds, but not efficient at if you didn't have engines. If your engines were shut down that thing had the glide angle of a flat rock, you know what I mean? You couldn't glide it that far. This thing here, you could shut the engines down and glide thirty miles on it so that it's a very forgiving plane, but the B-24, that was a problem and because of that problem they lost a lot of B-24s that never made it back home. I'll give you the story that I found out about a B-24 group. I found out just recently that a group sent out thirty-six of their B-24s on a mission, only one made it back, couldn't even make it back to the base, had to land some place where there was a runway. The commander of that base had lost his entire command except for that plane and he had one replacement gunner sitting in a Quonset hut all by himself, that's all he had. That's one day in the life of that crew in that base. That I found out not so long ago. The other thing I found out not so long ago, and this was proven by two German fighter pilots, is that towards the end of the war, and I think my last mission, I saw an account of it, is that they sent out their fighters to ram the B-17s. Now where I got an indication of that happening is on my last mission, which I said was a pretty tough one. A FW-190 slipped sideways between our plane and the plane alongside of us, close enough that I could see the rivets on the fuselage, close enough that I could see the pilot that he had his head up against the side of his, what do you call it, canopy, and he was out of control and that's what he was trying to do. [Editor's Note: The FW-190 was German single seat fighter aircraft that used all throughout the war by the Luftwaffe.] Now during that, it was a documentary on the *History Channel* that told us about that. I never knew that until recently and although I had an inkling of it then, but nobody ever talked about it, they never told us about it either. The Germans, just for one day, that was their job. They lost a lot of planes and they never tried it again and the two guys. the two Germans that described their experience, they were successful, but they were successful in being able to bail out. What they were doing was ramming the tail, see, but they managed to bail out because their plane was [destroyed] and they talked about the fact that that's what they were doing, but that was only a one day affair because they lost a lot of planes trying to do that, yes.

SI: Was that common where the plane would be so close that you would have a really good view of even seeing inside the canopy or were they usually further out?

JD: Oh, they were always out, unless they were making a run on our planes, they always had to come in fairly close, come in towards the tail, and then, veer off or come in from the side and veer off. They had to come in within six hundred feet, otherwise we never would have been able to shoot them down--six hundred yards, I'm sorry, but, no. They had to come close and no matter which way they came, either from the front, they would come straight in, and then, drop

down or drop up or from the side. They would always have to veer off because there were bombers all over the place. They got close. I remember seeing four ME-109s flying parallel to us and right behind them were four P-51s chasing them and they would zoom, they would whiz by, but I think the toughest thing, and I remember one of my jobs was standing on a girder in the bomb bay watching the bombs drop out. [Editor's Note: The ME-109 was often a termed used by Allied pilots for the Messerschmitt Bf 109 German fighter aircraft. By the end of 1941, the model was being slowly replaced by FW-190.] When they were finished out of the bomb bay, I would see what was going on underneath and you'd see the B-17s, some of them going down in a spin, some of them would be exploding and I watched one go straight down, I saw the wings rip off the fuselage. It's going absolutely straight down like a bomb and you see parachutes going down. It was carnage and those gunners down there were good, they were good, they were real good. One of the things that we used to hear during our briefing is how many of the guns that were down there shooting at us. If you went to Berlin they would say well it's about 240, what do you call it,

DR: Antiaircraft.

JD: 88s shooting at you and I said, "Thanks for the information." What they had also there in the major cities, they would mount the 88s on a flat car, they would know what direction we would be coming in because of the wind and they would be on flat cars on railroads and they would follow us with the guns. They were very good, very, very good. I remember we were along the north coast of Germany and there where Denmark is there's a little island called Heligoland. Now a straggler B-17 flew over the island all by himself, I don't know what it was doing out there, but right alongside of us, you could see and it was a battery of four antiaircraft guns on that island, just four and in watching him you would see four bursts right behind him, and then, four bursts closer, four bursts straddled him, four bursts passed him in the front and kept going, and then, the pilot made a right-hand turn and it started all over, behind them and they tracked him all the way through. He made it. I don't know how, but he made it, but goes to show you how accurate those guys were. One of my jobs, while we were over the target, was to dispense chaff. I don't know if you know what chaff is, it's a bundle of strips of paper with tin foil on it and you just drop them down the chute, you take the tie off and they would flutter down. They were tuned to the frequency of the radar, German radar, so that with all this stuff coming down, they couldn't figure our altitude very accurately so that saved us a lot of headaches too, but that stuff just kept fluttering right down, that was one of the jobs.

SI: Did you have any other jobs while you were in flight?

JD: Well, I had to maintain what's going on in the air and I also had to, well, when after the bombs were dropped, I had to make sure that everything was clear. One time I had a real problem. The problem was that we dropped a whole load of, what do you call it, the fire type of bombs.

DR: Napalm?

JD: Napalm and they were blue and smaller and after all the bombs were dropped, I looked down, there was no bombs in the bomb bay, no nothing down there and then I told the bombardier to close the bomb bay doors and it turned out that there was a bomb hanging out the bottom on the safety wire.

SI: Okay.

JD: When a bomb drops out, there's a wire going through the fuse. As it drops out, the fuse is armed, otherwise you could have an accident in there and the wire stays in the hanger and the bomb goes down. Well, this one was hanging outside the bomb bay, but behind it so I couldn't see it. Okay, so now when the pilot closed the doors it picked up the bomb and just the nose of the bomb was sitting inside and we got a radio call from another bomber and I went back and looked again and sure enough, the nose of the bomb was in the plane and the rest of it was hanging out and the bomb bay door wasn't completely closed, this is on one side. So, I told the bombardier to open up the doors again. The minute he opened it up the son of a gun went out, went down. That's the one thing and it wasn't armed because the wire was there. Why that hung up, I don't know. The other time, which it worked out well, when we went to Saint-Lô. Do you know what a hand grenade looks like?

SI: Yes.

JD: Okay. It was a fragmentation type of bombs, fragments. They were the size of a pineapple and they were mounted on a steel spring, along the steel spring and spaced, and then, they were tied up as a loop so that when they were dropped the thing would go out like this and these bombs would cover an area like that. Well, if you looked in the bomb bay and you saw those things hanging and all the wires that were there, but each bomb had a wire on it. Why they didn't tangle up like that and I'm standing there looking and I'm seeing, watching them drop out in sequence, they don't drop out at once, they drop out in sequence. It was amazing and all of them did get out. That was the two Saint-Lô missions. We had different type of bombs for different types of targets; the five hundred pounds were the general purpose bombs. Then we had some bombs that were time bombs, that wouldn't explode when they hit, but they would burrow into the ground and stay there for a certain length of time, and then, explode and we were never allowed to take those bombs back in case we didn't bomb the target. In fact, we were not allowed to bring any bombs back as you don't want to land a B-17 with bombs in it, too dangerous, so there's a few times we had to get rid of the bombs. We'd get rid of the bombs in the Channel or sometimes we would get there and the targets were covered with clouds so you couldn't see it. The only time we bombed through the clouds was, I remembered on our missions was the three times at Munich where we had the radar ship that would see through the clouds and it was pretty accurate, but one of the problems was, for some reason, I don't know why, but some of them got shot down and I was just wondering because of the fact that it was radiating frequencies that maybe they got a lock on it, I don't know, but some of them did get shot down, but most of the time we would do line of sight bombing, but those three missions I remember were through the clouds.

SI: When would they use the napalm or incendiary bombs?

JD: Mostly in places where there were warehouses and you know and manufacturing plants. A lot of the missions were railroad yards and actually a lot of them were factories, where factories are located and also the launching sites of the V-1s.

JD: They took a beating. I remember one mission where we had bombed this site, and then, otherwise we were leaving [and] there was one hell of an explosion down there. We must have hit the place where they stored them, because the whole thing went ballistic there, but most of the time they used to hide them underground or in bunkers where a bomb couldn't get at them, but apparently we must have hit them.

SI: Were you usually able to find and hit your primary target or would you have to hit the secondary or tertiary targets?

JD: The majority of times we hit the primary, the secondary targets sometimes we had to do because the primary was covered. You've got clouds all over the place, but very few times we hit a secondary, not too many times. I think there was always a third target we could have hit too, but on the way in there's plenty of targets, but we always bombed in formation. We never bombed singly. We kept the integrity of the group together for obvious reasons and also so that everybody could know what happened to this plane or that plane because when we have a briefing we have to tell everything that we saw and they would--this is what they wanted to know. Actually later on then some of the crews used to see the German jets and they used to report on that. That was later on, which was a big surprise.

SI: As a radio operator were you just monitoring what was happening or were you broadcasting?

JD: No broadcasting, no, no. The only broadcasting that was going on was between, well the lead plane radio operator would be broadcasting the strike results, but otherwise it was plane to plane and that should be minimum, also, because of the fact that they could track you, probably know where you are.

SI: Other questions?

EV: Did you have to bomb any populated cities?

JD: Oh, yes, well, practically all of the major targets were populated cities and we tried to hit the area that we're aiming at and I don't think, except for the Munich missions, which we bombed through the clouds, you really can't see the bombs dropping. Most of the time you have an idea, you can actually see where they're dropping and they're more or less concentrated where they should be, not all of them, but I personally don't think I'd been on any mission where they deliberately sent us to bomb areas that were not military targets, and that was also true for the fighters. The fighters, if they had any fuel left and if they had any ammunition left, their job was to go home without anything and they were to go down to the deck as low as possible and shoot

at anything that moves, railroad engines, military vehicles, buildings that look like they're warehouses and use their rockets, use everything they've got and believe it or not a lot of them got killed doing that because they would hit a building, the thing would explode in front of them, and if they were near they would get killed and many times, [you] get into accidents doing that, but anything that moved, that's their job.

EV: Did you have any remorse or feelings about that?

JD: No, no. The one thing, the first thing that I heard before I even started flying my missions, there were, I don't know if this is anything that is public. I never heard of anybody speaking of it, but there were some Jewish groups that wanted us to bomb the crematoriums and it never happened, that never happened, but that I remember vividly and that was before I even started flying in England, the "scuttlebutt" we call it. They were actually trying to get us to--God knows how many times I flew over those places.

SI: You could tell where the camps were?

JD: They were all over the place, yes.

EV: So, you had known about the Holocaust before going to Europe?

JD: I knew, yes. I did know and also I found out a lot about it after the war because I had read about it. You know that last raid I was talking, the one that they bombed and destroyed?

DR: The V-1?

JD: What?

DR: The V-1s?

JD: No, no, no. The one I told you, the fourteen hour mission.

SI: Oh, Peenemünde?

JD: Oh, no, not that one, the other one, that the place that was never bombed except for--

SI: Oh, Dresden, Dresden.

JD: Dresden, right, that's my senior moment. The Dresden raid created a firestorm and there was an American prisoner of war camp off to the side and these guys watched every bit of that and when the bombing was over the Germans actually got those prisoners of war out there picking up bodies that were around there. The three missions that we did over Hamburg were horrendous for them. It was a real tragedy there, but Hamburg was just loaded with, what do you call it, the railroad tracks, and also because it was by the coast, you had the all the canals and all the military stuff there, and also, the place really took a beating. The English did what they called pattern bombing. They would go night after night after night to the same target and by the time they finished, there wasn't any place where there wasn't a bomb hole. They couldn't do it any different because they couldn't see the ground, but there were a lot of civilians killed, there's no doubt about it, a lot of civilians killed. The one that I don't know whether you know that Edward R. Murrow, you know Edward R. Murrow? [Edward R. Murrow was a broadcast

journalist who flew 25 combat missions in Europe during World War II. Murrow wanted his audience to have a firsthand account of a bombing mission as it was happening.] Because he wanted to broadcast during a mission, he was flying with the English bombers. That was unmitigated suicide for that guy, if he, and his buddies, who would not go up. He went up and he was a lucky to be alive. The other fellow that flew five missions with, what's his name now, I don't know his name. He's one of the announcers.

SI: Andy Rooney.

JD: Andy Rooney. [Editor's Note: Andy Rooney was an American radio, and later on, television writer who flew one combat mission with the 8th Air Force in Europe during World War II. Along with six other correspondents, he flew on America's second bombing raid over Germany.] Andy Rooney flew on one mission during 1943 and all I could say to him is, "God bless you," because he flew when it was really tough. If you ever want to read a book, my son sent me this one. This fellow is a gunner, wrote this book, *The Cold Blue Sky*. He flew bombing missions during 1943 and you want to read about carnage, unbelievable. I got something here that, let's see, where is it? I want to read just three paragraphs here.

SI: Sure.

JD: For this. Ready?

SI: It's from *The Cold Blue Sky*.

JD: Yes, this is *The Cold Blue Sky* written by Jack Novey. He made it and he lives in--I don't know whether he's still alive, lives in San Francisco. He and his wife have an antique furniture store there. He lived through his hell, let me tell you. This is after missions. "After the ambulances pulled away (Tex Shield?) and I, along with a couple of others from our hut, walked down to the hospital to visit the injured men. Then, we decided to go to the morgue to look at the remains of our friends. When we got there one of the enlisted medical staff who knew us came up and said "Please, don't go in there." I looked in the door and the medics were going through a pile of body parts trying to pick out pieces of identification from the escape kits. It looked like a mess of garbage, it was a horror. We quickly turned around and walked towards the hospital. When we got there the doctor wouldn't let us see the survivors. They were sedated and pretty much beat up, but lucky. If you saw pictures of those wrecked planes, you wonder how anyone survived those terrible crashes. Back at the hut, I found it difficult to look at the empty beds. I felt nothing or at best I felt glad it wasn't me. I thought of myself as uncaring and uninterested. It hadn't paid to make friends with these enlisted men on this crew who shared our hut. Now looking back, I think I was protecting myself, otherwise, I couldn't have continued to fly these missions day after day. I was committed to finishing my tour of duty for my own sense of self-worth. I was from an ordinary background, uneducated, and used to hard work. I avoided fights by not being too macho, although none of us knew the term back then. Maybe I needed to be a soldier for my ego, maybe I needed to feel like a man. At the time, all I knew was that I had to do it." Now this is the part: "I can't explain why we bomber crews, without any gung-ho attitude at all, would put our lives on the line, mission after mission, against the terrible,

terrible odds of those days. I do not understand my blind obedience. I don't regret it. I can't explain it even when my fears were about to overwhelm me, even when I was physically sick, I kept flying my missions. I didn't want to let my crew members down; I would rather have been dead." Now when I read that for the first time, I want to tell you something. It was the first time that I realized that it never, never, never occurred to me not to keep doing what I was doing, never, and when I read that I broke down and cried because that was the first time it ever entered my head that you could do that, but it never occurred to me to do that. I really busted down crying reading that, that's why I have it. This here is unbelievable. I mean you get a copy of this, it's still being published. I read it once; I don't think I'll read it again, too much, too gory.

SI: When you came home did you have any lasting effects from your tour of duty like bad dreams?

JD: No, I think what it did to me, it made me a very, very, very serious person and I've been accused of being too serious because I don't laugh at jokes and I can be listening to a comedian and I really don't laugh. I can understand the joke, but I don't let it out, but I think what it's done for me is given me the attitude that life is a very, very serious thing and not to be wasted and I am doing my best not to waste it. My mother was eighty-one and she went senile, I'm eighty-four and I'm keeping my mind extremely active. I just got back from a four-day trip to Delaware at an elder hostel, just before that, four days down at the shore at Brigantine. I've been to England already this year. I've got nine days in Southern California to visit my son coming up during the Thanksgiving week, then; I've got to do a trip to my daughter's in Vienna, Virginia, right outside the Beltway. She was close enough to Washington, DC that she could see the smoke when the plane hit the Pentagon [Editor's Note: Mr. De Luccia is referring to the September 11, 2001 attack on the Pentagon]. So, I move around and also, in the meanwhile, I've made three trips to Italy to find family and so I'm keeping myself damned busy.

DR: Well very traveled.

JD: I hope to keep doing it for as long as I can. Another thing is I'm eighty-four years old. Since 1968, when my wife got sick, she passed away from cancer; breast cancer in 1973. When she got sick, in order for me to get out of the house and get my wits together, because we had a rough five and a half years of her cancer. It's hell on Earth. I used to walk out the house at maybe ten, eleven o'clock at night, right down the street is a Saddle Brook Park and I would walk in the park at night, in the dark. Since 1968, to this day, six days a week I walk five miles every morning.

SI: Very good.

JD: Every day, every day. Not only that, up until the year 2000, I used to hike on Saturdays and I also belonged to the Adirondacks Mountain Club and I used to hike. I used to lead hikes for the Club in New York State and Northern Jersey and any place else up in the Catskills and Harriman Park in North Jersey hiking trails and we've hiked in Canada, hiked in New Hampshire, hiked in California. We go on hiking elder hostels too. I had to quit as a leader, because I couldn't keep up with the young people and also my upper leg muscles couldn't take climbing anymore, but I can walk flat eight hours a day without any problem.

DR: Well, I think that leads nicely into toward the end of the war and when did you find out the war was over in Europe and Japan?

JD: Oh, when was in Laredo, we got the notice that the bomb was dropped and of course after the second one and the war was over officially, everything just stopped. [Editor's Note: the first American atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in August 6, 1945, and the second one on Nagasaki in August 9, 1945] There was nothing going on at all and since I had accumulated I think about seventy-six points, depending on whether you're overseas in combat, all that stuff, I was discharged right from there, and then, got on a train and came all the way home. After I got home, I went back to work for Western Electric. Western Electric was, before the war was involved in telephone, mechanical switchboards, before all of the electronics. I think for about a year I was taught how to inspect and test these boards and after that I was involved in other stuff that they were building that was for consumers. I think one was hearing aids, which didn't last too long, and then, there was some other stuff. Then, after three years, they had caught up with all the stuff that they hadn't built during the war and practically everybody got laid off so that was the time when television was booming. So, I went to work for a company called Fada, Fada Television. This is when they were selling televisions like popcorn at that time and I worked for them for a few years, and then, there was another outfit in Paterson that was doing servicing of television sets in the house, which I got involved with them and I was going to the home and repairing television sets. In those days, televisions were not that reliable and you know a tube would burn out and this and that. I did that for about five years and the problem there is working with people that have bad televisions. It's like a doctor that never sees anybody that's happy and people can be a pain in the neck when you deal with people, especially when they don't have to pay because they had contracts. So, finally I went out looking for another job and I worked for an outfit that was doing military work, doing telemetry work for the military. I worked with them for about two years and I really didn't care too much for the place, it was personnel problems. So, I applied for another job. I went to Palisades Park, there was an outfit called ESC Electronics. While I was at the other job for two years, I had a book to learn how to acquire the first class FCC license. You had to take three tests at a place, at the Federal building in New York, the first part was the laws of the outfit and the other ones were all electronic theory. So, it took me a year to study that which did me a lot of good because when I went for my other job, I was questioned on theory and I did acquire the license without any problem. I got a grade of ninety-six and everybody there was happy to get seventy and the guy looked at me, he said, "You know what, you got ninety-six." I said, "Thanks a lot," and walked out, got my certificate and walked out and he was surprised, but I applied myself. I learned all the theory of electronics. So, when I went for my second job, with the other job which I stayed with for twenty-eight years, this outfit did nothing but military work. I was interviewed by the chief engineer, brilliant fellow and he said to me, "Joe, I'm going to ask you a lot of theory questions and if you don't know don't try and give me the baloney, just say you don't know." So, he kept asking and I knew all the answers and had no problem, only one I just said, "I'm sorry, never heard of it," just went on, got all done. He asked me one question and it had something to do with the kind of testing that outfit does. They're involved in delay networks. Delay networks and transformers and filters for the military. Now, the question he asked me, he said "Joe, have you ever measured the rise time and the fall time of a square wave?" So, I said, "Yes." I said, "The 535 oscilloscope that I used at my last job," which I was still working at, I said, "has a vertical square wave

generator that's used to calibrate the vertical amplitude of the input of the oscilloscope. It's a square wave and when you check, you had maintenance checks on these things and you're supposed to check the time it takes from the 10% point to the 90% point, you can actually measure it, because you can stretch the pulse with the oscilloscope. [Editor's Note: An electronic instrument used to observe signal voltages] So, you measure it, and then, the fall time is that slope and you measure it from the 90% point and 10 % from ground level and I explained it to him. Well, he almost fell off his seat. He said, "Joe, I have hired every engineer and every technician in this place. Even I have never measured a rise time and neither have they." I was the first one to measure the rise time when they were hired. Well, I was his friend for life. What I was involved in there was, well, first at the time was test measurements all for military. We'd have engineers coming in, sitting next to me while I was measuring. This stuff was going on the Shuttle, going on the LEM, going on the Surveyor, going on everything out in space and also on fighters and also components on atomic submarines. So, the engineers came down from all these places that we were building them for. After a while, I got involved in getting the drawings from the customer on stuff that was never built before. They want this and they want it in a certain sized package and they want it tested, they want a prototype made, and they want the prototype sent to them so they can check it out before they would give us a production run. So, I would get this drawing and all the information there and I would design it. I would build it. I would check it out electrically. I would have it put in a case, so it would have it encapsulated, then, checked it again and I would have to check it at high temperature, low temperature and ambient temperature. We're talking about over +125 degrees Celsius and down minus fifty degrees Celsius and also at ambient, had to work and stay in spec and all of that, and then, it would be shipped to the company, and then, we would get the order. That's what I got involved in was prototype work and that, to me, was very creative work.

DR: Yes, it sounds like it is right up your alley.

JD: I did that practically all the time. It got to the point where my boss, who was the next chief engineer, he stopped designing because I did all his design work for him. Many times I would get a drawing and specs from a customer and I would look at it and I would say, "We can't do it and if we do it, we try to do it, we're going to lose money on it." My boss said, "Hey, take it up with the owner of the business." I would go upstairs and tell him. He took the job anyway and he would lose his shirt because they wouldn't take my word for it, they'd lose their shirt, but that's the name of the game. That was, I loved that and the thing is that I used to build the prototype and knowing all the changes that was going to happen to it after it was built because you had to do all of these tests at elevated temperatures and all of that, you had to make it as nominal as possible because production would never make it as accurately as I would. So, you had to make it right on the nose, and then, you would get a good production run out of it, otherwise it was a problem. I did that for twenty-eight years until the place went off, and then, I retired. I retired on 1986 and they were still involved in working, but then they would call me back for certain problems because we had certain equipment there that was built in-house, automatic coil winders which were built there and nobody knew how to service them except me. So, I used to go back there during an emergency. I'd get paid off the books and everything and meet my friends again and make a quite a few dollars doing that and finally the place went out of business. I want to show you some of the equipment that we had.

SI: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JD: This is the history of our airfield.

SI: Okay it is called "Airfield Focus, 50 Glatton Covington."

JD: That's right.

SI: By John Smith, John N. Smith.

JD: This fellow made a book like this of practically every airfield in England and actually provided it for us whenever we went to our reunions. I don't know if you know it or not, but during the war they flew a B-29 to England and they did it for one reason. There are German spies in England; they know everything that's going on in England because they've got spies there. They flew it over there and they flew it into our airbase and two other airbases, for one reason. So, that the fact that that plane was in England indicated to the Germans that maybe they're going to be bombed by this plane pretty soon, never happened, but it was a good, good ploy and they say that when they landed it there, he says, the personnel on those airfields went crazy. Look at this big monster coming in and putting it alongside of a B-17, imagine that.

SI: Oh, yes.

JD: Here, it shows you all the people there, look at that, all running there. This is a terrific book.

SI: How strict was the security around your base?

JD: Very strict. At night each B-17 had somebody sitting in it during the night hours, oh, yes, yes. There were saboteurs in England. I remember when was it, just before I started flying, I sat in a B-17 a couple of nights there and they would bring food to you and as soon as it got light, then you got off. It was kept, well, you had a bunch of brand new [B]17s sitting around for replacement, but don't forget, you had forty-eight B-17s that were operational to take off at any time. Out of the four squadrons, normally, only three squadrons flew during one day, but if you had a maximum effort day they would all fly, but mostly a crew got a little time off once in a while. What was I was supposed to?

SI: You were going to talk about the machine you had downstairs.

JD: Oh, the oscilloscope.

SI: Okay.

JD: Yes. The 511 oscilloscope was the first one that was produced and the way it was produced was that one of the fellows was going to college, engineering college, and he designed the first ten megahertz oscilloscope. Ten megahertz means ten million cycles per second. At that time DuMont, the best that they had, was 500,000 cycles per second, which was nothing compared to ten megahertz. So, he built this oscilloscope as his thesis in college. Now, when, what is it, Bell Telephone heard about it, they went down there and grabbed it and they said, "We want this, we want to use it," because there's no such thing as--that was like I don't know how many times more efficient and faster than the ones that they were using in production. So, they took it. Now, the fellow wanted it back so he went there and he was told, "You're not getting this back."

He says, "You get out there and start producing these." So that was the beginning of the Techtronic's Oscilloscope Corporation. This fellow came out with the best oscilloscopes in the world, okay, having periodically improved it from the 511, the 514, to the 535, and plus all the different inputs. You've got the amplifiers plugged in at the input were all different and made a fortune. He accumulated so much money for I don't know how many of his future families that he had to quit taking money out of the business and all the rest of the money went back into his employees. We had an engineer come down when we bought our first oscilloscope to show us how to use it, because you see all the dials there, not easy to use and he told us he had been working for Techtronic's for two years, he had already accumulated 70,000 dollars worth of profit sharing.

SI: Wow.

JD: Two years and this is way back, in only two years. So, they plowed all the money back into the employees and he couldn't take any more money out because he had provided for God knows how many future families of his family. Then, Hewlett Packard started coming out with pretty good stuff too and now you're getting a lot of good stuff from the Japanese, [they] come out with some very good stuff too after that, but these things were on all day running continuously. They're workhorses, fantastic oscilloscopes. More questions?

SI: Are there any other highlights from you career you want to talk about, or? You mentioned in general what you did with these different projects; were there any in particular that you want to talk about? Any that were particularly challenging or you did something?

JD: Are you talking about while at work?

SI: Yes.

JD: Oh, I can tell you some of the problems I had.

SI: Yes, sure.

JD: After my wife passed away, my son was in college and he never came home. My son, at the age of sixteen, he went to MIT, in fact, they wanted to take him earlier than that, but he was too immature, went to MIT and he got himself two degrees, math and physics during the first four years. In fact, when he was going to high school, because he was so bored, he knew everything, and that the teacher got him to sit in a class all by himself with some college books, math and whatever science, and when he first got to MIT he took exams for the first year, first two semesters of college and ended up with credits for almost a year of college just by taking tests during the first year. So, he got himself two degrees, math and physics in the first. Then he went to Harvard, got a full scholarship from Harvard for his Master's at Theoretical Physics and his PhD at Theoretical Physics. From there he went to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton and spent a year there. So, he's a real brain and this guy got all the, what do you call it, awards, all perfect grades and I used to get his grades before he did. It would be sent to me and he did very, very well in college. He left my house at the age of sixteen, never came home. He located out in California, went to work for, what outfit, a big outfit, well he's in aerospace right now, he's a project engineer, and he comes out this way for business, but a real brain and I have my daughter, my oldest daughter, she went to college in Florida and got a degree in Math and Astronomy and she and her husband were both astronomers at the Naval Observatory in

Washington, DC and they're both retired. He passed away about a year ago. So, they did pretty well.

SI: Well, let's see, do you guys have any other questions?

DR: Yes, I was wondering, do you think your interest in electronics and bringing electronics home, do you think that helped your children want to learn more about math and physics and things like that in the sciences?

JD: Well, my son, he's a great reader the way I am. I mean, I look at the books he reads and I feel like I'm an idiot because he's [a genius]. No, I don't deal with anybody else, but in the family, I'm really a loner in that respect except for the fact that, and I'm not a joiner either, although I do belong to the Veterans of Foreign War organization and I only go down to the bar in town and have a beer once in a while and I also belong to the American Legion and I also belong to the 8th Air Force Historical Society, which is located down there. I'm a life member of those three outfits, but outside of that, I'm within myself, except when I'm away on reunions. That's the only time I'm with people that are involved in what I was involved in. Otherwise, except for the fact that we have an air show that comes to the Teterboro Airport once a year and they bring down a B-17, which I go there to see it.

DR: Yes, I was going to ask because I know they come to Caldwell sometimes and to Teterboro.

JD: Yes, Caldwell also, but I never get to Caldwell. They have it here every year. In fact, they were here about a month ago and I go there every time and they've got good displays there, in fact, they have one display, which I haven't seen anywhere else, they've got a dummy with all the clothes that we used to wear, which is you know a flak suit and everything. It's really something to see and I belong to that outfit too, but I don't go there, just not much for me to do there, but outside of that, I had about four or five people in the area like Clifton and Paterson and some other towns like Denville that we see at the reunions, while they were in this country, but I don't see them anymore. In fact, I tried to socialize with these guys and they just don't seem to--the only time we see each other is when we're at a reunion. There's just nobody around. The one fellow that I knew from Hawthorne, he was I think a bombardier. He got shot down on his first mission and got back. He managed to land in an occupied part, where we had taken over and they took him, went back to England and he finished all his missions after that, could you imagine the trauma? I said, "Goddamn." He moved down to Florida and I saw him again in the reunion down at Pensacola last year, but otherwise, he lives close by. The other one lives close by, up in Wayne, and can never get these guys together and even when I go down to the vets, to the bars there, nobody there even talks about their past. It's not something [they do]. You don't meet very many people that are interested or even ask questions. I walk around, all my hats have my insignia on it; the 8th Air Force insignia. Occasionally somebody'll say, "Oh, 8th Air Force? What'd you do?" Outside of that, no.

SI: Did you ever make any use of the GI Bill?

JD: No, I had to go to work because I got married and I had a daughter by my first marriage, and then, I got remarried and had a son and a daughter and both my first wife and second wife passed away a long time ago. Both had medical problems.

DR: Did you stay in the same area here around Paterson?

JD: Oh, yes. What I did is I lived in my mother's house for about a year or so, on the first floor, and then, from there I always wanted to buy a house, bought a house. My wife and I bought a house in Saddle Brook on the other end of town right near the Fair Lawn border, Cape Cod, very nice house and my wife got sick. She had breast cancer, lasted about five and a half years before she passed away. It was a really terrible time going back and forth to doctors. At that time hospitals around here weren't very good at cancer and going to Sloan-Kettering and the New York Memorial all the time. It was really tough, although I got a lot of cooperation at work. My boss told me, he said, "Joe anytime you have to go, you go. If you need any money let me know." That's the kind of boss I had, I mean, talking about the owner of the business. So, after my wife passed away my children were out on their own and what I did is I always wanted a dining room, because that house didn't have a dining room. In order for me to build out in the back to either at least double the size of the kitchen, which I wanted, it was going to cost me a certain amount of money and so I figured, "Hey, why put money into that? I'll go out and buy a newer house." So, I went out looking and I found this place, put a down payment on it, and sold that one and got this one here, but I ended up living here all by myself. I've been here since 1973 all by myself, two bedrooms shut down, guest room over there when my son and daughter come over, and that's it, cook for myself, clean for myself, do everything for myself.

SI: Let's see. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about on the record?

JD: Any question you want to ask, ask.

SI: You guys have any questions, anything?

DR: Nothing comes to mind.

SI: Let's see. For the record we should mention you were awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

JD: Yes, and also the European Theater with three Stars, Good Conduct, and then there's also another medal, New Jersey Medal, which I never bothered putting on there.

SI: Okay, the Distinguished Service Medal.

JD: Yes, something like that.

SI: Well. If you guys don't have any other questions, thank you very much we appreciate all your time and your hospitality.

JD: Any time.

SI: All right, thank you very much.

JD: Oh, just one other statistic.

SI: Sure.

JD: Just one other statistic. During the 1943 when the 8th Air Force first started flying combat missions up until the winter of that year, the survival rate was thirty-five percent. When I was flying 1944 from January of that year until the beginning of winter of that year, the survival rate

was sixty percent. From the beginning of winter of '44 to the end of the war, the survival rate went up to eighty-five percent. So, that's the statistics. Of all the services if you take into consideration all the men that were just in combat, percentage wise, the 8th Air Force had the greatest percentage of casualties, because we were proportionately a smaller amount of people. In fact, it's listed in here: 8th Air Force had a total of 350,000 airmen and 26,000 were killed or that comes out to about 7.42%, which is a greater average than any other service in this country during World War II. So, that's the story.

SI: From the time you arrived in England and started flying missions to the time you left, did you have a sense that it was getting better, that the odds were improving in your favor?

JD: Not while I was flying because it seems that when I was getting my twentieth, twenty-fifth mission, it was a continuous--it's a new adventure. Every mission was an adventure, everything was different. There was not anything that tomorrow it's going to be a little better, the day after it's going to be a little better, it's not. You could have it easy on a couple of missions or sometimes what you thought--we would go out on a mission that we would name as a milk run. A milk run, you just go and come back, no problems. Let me tell you, some of them did not turn out to be milk runs. They turned out to be horrendous casualties, but it's the same old meat grinder every time you went out you didn't know whether you were going to come back and that's the way it was every day that I can remember, every day you wake up in the morning, you don't know whether you're going to be alive at the end of the day and that's true for other services. I'm not saying it's true for only us. When I was working, I had some fellows there that were in the infantry and they, the one fellow told me he used to see us every day. He'd look up at the sky, he was in the infantry. He was in the invasion force. He'd look up into the sky and he says, "You stupid bastards up there flying, going into Germany," that's what he said. He said, "You've got to be crazy to do that." When I was talking to him I said, "I always thought you guys were crazy down there." I said, "You'd have one hell of a time doing what they're doing." but he was on the ground, but flying is a different situation. You get hit with a bullet on the ground, you lay down and you die. You're up there there's a lot of things that's going to happen to you, you're not going to die that easily. You get hit, you're not going to get any medical attention up there. There'd been cases where somebody got an arm knocked off and they would put a tourniquet on them and put a chute on him and drop him out and hope that they would pick him up and put him in a hospital. That has happened, because there's no medical attention. The only thing we had up there for pain was the syringe with morphine, that's about it, but otherwise you can't do anything, so that a lot of guys died on the way home because there was no attention. I remember when I used to be on the ground and watch these guys come in, you see the planes coming in and those that had wounded or dead aboard would fire a certain very pistol they used to call it and it would send up a colored, what do you call it.

SI: A flare.

JD: Flare and depending on the color as to they needed an emergency landing because they had somebody bleeding to death on board and as soon as they landed they would run up there and with the ambulance to take him off, but we had one guy on the ground, ran into a propeller. That was a tragedy, and then, you had some that couldn't put their landing gears down, had to belly land and a lot of accidents in flying, planes running into each other, in the fog especially. England was known for fogs. You could come home sometime and you can just barely see your way home. You had to put up with that and when the sky is full of planes, I think the one story I

heard is that two planes collided up while they were bombing and they were tied together and they came down together and when some of the other crews that were on the ground that had bailed out, one of the German fellows said to them, "Oh, you've got an eight engine bomber now," because he saw them coming down with eight engines and it was really two planes that were locked together and they both crashed together so that's the stuff that went on and you had planes that moved out of position and got hit by a bomb and some of them just disappeared right in front of you, got a direct hit, they're just gone.

SI: You mentioned you had a very good relationship with the officers on your crew. What about the squadron commander? What did you think of those officers? Did you think they were doing a good job?

JD: Oh, they were all fine, I'll tell you. No, they used to go on missions too. They weren't supposed to, but they did. These guys had egos and one of them, I'll tell you; we had the second in command of the 457th Bomb Group, after the war was over got into a B-25 at Teterboro and flew it into the Empire State Building, okay. That's a bit of something that I didn't know for quite a while. He had somebody with him also. We had two base commanders; first one led our group on a mission, couldn't come home, bailed out, and was a prisoner of war, okay. He survived. After the war this one guy got involved in B-29s, went out to the West Coast, and then, I think he went out somewhere out in the Pacific, and then, he came back flying a B-29 and crashed and got killed, okay. The other commander, in the States after the war is over, was flying in the States, was flying a B-26, he must have been flying in the wintertime because the plane got iced up and he crashed. So, the three commanders of our base got killed after the war. That's the history of they didn't get it then, they got it here. So, in that diary there, I have a brief history of the 457th Bomb Group in there, too, it's got a lot of information. I incorporated that in that book and I also added the talk I could give on the first and the third mission of the Berlin mission and also the thirty-first, thirty-second mission, that's included. In fact, I have to add that to my son's book and my daughter's book, which they don't have that in there. I keep adding pages to it.

SI: That's good. All right, well. Again, any questions? Thank you very much, we appreciate it.

JD: Anytime.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: All right. Can we record this?

JD: Yes, go ahead you can record that.

SI: We're talking about risk taking behaviors after the war.

JD: Well, number one after I got back, my son is living in California and he keeps saying, "Dad when are you going to come and visit?" I wasn't that interested in flying commercial and I really had no interest whatsoever. So one day he sends me a ticket. So I've been flying commercial ever since, but I hate it. It's the most boring thing in the world. I kept telling him, I wish they would come up with a pill that you can take to put you to sleep for five hours, and then, wake you up and land, because to me it's the most boring thing in the world, to be in a cabin with hundreds of other people sitting like this together and I don't even have the ambition to read for

God's sakes and that to me is five hours like taking a hole out of my life. I mean it and it took quite a while before I flew commercial. I don't think, there was an interval I think of about, well, maybe about ten years before I started flying commercial, but otherwise, he kept on saying, "When are you going to come and visit? When you going to?" To me it's the most boring thing in the world.

DR: Now you said you had an interest in aviation when you were growing up. Have you carried that on to now? Are you still interested?

JD: Oh, yes, well, I know everything that's flying, I know what it is, everything, even the space stuff I know all about. I keep up with all that. I also know what the Russians were flying. I keep up with all that stuff. I go to the library, they have magazines there with everything about what's flying and everything the astronauts are doing. My head is moving all the time. I'm not kidding, I refuse to become senile, that's all I could tell you. I refuse to become senile, but every once in a while I forget something, but I'll find out. I do that purposely.

SI: Oh, yes.

JD: I read my daily newspaper, the *New York Times* every day. I subscribe to eight magazines and I've got books to read downstairs, go to the libraries, and it's overwhelming, but I keep doing it. I keep doing it.

SI: That's good. Well, again, thank you very much.

DR: Thank you.

JD: Anytime.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Mohammad Athar - 6/10/2015

Reviewed by Joseph De Luccia - 7/7/2015

Reviewed by Molly Graham - 8/5/2015