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Reflections on my 1990 Taped Interviews with POWs of WWII

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Reflections on my 1990 Taped Interviews with POWs of WWII

Interviewing former WWII POWs was an honor I will cherish forever. Having never met any of the men prior to my interviews, I came to know that collectively, they defined the real meaning of being a true American hero. To a person, they embodied the spirit of patriotism, honor, and commitment to preserving the freedoms of a country they loved. During the course of my oral history project, I discovered the men I interviewed all joined their respective branches of service as boys ready to defend the U.S., and in most cases teenagers who had no concept of the horrors of war. In the end, it was easy for me to conclude that all came back changed men having survived brutal capture and the starvation and torture that went with it.

I want to thank all of the veterans who agreed to be interviewed for my project and for their willingness to commit to history their wartime experiences as POWs of WWII. Further, I wish to thank Buffalo State College and especially Special Collections Archivist, Hope Dunbar, for her effort in making available to the public their stories of bravery and survival as POWs. These reflections of the “greatest generation” should not be lost to future generations of Americans and I am grateful that the Buffalo State Archives & Special Collections believes the same.

On an academic level, I want to thank the late Dr. Donald Leopard for his assistance in the conduct of my project. I am grateful for his support and expertise in terms of the planning that resulted in the stories you are about to be inspired by.

-Mark Rieman, 11/11/2018

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