

Seymour Nussenbaum

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Highlights:

Mauldin

Letters and stamp collecting 7:47- 9:36 & 118 - 125:14

On citizen soldiers 125:14 - 126:00

Beyer: Yes, it started recording so today's May 5th, 2020 and my name is Rick Beyer and I'm here also with Leah Cohen of the Pritzker Military [Museum &] Library and we are going to be speaking to Private Seymour Nussenbaum. He's not still a private, but he was a private who served in the 603rd Camouflage Engineer Battalion, which was part of the 23rd headquarters special troops during World War Two. And was also known as the Ghost Army. And the Ghost Army was charged with impersonating other Allied army units, really American units to deceive the enemy. So, Seymour, we're going to start. There's a list of questions here, very long, but we're going to start by talking about your background, then about your service, and then finally a little bit about post-war and some reflections. So, for could you tell us when and where you were born.

Nussenbaum: I was born in New York City in 1923 and in two weeks will be my 97th birthday. First, I have to think.

Beyer: You don't have to come up with the year. We can do [let] them... I think we can do the math.

Nussenbaum: I'm not ashamed of it.

Beyer: So, what neighborhood in New York? And tell us what life was like growing up there?

Nussenbaum: Well, I was born just before the Great Depression started, but luckily, I don't remember those years. But when I grew old enough to remember what was

going on, it seemed it was a constant battle to put food on the table and get a job and to have something to do. My mother was a homemaker in those days women didn't work. They stayed home took care of the kids and my father struggled. Sometimes went and freelanced a job afterwards. [He] didn't come home until 11 o'clock at night and I didn't get to see him until weekends.

Beyer: What kind of work was he doing?

Nussenbaum: Ladies' garments. And, uh, and it was tough because women weren't buying clothes, then, that a lot of places went out of business and he... I don't really... have two jobs to put food on the table.

Beyer: As you [got] older were you aware at all of the rise of Nazism in Europe?

Nussenbaum: I know it at fourteen, I guess. I knew something about it, because I did a painting.

Beyer: Mmmmm.

Nussenbaum: Showing emblems on the antisemitism and all that. [It was] one of my earliest paintings. Yeah, we know about it my... my grandparents lived in Europe, my paternal grandparents lived in Europe and they didn't survive the Holocaust. My mother's parents came here. They came here just after world war... just before World War one.

Beyer: And, um, so growing up as a young person you obviously became interested in art at an early age. Can you tell us about that and what other things you were involved with as a teenager?

Nussenbaum: The earliest I remember is having my teacher come up behind me in grade school and berating me for drawing pictures on the back of my book when I was supposed to be doing my work. [laughs] So, that's the... My earliest memory of my art. I think I knew from a very early age that I wanted to be an artist. I wanted to be doing painting, the drawing for the rest of my life. Luckily, it's worked.

Beyer: Excellent. And I just have a technical question as we're going along. Leah, Leah, when I mute my mic it does an awful beeping sound, do you hear that?

Cohen: I don't hear that.

Beyer: Good.

Cohen: And I have question for you. do you. Do you happen to see the little window that says recorder and have the amount of time recording that I see on my screen?

Beyer: I do not, but I do have a button that says recording in progress.

Cohen: Okay, good.

Nussenbaum: I don't have any of those buttons.

Beyer: We'll just say for the reference of the historians looking at this video we are we are all experimenting with the new technology in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. So, bear with us and hopefully the content will overcome the technology.

Beyer: Where were you in high school, Seymour? Where did you go to high school?

Nussenbaum: I went to first... I went to junior high, which they don't have anymore. Herman Ridder, a junior high school in the Bronx. Then, I went to DeWitt Clinton and also in the Bronx.

Beyer: Thanks.

Nussenbaum: At the time, [it] was the largest high school in the world. The building was immense. We had a graduating class of eight hundred.

Beyer: Wow. Were you involved in any activities at your high school?

Nussenbaum: I was on the staff of the *The Magpie*. That was a little publication they put out of art and poetry. Although, I never got any of my things published at the time. I was still on the staff. One very influential artists, was at the school at the same time. He was more or less... Most of the drawings we put in *The Magpie* were his.

Beyer: Who was that?

Nussenbaum: It was [Robert Hamilton] Blackburn¹, I think. He was a man of color. And that was pretty much unusual in those days. He's very, very talented and a very nice guy.

Beyer: Now you also from a fairly young age started collecting stamps, didn't you? Can you tell us about that? [07:47]

¹ Blackburn became a prominent artist, printmaker, and teacher.

Nussenbaum: Well, in those days, there wasn't much did you know – no, no television, very little to do. Outside, most of the kids did played ball in front of the house and went to the park. When you're stuck in the house, you have something to do. I was an avid reader. I still wanted something. So, we used to have show-and-tell at school and some of the kids brought in stamp collections and I thought that was very interesting, so I decided I was going to collect stamps, I was about six or seven. I started and then I went home, and I asked my father who saved all these stamps of whatever mail he got. So, he got like four letters a month you know. I didn't have a very big stamp collection. Then, I started to ask the rest of the members of the family in. And I discovered Woolworths used to have five for five cents. A packet of twenty different stamps from of the world and that totally fascinated me, because you know here I was in the Bronx and I was holding something that actually came from Japan or France. It was very interesting. So, I got hooked. I am still collecting.

Beyer: We'll come back to that at the end, because I know you're still an avid collector and have a really amazing collection. So, after you...

Nussenbaum: You said avid stamp collector. My wife said [09:35] rabid.

Beyer: Pardon me.

Nussenbaum: You said avid stamp collector. My wife says rabid.

Beyer: Rabid. [pause; laughs] You, you, you, uh, after high school you, you... I think he went to Pratt. But we're probably right around 1940 by now it's... it's right before the World War, you started to go to Pratt Institute, didn't you?

Nussenbaum: Well, it wasn't that easy. I graduated from high school at sixteen, because in those days due to the overcrowding and everything, they try to push some kids out as fast as they could. My grades were a little above average, so I say two years of going to school. I graduated at sixteen and what was that going to do at sixteen? My father got me a job in the garment industry and I worked as a delivery boy and then I started to go to school, an evening school in New York, called the Leonardo da Vinci School of Art, which was the sponsor with Fiorello LaGuardia. I was the only kid in the class that wasn't Italian. My teacher had a hell of a time for announcing my name when he called the roll, but anyway I went there for about a year and a half. But I applied for Pratt. I applied for Cooper Union first. Cooper Union was a free school, and I didn't make it because I never had any training before. Now, I just drew what I saw and maybe very unsophisticated. I went back to work the next year and I decided instead of going back there. I'm going to try for Pratt. And again, I did and again I didn't make it. But I came very close for Coopers Union, I mean. And I mean I came very close. I said well I'm not doing that again I'm not wasting another year. So, I

found out about Pratt and I went and interviewed there, and I decided to spend half a year. I went to night school at Pratt. And there I started to learn something. So, that when I think for the final interview, I had something to show.

Beyer: Do you remember what year that was?

Nussenbaum: In 1940.

Beyer: And, so, Pratt Institute is in Brooklyn, right?

Nussenbaum: I think that it still was in Brooklyn, at that time.

Beyer: It's still a very vibrant institution today and a lot of Ghost Army soldiers a number of artists maybe as many as a dozen that I'm aware of went to Pratt either before or after the war or in some cases both. But while you are at Pratt you discovered or found out that they had, they were going to offer a camouflage course. Can you tell us about that?

Nussenbaum: They made an announcement that they were going to have a camouflage course. You weren't going to get any credits for it, but they're offering, it because of the times, you know, with the war going on. I figured... At that time, I was almost nineteen. I figured any day now I'm going to get drafted, because I registered for the army. I figured I may as well take that and have that under my belt. And it seemed interesting, so I took that course, and I was drafted. I was halfway through my first year at the course.

Beyer: And, we should say that the war had, had the United States was not yet involved in war. There was a draft had been obviously passed, and an extent--

Nussenbaum: That I was...

Beyer: 1942 at this time. Okay. Okay, so that we had gotten involved. The, in some cases, at some places, they offered camouflage courses even before the US was involved, because there was a knowledge that that we were likely to get involved. But either way, that's, I think, it's probably interesting to artists now kind of very interesting the idea that they actually taught courses in camouflage. And you're out there. Were you? Were you doing work, outdoor work or was it all in the classroom?

Nussenbaum: Oh, it was all the theoretical camouflage. They taught us the different tones to use and you know that sort of thing. And big splotchy patterns and different uses of camouflage. So, [no] dummies or anything like that.

Beyer: Sure, so you entered the service halfway through your, your freshman year at Pratt. That would have been I assume 1942. Is that correct?

Nussenbaum: 1942... February of 1943.

Beyer: February 43. Okay, and, and you were drafted. So, where did you do your basic training? And, and what was your initial experience in the US Army?

Nussenbaum: Okay, the first thing was that while I was taking the camouflage course the instructor was an Army person and he said that when what when and if we go into the service and we were in the Army we should tell them about this course and have them direct us to that unit. So, I did that and the Army, as usual, ignored what I said and sent me, and it put me in the field artillery sent me down to Virginia. So, I decided I have nothing lost I wrote a letter to the address that this soldier had given me and told them that I was in this and this outfit and that I would like to be in camouflage. And two weeks later, an officer came into my barracks and said to me, "Who do you know?" I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You've been transferred." So, I got my transfer and went up to Fort Meade [Maryland].

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Beyer: So, you joined the did you go directly into the 603rd Camouflage Engineers? Tell us about this unit and what it was and what its purpose was at that time in 1943.

Nussenbaum: For the first few weeks, its purpose at that time was for me to be thoroughly frustrated. And what I did was KP [kitchen patrol] and basic training and they never did any camouflage or anything like that. We had to get through our basic training first. And once, once we got started with it then we did get a few camouflage lessons. It was nothing like the 603rd. They like the 23rd Special Troops.

Beyer: You're not involved in deception yeah this is just camouflage.

Nussenbaum: And I don't remember exactly when we'd started with that. I know we started to make dummies. I think it was in the very end of our stay at Fort Meade or maybe the beginning of when we were transferred to Camp Forest [Tennessee]. We used to make dummies out of wood and burlap. And they were very unwieldy. And they didn't bear much of a resemblance to the real thing.

Beyer: So, if I can just ask another question about the time before, you become part of the 23rd, is just doing camouflage. Were you involved in any large-scale camouflage projects in the United States?

Nussenbaum: I wasn't, but the 603rd was before I got there. They [did] camouflage. They was outside of Baltimore was something inherent in an aircraft plant. They put a

cover over it and made it look like fields and I saw pictures of that. But I wasn't involved.

Beyer: Did you go down when the 603rd took part in some big army maneuvers in Tennessee in 1943. Did you... Were you part of that?

Nussenbaum: I probably was, because I was there with them at '43, in the beginning of '43. When I joined...

Beyer: So, okay. So, into sort of set the scene for the change in in what you guys did, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops which is the unit known as the Ghost Army. This deception unit is activated on January 20th 1944, and the 603rd is now selected to to be part of the 23rd. And no longer is it going to be doing simple camouflage, but to be doing deception. And I think at that time, you moved to Camp Forest in Tennessee from Camp Meade. Do you have any memories of that kind of change and that meant and what that meant and what your understanding was of what you're going to be doing? [21:05]

Nussenbaum: Not really. I think at the time they told us we're going to be working with on dummies. At first, we started with wood, burlap, and then rubber. But they didn't say exactly what the purpose was. It's only after we began to progress in it that most of us figured out what the idea was.

Cohen: What type of tasks were you being asked to do?

Nussenbaum: Well, we first of all, we... we were strangers at this. They brought in this huge package wrapped in you know in a big bag and one of those dummies weighed about ninety pounds when it was deflated. So, usually at that time you could pick one up. But it was a little unwieldy. So. Two people would carry it. Take it out the thing, spread it out and we had little compressors. Many compresses the work was was there ever single gasoline, I don't remember. And you use those connected into the valves to blew the thing up. And there were times when we couldn't use them, because the sound of the compressors would give us a way so we use something that was like a bicycle pump and we could... We could inflate the thing by using a few valves at the same time, instead of just one.

Beyer: Seymour, let me ask this question for somebody who might not understand, what is the purpose of having these dummy tanks or trucks or anything? What is the? What is the goal of having them?

Nussenbaum: Well, the idea was to fool the enemy and make them go crazy about where our troops were and where they were moving? Which ones will move? Let's say you had one division in one spot, and he wanted to move it thirty miles or forty miles down south and you don't want the enemy to know they moved me down

there. So, we would come in with our rubber tanks and we usually knew what equipment that outfit had. So, we brought in dummies put them in the same spot where their real ones were, and they moved out. This was all done at night and there were reconnaissance plane that would come over and took a picture. Same thing is this the other day before, but it wasn't. That was essentially why we use these rubber dummies.

Beyer: Okay, and the, the 603rd was one of four units under the command of Colonel Harry Reader in the 23rd Headquarter Special Troops. There was also the, the 3132nd Signal Service Company, that was doing sonic deception. There was the 406th Engineer Combat Company and there was another signal company doing radio deception. And how aware were you either when you were still training at Camp Forest or when you were in the field in Europe? How aware were you of what those other units were doing? And how what you were doing fit in with what they were doing?

Nussenbaum: As far as I was concerned, I was completely unaware... My training and everything. My first sergeant, who didn't care for me and I didn't care for him, and he made sure that I didn't have too much free time. They talked to a lot of soldiers. So, I spent a lot of time in the kitchen now scrubbing pots and pans and stuff like that. I really didn't know what was going on. Most of the guys didn't. They, you know... They were they were in there to do something and a lot of them were getting edgy, because some of them were in over a year and they didn't see any progress. Well, they thought this was basic training, you know, they didn't even know what they were in for. They were getting edgy. I just figured look I'm going to be in here for the rest of the war. I'll go home and I'll just take a day by day.

Beyer: One thing, I did notice looking at your scrapbook is that it seems like whenever you got an opportunity you liked to visit places and be a, be a tourist. [26:21]

Nussenbaum: Oh, yeah. I'd never been out of New York City, before I got in the Army. I wanted to see what the outside world was like. oh and, another thing, I wanted to get away from my first sergeant. I never was one that sat in the barracks and read a book or something. I used to go out and go sit in the PX, where he couldn't find me.

Beyer: And we'll come back to that a little bit later on. But let's give you in in May 1944 your unit shipped out on the [USS] Henry Gibbons to New England. Do you recall anything about your time onboard the ship in that process?

Nussenbaum: I remember sleeping in the hammocks. Tiers of hammocks and this huge room. I remember that - it was no picnic. At night, they would drop depth charges. They

keep the submarines away so you'd be trying to sleep and when a depth charge one know if you feel the vibration but hear the noise so much but you feel the vibration and you never know you know if that's a torpedo coming towards you or just vibration a little edgy and the second thing I remember is that the food was God-awful and I get seasick. I get seasick on a Staten Island Ferry. I didn't have a picnic on that... that trip. It was a mess. And it didn't get a lot...

Beyer: I mean, I seem to recall a story that not long after you landed in in England that you, you came under fire, as well. Can you tell me about that?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, when we pulled into, I think it was Avonmouth, is sort of the port. Or Bath. I believe, it was- the big city on the west coast. I don't remember. We were pulling into the dock and some German planes came over and started to strafe that dock. And, I don't believe, they dropped any bombs. They were just strafing the ships and the movement on the dock. And, uhm, when we get down below, the ones that were on deck get down below, so we'd have a barrier between the bullets and the shrapnel. And down there. And I had one of the guys who was with me, Eisenberg, and he was right next to me. And you could hear the shrapnel pounding against the deck every time one of those bullets hit the deck. Then, the metal would go flying. And you could hear it. He came [over] to me and says, "You know, a guy can get killed around here. [laughter] Yeah, with the humor..."

Beyer: ...crossed to England. Where were you guys stationed in... while you were in England?

Nussenbaum: At Walton Hall.

Beyer: Tell us about Walton Hall.

Nussenbaum: It was a manor. I don't know if you know about English manors, but every few miles there's an English manor, where somebody with lots of money lived. And the army requisitioned the land. The manor was there, but we only went in if we were invited in. One time, we were invited in for crumpets. So, we set up tents on the lawn outside and we got a few days, you know, evenings, and weekend day off. Or I managed to get wrongly therefore between May and July, no June. Well, about a month. And I managed to get into Stratford-on-Avon and saw three Shakespeare plays.

Beyer: Do you remember what plays you saw?

Nussenbaum: I don't but look in my scrapbook, because I have the programs.

Beyer: Sure. Because, well, that's a thing. And, you know, your scrapbooks are now at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. But you are, I don't think using the word pack rat, is over saying it. You must have saved every scrap of paper that you came across during World War II.

Nussenbaum: Very much. I have a thing, I have a thing with paper... my whole life I've been involved with paper of one sort or another. My stamp collecting. My artwork.

Cohen: Have you saved any copies of the *Stars and Stripes*?

Nussenbaum: I have some, some things, I cut out of it... *Stars and Stripes*. I don't have complete copies. But I have some cartoons that were cut out.

Cohen: Nice.

Nussenbaum: Very, there in my scrapbook...

Cohen: I am kind of curious, if you could tell us a little bit more about the cartoons?
[32:29] Like which artist or--?

Nussenbaum: I can remember his name was Breger, B. R. E. G. E. R.² Do a cartoon. I am trying to remember what it was called. It was very popular during the war. I'll remember after I go off the air.

Beyer: Of course. That's what happens to all of us. Did you...

Nussenbaum: *Sad Sack*. Remember that one?

Cohen: Yeah.

Nussenbaum: I used to look forward to getting, looking at a copy at looking at it because this poor guy was such a... I don't know in my language they call them a *Shlemiel* [inept person, in Yiddish] I don't know what else to call them. I've always got into.... Cartoons.

Cohen: Did you like Willie and Joe? Bill Mauldin's Willie and Joe.

Nussenbaum: I don't remember them. [33:44]

Beyer: Okay. I'm flipping my notes around. To find the right place that I want to be at right now.

² Sad Sack was created by Sergeant George Baker during World War II; Dave Breger created the GI Joe cartoon series.

Nussenbaum: One trip we took, we just drove through Coventry. They wanted to show us what the Germans are capable of. And they drove us through Coventry. And we were shocked. It looked like a dump, a junkyard. I don't think there were two bricks one on top of another. The famous Coventry Cathedral was actually almost demolished.

Beyer: You know, they actually preserved the ruins of the original Cathedral and built in a new one next to it so that people would remember what had happened. it's a very... it's still a moving experience to go there. The Ghost Army did three exercises, practice exercises in England. It just took a couple of days. They are called, I think, cabbage, spam, and cheese, if I remember correctly. Did you... Did you go on that? Do you remember that at all?

Nussenbaum: No.

Beyer: Okay. But I'm sure you do remember D-day? So, could you share... You were still at Walton Hall. Can you share your experiences?

Nussenbaum: Well, we were awakened by a terrific roar and we all, you know, popped out of the tent... to see what was going on. And we saw thousands of planes. You couldn't see the sky. They was so close to each other, going over heading east. They never sent up that many planes. We knew something was up and evening we found out that they'd landed on Normandy and...

Beyer: Then, so you, of course, also went to Normandy and when when was your contingent of the 23rd you're part of the 23rd. When did you go to Normandy? What beach did you land on? What do you remember of that?

Nussenbaum: We landed on Omaha Beach. It was, I think, the last week in June, about three weeks after the invasion. And we climbed up that hill that you see, Normally, pictures of Normandy with all our equipment on our back. When we got to the top of the hill, they told us to take cover, because we're not moving out till morning. Some of us found... old packing crates that were laying around. Ammunition boxes. And put up cover or whatever. And I know, I found what do you call it? A trench.

I don't know [what] we're talking about.

Beyer: Je ne sais pas. I don't know what we're talking about.

Nussenbaum: You dig a little trench in the ground, that's it--

Cohen: Foxhole?

Nussenbaum: Foxhole. My memory plays tricks on me sometimes.

Beyer: You've got an awful lot that you do remember. So, so share [some] of that.

Nussenbaum: So, I jumped into this foxhole and I wished I hadn't, because it was full of water. I had no...I had to hunch there all night soaking wet and then we moved out. They brought trucks up and put us in the trucks and move that we moved east we went through Saint-Lô, which was another town that was completely devastated. Completely. The streets. All you saw on either side of the road, where the truck was, was debris. [37:58] And, these little towns, the ones closest to the [English] Channel. It...

Beyer: As an artist, did you have a sketchbook with you? Were you trying to capture any of this in your own art?

Nussenbaum: Well, not at that time. No, we didn't have the opportunity to stop any place. Some of the guys did. There were some guys who stopped him and, I don't know, they were told to stop. Maybe, they were told to stay overnight there. Whatever. They did some sketching there, but I didn't have any opportunity to sketch until we got further east and when we when we did when I did do a sketch almost every sketch I did was a cathedral, because there was nothing else to sketch. [Laughter]

Beyer: Do you have any recollections of early Ghost Army deceptions? And I wondered also as part of that did it feel odd or in any way strange to be there in the in a midst of this world war and doing this job that seemed like something that, you know, kind of maybe seemed a little strange?

Nussenbaum: Well, the whole thing was strange for me. It was strange for me to be in it? I didn't even try to make head or tails out of it. Most of the time they moved too fast to think over what you were doing. I remember going driving on a road and the hedgerows of Normandy driving down this road and a German plane was coming straight for us. Diving straight for us and we all jumped out of the trucks and ran in under the hedges. A few of those trucks were hit. I didn't have much time to consider – to get philosophical about what I was doing. [40:26]

Beyer: Well, what were you doing? What was your job in the 603rd when you were in France?

Nussenbaum: It seemed to me my job was driving around in trucks, because we... We went from... from Normandy, all the way to, I think it was or Briey or Luxembourg, I think it was Briey, around I think it was in the eastern part of France. We go

along with completely across. Maybe some of the units were... doing parts of the units were doing missions, but I didn't know about it.

Cohen: Were you transporting any dummies on the trucks, like the tanks?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, we not only had dummies on the trucks. We also had a dummy bridge to go across the river if need be. And that was on a huge trailer about a city block long. And I remember, I think the name was Benner. The driver of that thing, he reminded me of John Wayne. You know, rough guy in rough talking. And we dragged that thing around all over France and I think everybody was getting fed up with it, because all they did with it. They didn't use in any place, but we didn't have to do any river crossings. You know, that we had to do deception. So, I don't know, who it was, but they the story goes that... me... this officer pulled Brenner aside. He told him, "I want you to take that bridge out, okay. I don't care where you go with it but come back without it." [laughter] And it disappeared. I never saw it again. He probably drove it over the edge of a ravine or something.

Beyer: But you... but you eventually... So, so, the Ghost Army was involved in visual deception, radio deception, sonic deception and then, eventually, there's a fourth kind of deception that called special effects or, or atmosphere and, and you had a job related to that. Can you tell us about that?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, I had the guys talking about that, "We have to go out and do some atmosphere." I didn't know what they were talking about the whole idea was to actually impersonate not only the vehicles, but the actual people in the outfit. One of the first things we did was - take these trucks we traveled in. They had a row of seats on the inside of the truck. And there were a few men and I think the truck may have carried about fourteen men or something like that. And they put four or six men in a truck and seat them all towards the back though. That way when we'd drive through, people would see soldiers, but they didn't know the rest of the truck was empty. And we drive through town and take a detour around it for a minute. Change the number on the bumper and drive through it again as if we're another truck. We'd keep going in circles. It was one of the tricks we did. And we... we'd commandeer a bar or something and go in and sit around and talk and give out false information, because the Frenchmen that they were... they that were there, you never know which ones were cooperating with the Germans or which weren't.

Beyer: And as part of these special effects deceptions... If you're pretending to be in the 75th Infantry Division, you better be wearing a 75th Infantry Division patch.

Nussenbaum: Yeah.

Beyer: So, you were working, I think, in the factory section as it was called of the 603rd and, and it [was] part of your job was... was coming up with some fake patches, wasn't it?

Nussenbaum: Yeah.

Beyer: So, tell us about, about that? Who worked on that? And kind of the scale of that? And how you did that?

Nussenbaum: Well, they came up with the idea. I don't know who came up with the idea. But due to the fact that we did so many different outfits, we couldn't carry it, didn't have that much supply in Europe. So, we came up with the idea of making fake patches. All they had to do was supply us with one patch and tell us how many they need they need and a bunch of us would do... we, you know, share... Or one did [thing], one did one type of job; another one did another. One guy traced a patch and cut out a template for each color, got to print each color separately these were printed on discarded shelter halves, the little tents that the soldiers carry with them. Saying you do this to if there was any white, because these tents were all in khaki. So, if there was any white in the patch, you had to paint the white arm first. So, we stretched these things, like a canvas, and paint them all white with a big brush. When that was bad done, it's like having a piece of white paper in front of you. And we start printing the colors. Now, some of them were easy that was just too colors. Some of them were four or five colors, which is more difficult like the... the armored division - big triangle, a lot of colors on it. The colors had to be at least didn't have to be perfect register, but they had to fool the eye from at least a few feet away. Look like the real thing. We would have a few steps. You can only print one color at a time, and we didn't have quick drying paints. Like, if we would have had spray paints, we could have sprayed it on and five minutes later done a second color, but we had a wait to couple of... It was a tedious job, till all the colors printed and we had a fill in on a template, where let's say the letter O. The circle inside the O had to be held together with the outside of the O. So, they put little bridges on. I forget what they call them but when, when the printing was finished, we had to paint over those bridges by hand. Fill them in. Then, we cut these things out. We're ready for action.

Beyer: You don't... Seymour, where you're sitting you don't have your page of patches within arm reach, do you?

Nussenbaum: I meant to bring them out. It would take me about five minutes to get it. Do you want me to get them out? Then I'll get 'em.

Beyer: Yet, you know, I'm going to try to see if I can take a picture show a picture of them here. So, Leah, I'm engaging in a technology effort.

Nussenbaum: The one I have shows the actual progression of colors. What you have doesn't show that.

Beyer: If you want to grab it, sure.

Cohen: I'm sure in fact I can even, I can even pause the recording. but I I'm a little reluctant feeling that, you know it's going like don't, don't mess with it.

Beyer: Yeah, I would say that you're better off having someone afterwards do a little slice there. It's worth seeing.

Cohen: Ya know, especially that he's described the printing of it to get an idea.

Beyer: Yeah, well, it's the coolest thing, I think. He makes it sound very nonchalant, but you know there they are - counterfeiting shoulder patches. You know, as part of their deception action World War Two. And, oh, it always struck me as pretty amazing.

Cohen: Very much so. Yeah, yeah.

Beyer: So, let's see and I'm going to see if I could do this, as well.

Cohen: If you could share the image from the computer? I think you want to go to...

Beyer: Yeah. Hang on. I'm just going to, going to go crazy here. Can you see my screen?

Cohen: It's starting... It is starting to share. Oh, there it is. Yes. Yes.

Beyer: I think...See.

Cohen: Wow.

Beyer: I think what Seymour wants to show us...

Cohen: I see what you're saying... First starting with the white that they paint, and then the blue, and then the olive green, and Wow! Wow!

Beyer: So, that's one thing put that down here and I'm not a genius at doing this. Hurray! He's back.

Nussenbaum: I'm back.

Cohen: Hi!

Beyer: Seymour, while you're... While you're doing that, I was also going to show... This is a some of the patches. Some of the fake patches. Can you see those, Leah?

Cohen: I can. Is the one for the Ghost Army the white and blue swirly one?

Beyer: No, on this...

Cohen: No?

Beyer: These are all fake ones of other units. So, you have the 1st Division, the 2nd Division, the 9th Division, the 26th Division. And I don't know if you can see all six fake patches here, but there are six on this page.

Cohen: Yeah. So, these are all fake divisions? All six of them.

Beyer: There, they're real divisions.

Nussenbaum: [Indecipherable]

Beyer: They're fake patches.

Nussenbaum: They weren't even allowed to show it. It would have given something away.

Beyer: So, did you want to show what you went to go get?

Nussenbaum: Yeah. [shows patches] These are some more of the patches.

Cohen: Could you... well, that's good...

Beyer: So down below...

Cohen: Could you move it up a little bit?

Beyer: Down below, at the very bottom, it just goes on and on the screen that's the 4th Armored Division. So, he talked about the different colors of an Armored Division. And some of these other patches are you have some corps patches here. So, in addition to wearing division patches, the soldiers had to wear a patch showing what corps they're in. And so you have a lot of work that they're doing to make these patches.

Nussenbaum: I'll show you the other one I have.

Cohen: Okay. Yes, yes [mumbles], were... you're showing one color, adding one color at a time after the previous one dries.

Beyer: Right, so this is a great, really the only example I've ever seen of documenting of this process where... are... the soldiers showing how the soldiers made a big patch, seeing it in process.

Nussenbaum: I think that was the only one that was ever saved.

Cohen: Wow!

Cohen: Seymour, had you done some printmaking when you were at the Pratt [54:02] prior to your service?

Nussenbaum: Huh, huh, no, not really. I did... [unclear] after the war, and I did a couple of etching as part of my training.

Beyer: Okay. So, do you have any idea how many of those fake patches you and other people who worked on that with you may have made?

Nussenbaum: We figured out that had to be between thirty and forty thousand. The whole state.

Beyer: Wow. were you in...Did you get to go to Paris then when the unit was near Paris?

Nussenbaum: Yes, I did.

Beyer: What memories... That's like a week after Paris was liberated or so. What memories do you have of that?

Nussenbaum: I think it was just a few days, not even a week. They were still floating on air, the French. We drove down the Champs-Élysées and the kids, the little kids, the women were running after the trucks. They had given us some chocolates to throw to the kids. I guess they had some advertising people along, so they knew what to do and we shoot chocolates to the kids and [it was] very exhilarating.

Beyer: You did not participate in a lot of the missions, because you were in a factory section. You're there working on the patches and the other things the factory section is working on which are support activities. But you went on a few, didn't you? And, and do you remember that? What was that like?

Nussenbaum: It was like everything else. You drove in trucks. [chuckles] You took the dummies off. You blew them up and put them in position and you sat and waited. That was it. I mean, it was not very theatrical.

Beyer: It sounds so exciting.

Nussenbaum: Yeah. I wonder if they make that movie what they're going to do to put some excitement in it.

Beyer: We'll have to get on that. And hopefully it can be done without making it too fake. Because we don't want to have a fake movie about fake tanks. [laughter]

Cohen: Well, maybe I'm also looking for the theatrics, but I was wondering what type of false information you were spreading when you and some of the others would be plants in in pubs, in France?

Nussenbaum: I don't know. It's hard to remember what we said. They told us what to say.

Cohen: Okay.

Nussenbaum: You know, you are you playing a part. You talk about things. You talk about home, throwing a word about the Army and hopefully the guy that you want to get that word hears it and tries to put two and two together. The Germans must have been terribly confused, but they never really caught up to what was actually going on.

Beyer: Seymour, let me take you away from the mission here for a moment and talk about your some of your personal interactions in the Army. And you wrote at your biographical questionnaire that it was in the Army you first countered antisemitism. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Nussenbaum: Well, growing up in New York, you didn't see too much of that. Schools were pretty much integrated even back in those days. They did... We didn't have segregated schools in New York City. We didn't see too many people of color in my school, because there weren't that many people of color living in that neighborhood. But there was some. We had neighborhoods like Jewish people lived in one section and the Italians were adjacent and the Irish were adjacent to the Italians and people liked to cling to each other and we made sure we never walked into the Italian or the Irish sections and they didn't come in our section. We didn't have much much to do with each other. But in the Army, where you're in such close quarters, and particularly some of the people who were in charge. And the worst one was my first sergeant. So, I lived with him for over almost two years. I'd never seen anything like that in my life and I couldn't believe it existed. I figured, well we're all in here for the same reason. Why are we fighting against each other?

Beyer: What kind of forms did that antisemitism from your first sergeant [60:04] take?

Nussenbaum: The one I remember vividly was they wanted us to go and if they wanted one truck with four men, I think in it go into a village, where they were not quite sure if the Germans were there. They said if there were no Germans there, to go through the village to make sure it's clear. But we can pass through. And out of the four people, three of them were Jewish. So, I had my suspicions, but anyway, there were no Germans there. Luckily.

Beyer: You had an interesting...

Nussenbaum: I also spent a lot of time in the kitchen, which was unusual. I mean, I was an expert...

Beyer: He also... He would put you on guard duty, right? It's like whenever there was a big event, like when Marlena Dietrich came to to sing, right.

Nussenbaum: Right. That's another thing, if something good was happening, he made sure that I was on guard duty and I'd have to miss it. you know, it's nasty things. He was hoping I would blow my top so they could have me court-martialed, but I never gave him the chance.

Beyer: Tell us about the last time you saw him.

Nussenbaum: I won't use the same language I did, [laughter] but you could say that I'd be censored right off the airwaves.

Beyer: Okay, you can say it however you like...

Nussenbaum: But we were just waiting. And we were at Camp Shelby in Mississippi at that time and waiting for a bus to take us back home. We were all already discharged. We weren't in the Army anymore. And he walks over to me and he puts his hand out and says, no hard feelings. Well, I let him have three years, almost three years... verbally. There wasn't a thing he could do about it. He just turned around and walked away. I wouldn't have a drink or whatever with him, if he was the last man, not in one hundred years on the earth.

Beyer: You also wrote in your biographical questionnaire that as a Jew, "I had no love for the Nazis". So, how did the fact that you were Jewish kind of factor into your motivation to serve in the Army? I mean, I know you were drafted...but

Nussenbaum: To tell you the truth, I would have been enlisted had I finished my camouflage course. I didn't expect it that would have been another six months. I would have enlisted, because I knew it was imminent. They were drafting people of eighteen

and nineteen. I was in pretty good health, so I didn't expect to not be taken in. But, uh... What was the question again?

Beyer: Just how that might have affected your motivation. How being Jewish might have affected motivation to serve?

Nussenbaum: Well, I had actually, had two motivations...very appreciative that I live in this country, and I felt that he should do my duty as a citizen of this country, and also I felt that if I could eliminate... help to eliminate the Nazis it would be beneficial to the Jewish people, to put it mildly.

Beyer: Were you aware of the concentration camps while you were in the Army? Were you aware, for example, that you know, you had family that had perished that there while you were there? Did you learn all that later?

Nussenbaum: I didn't know that they had died. No. [I knew that] there were concentration camps. There were pictures circulating. You know, troops would pick them up. I don't know where they picked them up and they show them to each other, and pictures of corpses piled like logs. And I was aware of that.

Beyer: Seymour, do you speak Yiddish? Did you speak Yiddish?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, I still do.

Beyer: Did you ever use it to communicate to soldiers? to German POWs? to civilians?

Nussenbaum: No. I never used it until I found out after the war that one of my cousins... my father's sister son [survived]. She [my father's sister] perished in the war, but he [her son, my cousin my survived] was fourteen at the time and they put him into a... the Germans didn't do this. This was the Romanians. They came from the border of Russia and Romania and they put him into a concentration camp in Romania and that was close enough to Palestine that they the Haganah sent some rescue people and rescued some of the kids. And brought them back to the Palestine. It wasn't Israel yet. He was one of those kids. in 1944, he was fourteen years old. In 1948, when the war started, he served in the first army to liberate Israel. I found out about him through my father's family and I got his address, and I wrote to him in English. I didn't realize that maybe he doesn't speak English, and he didn't, and he had...He had the person write a few words in English to me and then the rest of the letter he wrote in Yiddish. And I had to, you know, dig deep in my memory to figure out how to read it, but I did, and from then on I wrote to him in Yiddish and yet it we wrote [to each other every] week. We corresponded for forty years until he died.

Beyer: Oh, wow. [pause] So, in I only have one, one... really one or two more questions about this area and then we move on. but in 1944 I think in the fall of 1944 you... I understand, you attended a Rosh Hashanah service led by Rabbi David Max Eichhorn.³ Is [67:30] that correct? Can you tell us about that?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, that forms a page in my collection, by the way. It was Rosh Hashanah was coming on. And he wanted to have services for the troops in that area and he's scouted around. This is I read from his biography. He scouted around to find a suitable place and he saw this synagogue in Verdun. And it was empty, he looked at it in pretty bad shape, but it was better than nothing so the he got some help from the Army yes if he can get somebody to clean that out and they gave him a contingent of German prisoners of war to clean it out and they did and he even said in his biography that they did a very good job of cleaning it out. It had been used as a storehouse. they took all the seats out and everything and the roof was in disrepair. It leaked. It poured that day, we were... We were, but they had given us an option if we wanted to go to services, they'd provide a truck and so I went and it was very touching, because there were about four or five hundred of us. There standing in this rec room with the roof was leaking. It was cold, but nobody complained. We just went through an actually, not a complete service, but a quick service and somebody towards the end of the service started to sing a Hatikvah [anthem of the Yishuv, Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, which became the official national anthem after the establishment of the State of Israel] and the ones that knew the words sang. It was very moving.

Beyer: Leah, before I move on, is there anything else that you wanted to ask in this area of inquiry?

Cohen: I was wondering whether it was important for you to observe whatever Jewish observances were possible, especially in light of your sergeant. And... and if so how, how did that play out? And that question would include when you were stateside training as well?

Nussenbaum: Stateside, I remember going to a service in Fort Meade in a small town called Odinton. And they had a small synagogue there and they invited Jewish soldiers, because I think that was for Pesah. So, I went there and at Camp Forest I went to something I don't remember what. And two times in Europe once not for any particular service, I think it was just the Sabbath service. We went to Manchester in England, a large synagogue there, and the chief rabbi of England happened to be there, of the British Empire. His name was Hertz, I believe. and the American soldiers were very upset with him, because he gave a sermon in which he said

³ David Max Eichhorn was a Reform movement rabbi who enlisted as a chaplain during WWII. He served in combat units on the European front and was among the troops that liberated Dachau.

that we should do we Americans shouldn't think that we came there to rescue the British, because they're very capable of taking care of themselves. I thought that was a pretty poor taste, you know. I mean, you... you... these are... these are you guests.

Beyer: I'm going to move on to a very different topic. You doing okay? Everything? You hanging in [there]?

Nussenbaum: I'm fine.

Beyer: Okay. In October 1944, your unit was based in Luxembourg City in in a building that was a an old seminary building and it had a big it had what had initially been a chapel, but it's kind of a little bit like a theater and you guys put on a very ambitious talent show, if I can call it that. That you were involved too up to the top of your neck or maybe up to the top of your eyebrows. So, because you helped produce it and wrote a lot of it and we're very involved in the Blarney Breakdown. Tell us about the Blarney Breakdown.

Nussenbaum: Well, Alison Severe was... He was a private first class then in a headquarters company and we used to chat a lot. We had a lot in common. We did paintings. So, we had a lot in common ones talking about being sometimes time weighs heavy area during a barracks with a lot of beds. You have no privacy. There's a lot of things to be said about the Army, which I won't bother to say. But we said we'd wish there was some way of having some entertainment or something because occasionally you're not somebody from the USO so come by like Marlena Dietrich had come by I think a couple of weeks before—

Beyer: But you were on guard duty.

Nussenbaum: I didn't get to see her I just got the pictures of Her, because the guy that took the pictures was in my in the company. Stan Casson was his name. There was... I... I... I digress...

Beyer: Blarney Breakdown, you were talking to Alison Severe...

Nussenbaum: Right. So, he said, "Why don't we see if there are any people with talent and see maybe we can put on a little show or something". I said, "Gee, that sounds good. You know, why don't we give it a try?" So, I said that we will need the cooperation of the brass. So, he said, I'll ask Lieutenant Sterling. He was one of the nicest people. Luckily, he was second in command of my company, whenever I had a problem, I went to him. He said, "Let's go to captain and see what he says." Captain, okay. Then, he had to go to the head of the 23rd and they said, "Okay. Will you need any help?" I said, I don't know we you have to figure out what we're doing first. Now what form it's going to take. So, we sat

down whenever we had some time, and we wrote some parodies using either classical music or popular music and putting words with an Army connotation in them, not always...

Beyer: Not always the cleanest.

Nussenbaum: Not always complimentary. And we ran it by the brass, and they loved it. So, we put out a little flyers. Those days, we'd have mimeograph machines. I don't know, if you remember those things and we printed out a bunch of them put them up in the PXs and in the barracks, asking for talent. He is saying, "Do you act? you dance? Poetry? Whatever?" and we were overwhelmed. You know, we came from... a lot of the people in the unit were college people. The hillbillies in the unit used to call us the eggheads, but some of them had good talent too. So we got together a little, little unit where what's his name... Atkinson came down. the guy... I'm sorry it was Sidney Eisenberg; he was the one that danced in drag.

Beyer: I actually have a picture here. I'm going to try again to share in our... from your... from your scrapbook, and I don't know how this will go. So, I'm do this this way. Share. and I'll get it over here in the middle of the screen. So, you can see it?

Nussenbaum: The bottom picture in the center?

Cohen: Oh.

Beyer: Yes, that Sidney Eisenberg. That's right. Honeysuckle Epstein, if you can't read it. it's so Mickey Nussbaum. And Syd Eisenberg in the lower right. You know, Seymour, we were talking about this the other day. A lot of guys in the unit ended up changing their name and one classic example was Irving Nussbaum, who ended up changing his name by degrees and eventually became Micky McCain [laughter]. Kind of interesting.

Nussenbaum: His middle name was Mickey, because his mother was Irish, and his father was Jewish. Even in the Army, he was known as Irving McCain Nussbaum.

Beyer: Well, yeah, and he changed his name. Harold Lewinski changed his name to Hal Laynor.

Nussenbaum: Here he is, right here. You see this row?

Beyer: The second, second picture down on the left. Hal Lewinski, on the far left of that picture and he changed his name the war to Hal Lehner. A terrific artist. Also, one of the many obviously good artists in the unit and we were talking about Elliott Atkinson.

Nussenbaum: Second row

Beyer: Playing piano, and you told us that he played and then he put a wig on, and then did a kind of a classical parody.

Nussenbaum: He... he put a wig on, and I don't know where he got it, but a black jacket.

Beyer: All right, okay, he's wearing a black jacket. Sure, and now he's like pantomiming something. We were just talking about the fact we just discovered in doing research that Elliott Atkinson was the uncle of actor Sam Waterston. And up in the upper left is a, you know, which is also interesting is you... you're... you're you're all playing Nazis up there. You've got... a you've got...

Nussenbaum: A skit about Hitler. Hitler and his gang. The second one from the left in that picture, is me.

Beyer: Yeah, okay, that wasn't the act, that was just posing afterwards... Okay, people involved in this and I... I know, Leah, I shouldn't be testifying here. I'm like the lawyer testifying in a case. This is... is Seymour's interview, but just to point out that one of the people involved in in this picture and also in writing the some of the songs was a man named Art Kane, who went on to become a very world-famous photographer one of the many Ghost Army artists to... You know, have various degrees of success in ordered after the war and I don't know. There's a line from a song, Seymour that Art Kane wrote. it's in my head. I... I could repeat it, but it's... It's a bit off-color. What do you think?

Cohen: Go for it.

Nussenbaum: I'm not the censor.

Beyer: Okay.

One of the songs is:

Our mission here is crummy
Giving blow jobs to the dummies
What a world
What a world!

And I always thought that was a sort of a clever way of making an allusion to what the unit really did. Well, at the same time, kind of you know sticking it to the Army.

Nussenbaum: That reminds me of what I what I said whenever people used to ask after we

actually came home after the war. Well, even before, when I was home on furlough. "What are you doing in the Army?" I said, "I blow up tanks".

Cohen: One thing that you know Rick mentioned or from my brief reading of your shorter book. it seems like many of the people, as he said, been achieve just success in art and fashion and so on, and I wonder, Seymour, I'm like... was there more camaraderie between people and that many of them... You were already artists in training or had interest in the arts?

Nussenbaum: They wanted people... that they originally formed the unit about around the cadre of artists and entertainers and writers and people in show business, because we're supposed to act out a form, you know.

Beyer: I think what Leah is asking is did that give you kind of a... Did you have more camaraderie with some of those people than some of the people who were of a very different background?

Nussenbaum: Not really, I got a long with everybody. I know. I wasn't I wasn't looking to be a troublemaker. I got along with everybody.

Beyer: That's surprising.

Nussenbaum: That's one... one guy talking about Hillbillies. Willie Woods. I don't think his name... That his first name was Willie. But we called him Willie Woods He was from Kentucky or Tennessee. After the war was over, I think we were in Mississippi getting ready to be discharged, and I said to him, "Willie, what are you going to do now when you get home?". He said, "Well, I guess I'll find a job in a gas station or something." I said to him, "Did you graduate high school?" He says, "Yeah, why?" I said, "Well, if you wanted to go to college, the government will pay it. for it." He said, "You're kidding." [And I said] "No, the government's going to pay for, if, if you want to go to college." He ended up going to college. He became a schoolteacher. You know, you get along with people and I'm very proud of that. And I had, had some something to do with his not having to spend the rest of his life pumping gas.

Beyer: So, in December 1944, the Germans launched the counterattack known as the Battle of the Bulge. What, how did that impact Seymour Nussenbaum?

Nussenbaum: They came in and told us. We heard that there was something going on up north, but we didn't know what. They came in and told us to start packing, because we're getting out of there. The Germans were heading south, and we were right in their path. I suppose we weren't told, but I suppose they didn't want our equipment to fall into German hands, because that would give our whole, whole thing away. So, we had a few things that we were working on that

weren't usable, so we burnt them and the rest we packed onto trucks and the next day we pulled out, went back to Verdun in France.

Beyer: Was it, uh, did you have any concerns at that time about this German counterattack?

Nussenbaum: We didn't know. You know, the average G.I. didn't know how far they got to, how big a force it was. Oh, they just told us to get out. You don't ask questions in the Army. You do as you're told.

Beyer: The operation that you guys were on was Operation Viersen and I know they--

Nussenbaum: I never knew the name of any of these operations.

Beyer: It was the big one on the Rhine River. and I know I said that you were involved in that and maybe it's the same thing it's driving trucks around, but I just wondered if you had any particular memories of that mission? March 1945.

Nussenbaum: No.

Beyer: Okay. What about V-E Day? You know, that we're actually coming up to the 75th anniversary of V-E day. I think it's Friday.

Nussenbaum: May 8th.

Beyer: May 8. So, so, do you have memories of that?

Nussenbaum: Yeah.

Beyer: Would you care to share them?

Nussenbaum: Yeah, maybe. Well, we... we had captured when I say we, I mean the unit, and captured a German cache of liquor and hidden it some place I don't know maybe a barn or something and we captured it. And had hidden it someplace in a barn. And of course, the brass put an immediate guard on it, but nobody was allowed to go over the average Joe didn't get anything but on the day the war ended. The issue. They got us all lined up and we walked by the door there and they handed you a bottle. And you didn't know what you were going to get. So, many different varieties of stuff here that they captured and brought to that place. Like the artwork they took out of art you know out of museums and stored them away in barns; here they stored away liquor. So, I got a bottle of Spanish wine [and] the guy next to me got some liquor, I think from Switzerland. We took it back to the barracks and they just left us alone. Well, we started to drink with

each other drinking each other's problem. If you want to get drunk, mixing your drinks and we all got drunk. If the Germans could have come back then, they'd go to walk right over us. [laughter] I, ordinarily, I slept on is the second, second, second floor, let's say of the brought the upper bunk. I remember climbing into the bunk. The next thing I woke up I was on the floor. I don't know. I fell out. I was lucky. I didn't break my neck. I had the worst hangover I ever had in my life. That' swore me off from drinking. I just don't like liquor since then. I like, like, a since then, a good beer once in a while.

Beyer: At the end of the war, the 23rd was done with your missions and you guys were guarding some displaced person camps that are known as DP camps in Germany. I know at least one was in Triere were others were in surrounding areas. What were you what recollections of that?

Nussenbaum: We were stationed near [Wiesbaden] Idar Oberstein. That's in the southern part of Germany, and I don't remember doing much, except they tried to find things for us to do. They use to call 'em to go pick up coal at the furnaces, because [91:17] I don't know why they needed furnaces. It was May. But we go and pick up coal or whatever. They sent us and they also let us go on weekends. They take us on a trip, the coal company and take a trip up the Rhine all of the Rhine up to the major cities we went to Koln and get the other one big German city along the Rhine. They just drove around, because they didn't... One time, we stopped at a farm on the highway and, you know, take a five-minute break, and the father came I was an old man very friendly. At that time, they didn't tell us not to talk to the Germans. Helmut Eisenberg spoke fluent German. He was born in Germany and we got... got to talking to the guy. He hated Hitler with a passion, but there wasn't anything he can do about it. He was too old to serve. Before we left, he... he gave a few of us the ones that were closest. he had strawberries that big and we would take off our helmets and he filled them up with strawberries.

Beyer: Did [you] interact with any of the displaced people who were in those areas?

Nussenbaum: No. Not at all. We were just there to oversee that they got their rations and all and we'll make sure that they don't have any problems. A lot of... I understand, there were a lot of feuding nationalities in there. There were Croats and Serbs and they ended up killing each other afterwards, but in the camp. It was quiet.

Beyer: You never got a chance... to see any of the actual concentration camps?

Nussenbaum: No.

Beyer: Did you know... And when did you go back to the U.S.? Can you tell us about that? And about what happened when you came back?

Nussenbaum: Well, when we started back, they told us that we're starting to head west for three days to drive across France and each night we either found us places to sleep indoors or we put up our tents or whatever until we got to this camp was. I forgot what the name of the camp was. It was a debarkation camp, full of big tents and we stayed there, and they put us on a boat. It was about a week getting us over the ocean. So, they told us that we're docking the next morning, so we all got up bright and early. We hustled up to the back deck and we're waiting to see the Statue of Liberty we wait, and we wait. We don't see anything suddenly we see it like a rock growing under the water with a pole on it and the next thing we know we're approaching shore. Where the hell is the Statue of Liberty? What did they go with it? They brought us in to Newport News. [laughter] They took us off the ship and brought us to a camp that was near there. We just stayed there for a few hours. When we came, we came off the ships and we left are we each had a big duffel bag with us, and we left them in one spot. And they took us into the mess hall, and we were served. Whatever we missed in Europe that we couldn't get we had there. Sitting down and at every place, there was a whole bottle of fresh milk. We hadn't had any fresh milk, you know, the, the French used to use the milk they got from the cows used in themselves they didn't give it to the Americans. We all hardly got anything like that [in Europe.] We had evaporated milk and turkey and, you know, the whole, whole thing, sat there about two hours and then they took us up to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and from there we got a what a whole month's parole discharge, because the war wasn't over in Japan yet and spent a whole month at home. Then they told me to report New York City. From there, we drove up in trucks to Pine Camp, New York and we stayed there for a while. Meanwhile, I had accumulated, I think, it was thirty-nine points or something like that. You needed forty to get out in October. I was missing one point, so I had to stay an extra month. For that month, they sent me down, me and a few other guys, they sent us down to Mississippi. I lived in New York. I will in New York. I was going to get out in a month. What doesn't make --they send me down a Mississippi. Hattiesburg, Mississippi was a hellhole. It was the height of segregation and I... We... We went in once. A few guys that I knew... We went, I think, three of us went in one time and we saw [how] they treated the black people there and how stupid the people were. There was nothing to do. It was a fairly large sized city, Hattiesburg. And we never went back.

Beyer: Were you aware that there was a plan for the 23rd to go to the Pacific? Which obviously didn't happen, because of the bomb.

Nussenbaum: From Pine Camp, we were issued the tropical uniforms -- the light tan, not the khaki color. The light tan. And we had to turn them in before we had a chance to use them. Thank God.

Beyer: What was your... What was your response or feeling to the dropping of the atomic bomb?

Nussenbaum: I had no compunction about it after reading what the Japanese had done to Americans. I didn't care what happened to them. I just wanted...I had enough, you know, three years. I wasn't as politically correct then as I am now.

Beyer: I think that the interview starts to feel like it's three years also. So, we'll get on to a few more questions. There's a little bit about your life after the war. You went back to Pratt. Well, just tell us what happened. Give us a picture.

Nussenbaum: I applied as soon as I got home. I got home in November of '45 and reapplied to come in and, of course, they took me back, because I was in the middle of the year. But I couldn't go back in November or December, because it would be in the middle of a semester. They said, oh I have to come back, and you know reapply in June, no problem. So I had some time on my hands, I was home. I didn't want to go to work, because I knew I was going to go back to school. So, I decided to take all this stuff that I had sent home and put it into a scrapbook. Soon, the one scrapbook got to full so I had to do a second one and by the time I was finished with that, it was pretty much time to go back to Pratt and I went back. And it was at half year...it was a three year course and... but, at that time, between semesters, in the summer time I went to a summer camp for children and I was an arts and crafts counselor and that's where I met my wife. She was a counselor and she had just come... emigrated from England...

Beyer: I was actually going to ask... My next question was going to be about Vera, because Vera has an amazing story, as well, that starts in in Germany.

Nussenbaum: Well, I'll try and make it as short as I could, but Vera was born in Germany in 1937, no, '38. She was twelve years old and she remembers living... they lived in Leipzig. Her mother had met her father. Her father was from Poland and he had been traveling to go to United States, because he had a brother in the United States. He stopped in Leipzig and I guess he must have been religious or what, but he decided to go to services Friday night and Vera's grandfather was the cantor at that synagogue. So, he sees this new face and they invited him for Shabbos dinner and there he met Vera's mother. They got married and he never got to the United States and after Vera was born, he died of tuberculosis, when she was two and a half. So, she was a single mother, her mother, Yetta, brought her up. The lived with the grandparents, you know, the cantor and his wife and she remembers that on Kristallnacht, they were awakened. But with a lot of noise because they lived right across the street from the synagogue. You could see the front of the synagogue. And they looked out of the window and they saw crowds and they were bringing things out of the synagogue: books and Torahs, and everything else and throwing them in a bonfire. If there any Jews

around they were chasing them. It wasn't easy for Jews even up to that, because she remembers that she couldn't go to a proper school and she wasn't allowed to go to the park and sit on the bench, a lot of things. Her mother had two sisters. Between them, they had five children. So, there were six...six cousins. They all lived within walking distance of each other. They decided that they have to send the children away. Luckily, her uncle who was the brother of those three sisters. He worked for the... like the... Jewish Family Services of Leipzig though he had some connections. He was able to get all six of them on the Kindertransport. Vera was the first one to leave. She was just twelve and she remembers they... they brought infants, they sent away and...the parents weren't allowed to cross [the border] with the infants. So, they'd have a nurse, the nurse and the nurse had to leave the child go back because they weren't a lot of course the border away she got she finally got to England; anyway she finally got on a train going to Amsterdam. [Vera did not speak a word of English]. The Nazis were on the train and soldiers they were in making fun of the kids. These kids were, you know, [having] fits and crying and when she used to talk about it... She spoke a lot to schools and, you know, museums and everything. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. When she got, they finally got to Holland, people from Amsterdam met them at the train. He gave them cookies and took them to a place where they spent the night and the next morning, they took the ferry across to England and when they got there, they put the children up there about at the time about five hundred children. Altogether. The British took in close to 10,000 children. Most of them were Jewish - there were a few who weren't, but most of them were Jewish. So, they put them up at this summer camp. It was December. So, it wasn't being used. So, it was empty. So, they had beds for them. And the next day happened to be December 7th and Vera's birthday was on December 8th. So, the woman walks over to their table, where they are eating breakfast. An English woman, because they had put notices in the newspapers in England that this shipment of children were coming over. Refugees and then... she... this woman walks over to Vera's table and points at her. She didn't speak a word of English. So, she didn't know what was going on and she got scared. Thought they're going to sell her into slavery. So, the... the attendant there who spoke German told her, "Don't worry. She says the lady wants you to come and stay with her until you can get together with your family." Okay. But she says to the woman, "Okay, but could I stay until tomorrow? Because it's my birthday and they're going to show *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*." She wanted to see it. So, they thought that was very cute. So, they let her stay and she came back. They came back to get her. She wasn't... She lucked out, because this one... this woman was Jewish. Her husband wasn't, and he; they were wonderful to her. She stayed with them for eight years. During that time, she found out her mother had been killed, her grandmother and all their aunts and uncles. Nobody survived. So, while she was in England, her uncle...her father's brother who lived in the United States had three sons. One of the sons was in the American army, stationed in England. So,

the father wrote to him and says, "You know, you have a cousin in England and why don't you look her up?" He didn't want to, you know, an eighteen-year old, what does he want?...But he looked her up and they clicked, and he said to Vera... After he left... when he gets home, he's going to tell his father to send for her [to come to] the United States. So, in the United States, she stayed with her uncle and his three sons, who called her 'sister'. And this summer that she was there... I suppose I will look for a job. He said, "You know what, Vera, when my boys do during the summers? They used to go to summer camp as counselors. It'll be like a vacation for you. See if you can get a job." She not only got a job. She got a husband. I always said, "You are the, the fastest worker I know. You got here in April and in July you landed a husband." [laughter]

Beyer: Vera, em, Leah, we are... we're a couple of hours in here and I'm feeling like we should probably start to wrap this up but I wondered what you thought of the kind of sort of reflection questions. What... what you feel is the, the most important thing you wanna either... either post for career or reflections on the unit. What do you think is the most important thing we should be asking Seymour about?

Nussenbaum: Well, the... the unit I told you about it, I made some friends there. There was some nice people, but it wasn't a pleasant situation.

Beyer: I do want to ask about Bernie. Bernie Bluestein, who was your friend in the... in the unit. And then you didn't see him for a long time. And then you did.

Nussenbaum: Through you, I got together with him on the phone after 74 years.

Cohen: Wow.

Nussenbaum: We talked to each other. We didn't go out much, because Bernie was not a... a... an inquisitive guy. He... he enjoyed just laying back and reading. I didn't want to stay in that barracks. To me, it was like, you know, like being a... waiting for somebody to take a shot at me, like my first sergeant. I just wanted to get out of the barracks. So, whatever the opportunity came up I went, and he would just stay back. So, we didn't go to many places together. One time I remember going out, we went into town and he we had some dinner and then we looked around at some of the shops. French shops were practically empty at that time, because we used to get paid in francs. So, we didn't know what to do with them, because there was nothing to buy. So, at that time, we were both into smoking a pipe. We went into this store and we saw some pretty nice-looking pipes. In my broken French I asked them if they were over the brew year you know Bruyere pipes and he swore their genuine Bruyere. So, we each bought a pipe and it so happened that, that was towards the end of our stay there and that next day we'd have a chance to smoke the pipe so we were away from that place

and we both lit up the pipe and the whole Bruyere on the outside was painted on.

Cohen: A camouflage pipe. [laughs]

Nussenbaum: Yeah, it wasn't real was just a cheap pipe that they painted to look like a Bruyere pipe and peeled right off. He remembered that when we first met when we first started to talk, he remembered that.

Cohen: Rick, is it okay if I ask one question going back a little bit. It's a more of curiosity um I believe I read in your book that at the manor... at which in Walton Hall, there was an occasion... an art exhibit by the people who were based there and I wondered Seymour, if this occurred while you were there - the art exhibit of the manor?

Nussenbaum: I don't remember that at all.

Cohen: Okay.

Nussenbaum: I don't know if it was something that was done after the war, long after the war or what. I don't remember any art exhibitions.

Cohen: I also was wondering if when you were based at the DP camps, if by happenstance, you met any European Jews like just by the by?

Nussenbaum: I didn't. If they were... they... they weren't isolated. I'm sure that all the Jews in the DP camps were isolated.

Beyer: Seymour, were a lot of the guys, but not all of them told to keep quiet about it, after the war?

Nussenbaum: As far as I know, they had us all in an assembly and they told us all, "Don't say anything about what you did. It's going to be tough secrets [to keep] for fifty years and it was [115:51]. Well pretty much... I mean there were few instances where it appeared, but it was overlooked. Nobody made anything out of it.

Beyer: So, you didn't tell people about it?

Nussenbaum: No, I told people if they asked me what I did - [that] I blew up tanks. [116:08]

Beyer: And how did, did being in a unit the 603rd that had a lot of artists in it did that impact your post war life? Your career at all?

Nussenbaum: No. We used to talk art, you know. Art talk. If we were sitting next to each other

doing a painting, they never looked exactly the same, you know, everybody has its own style and its own, but we talked to each other and we used to discuss what we're going to do when we get out. I said before I thought I was going to be another Norman Rockwell. I didn't have the talent.

Beyer: Tell us what you... you did do in your career?

Nussenbaum: I went into packaging. Package design. I got my degree in illustration. So, I knew how to draw the figure and, you know, action scenes and things like that. And it wasn't easy to get a job when I came out. We were in, I think, the first post-war recession and that took me almost a year to find the job. But I finally found something, and it happened to be for somebody who printed tags and labels and small folding cartons, and it was interesting, you know. He gave you a label told you what they wanted to say on it. It was up to you to put a pleasant design on it. And I did pretty well with that but came a time when he didn't want to pay me any more than he was paying me. So, I looked for another job and went to the *New York Times*. In those days, you went to the *New York Times* want ad - and it was this little innocuous ad, two lines. I found a job I stayed at for thirty-one years. I started an art department for this printing company. By the time, I left I was general manager and art director, at the same time, it was pretty good. Pretty good deal and I...

Beyer: I feel I have to ask this, because we mentioned it before - you are still a stamp collector. Tell us about the focus of your stamp collecting and... And how many how many volumes of stamps you have? [118:59]

Nussenbaum: Not only stamps. I started I like all kids, you know, you collect stamps from all different countries; and you buy an album with pictures and you try and find the stamps to put on top of the pictures. That's how most kids start. I got bored with that pretty quickly and at that time the only place you can buy stamps was at a stamp shop. Yeah, you know, I went to stamp shops and there were just so many you can go to and I got bored with it. So, I started to specialize in a certain country. My first country I specialized in was France. First before, because I managed to get a lot of French stamps when I was in France. Second, because my aunt worked in an importing company that imported from France. They got a lot of letters. So, she saved them for me. I got a pretty good stamp, the French stamp collection. They also started with Germany, because in my wanderings through Germany, I "liberated" a couple of stamp books, if you know what I mean. I...went into a wrecked house and you see a stamp book laying there. It would be a shame to let it rot, you know. So, I took it, so it happened that when I got home, I found out that some of those stamps were worth more than pennies. Never anything with great value [but] a little piece of paper at that time. I started with France and Germany.

In 1948, when Israel became a country, I was coming home from work one day and there was a stamp shop in an arcade, that was part of the subway system in New York and I went by that stamp shop every day. One day I went behind I looked in the window and I see a set of stamps with Hebrew writing on it. I had never seen that before and it didn't say Israel, because when Israel became a state they didn't know what they were going to call it. So, they on the stamp they put 'Hebrew Post'.

Cohen: Wow!

Nuseenbaum: ...instead of Israel. So, I went in and I asked, "How much is that?" He said... he says \$8.95. Well, you know, it was a blow to me, because I was making \$20 a week. \$8.95. It was almost half a week's salary, but it began to gnaw at me. I wanted to have that set so one day I went into him I said, "I'll tell you what. What if I give you a dollar a week? When I pay it up you know, I'll take it." He says, "Sure." I put away a dollar a week, which didn't hurt much and when I got to the \$8.95, he gave me a nickel's change and I took this set home and another thing I did - he offered this set two ways. It was \$8.95, but at the bottom of each stamp there was the paper that was from the rest of the sheet called selvage. Stamps were printed with the ancient Israeli coins. People aren't going to know what those things are when they see the stamps. So, we better explain it to them. On the bottom of the sheet under each row of stamps they say, "This was from this and this period." I thought that was interesting so that was the \$8.95. Otherwise, the set was about \$4.00 so I wanted them with the tabs. Today you can buy a set Israel 1-9 about a \$150 - \$200 dollars without the tabs with the tabs is closer to \$3,000-4,000 thousand - investment that happens to be... This happens to be the big gem in my collection. So, and I've started to collect. I stopped collecting United States, because they started to issue high value stamps and I didn't want to spend all that money. Couldn't afford it at the time and I stopped collecting Israel back in 19--, no 2008, for the same reason. They started to issue garbage and were trying to make money out of the stamp collectors. I took up collecting Judaica. I would get stamps from all over the country -em all over the world that have some sort of Jewish thing. Could be anything. Could be a picture of a person, could be Hebrew lettering, the Star David, could be anything something something that the person invented and right now I have now I'd say I had up until a few weeks ago one-hundred and fifty albums.

Beyer: One-hundred and fifty albums!

Nussenbaum: They're getting too thick and now I can't buy too many more stamps, because my room is getting impossible to get into. [125:14]

Cohen: Well, I'm going to segue a little bit artificially, but on the subject of collections the Pritzker Military Museum and Library has a mission of collecting the stories, the artifacts, the books related to the Citizen Soldier. So, we ask people, what does the term Citizen Soldier mean to you?

Nussenbaum: The words, Citizen Soldier? You know, somebody was doing his service to his country as opposed to a professional soldier working for money when you... [126:00]

Beyer: When you... Do you have a follow-up on that, Leah? Or...

Cohen: I don't but thanks for checking.

Beyer: I guess I would just say when you reflect back on your time in the Army, the good things, the bad things, but... but what stands out to you the most about your service in the 23rd? of your service in the US Army? Your service in Europe? and sort of how you... you framed that as, as it fits into your life. [126:45]

Nussenbaum: Very important part of my life. First of all, because it was it exposed me to something other than New York City. It showed me that there was a lot of country - it was a world out there. That's one thing. Another thing, it exposed me to different types of people that I've never met before. Some of the friends I have like Bernie...lived in Cleveland... Most of the people I know were from in New York area, Baltimore, New York, you know, all and all the East Coast. I got together with people like Willie Woods, who's from Kentucky I think, and somebody was from Minneapolis and as you know, all over, that was another thing. Third, I was glad that I served, and I wouldn't change it if I had a chance. I wouldn't have changed it and I think that my country did a lot for me, as well, as me doing what I could for my country, because when I came out of the Army, they provided free tuition for school. My father could stop paying my tuition for the last two years. They provided me with all the equipment I needed, all the art supplies, didn't cost me a nickel and they gave me a stipend to keep me going I think it was like \$33 a month. That was the first thing. Then, while I was working my first job, after a year I worked there a little over two years, but after a year and I asked for a raise he was hemming and hawing, I started to look for another job and I was offering on-the-job training stipend for on-the-job training. I took advantage of that and they paid me \$33 – I don't know where they got that \$33 but they gave me \$33 a month on top of my salary. My boss didn't have to pay that wasn't a bad deal. Then I had he when I went to buy my first house here, Vera and I bought our first house we took advantage of the program they had where you didn't have to put a down payment on it. It enabled us to buy a house and then after that, I had the VA health system, which I don't use very often, because very inconvenient since I'm on Medicare or Obamacare or whatever, it's much more convenient to use that than to use the Army system.

Well, I can't complain – that's a lot more than the soldiers that served in World War I, got.

Beyer: Well, [130:36] Leah, I I'm I'm kind of checked off my list of questions, here. Did you have anything else that you wanted to ask?

Cohen: I don't think so. Is there something, Seymour, that you would like to talk about that we did not ask?

Nussenbaum: I can keep you here all night. [laughter]

Cohen: A salient point related to your service?

Nussenbaum: You know, when I was in grade school, I was the shyest kid in the class. If they came to call me to speak in front of an audience, in front of the class I think I'm... but the only time that I would get up in front of the class and talk and not feel embarrassed or anything is when I spoke about my stamp collection. And then the teacher had to come and tell me, "That's enough."

Beyer: You've talked to a lot of groups about your Ghost Army service.

Nussenbaum: Yeah. Yeah. You're a very good questioner, because when I talk in front of groups, they ask some of the most inane questions. Yours seem to be to the point and you know something you can talk about.

Beyer: Well, I stole a lot of them from Leah. But...

Cohen: Rick has a lot of experience doing interviews.

Nussenbaum: There's an art to that too?

Beyer: There's an art to everything. You never want to ask somebody a yes-or-no question, if you can help it. If I say, "So, did you serve in the Army and you say, 'no', that wouldn't do me much good." So that's why I keep saying things like can you tell me about that or...

Nussenbaum: That would be the end of the conversation...

Beyer: But what he said no that would bring the end of the conversation. We would have...

Nussenbaum: We would have...

Beyer: We could have done something else the last two hours, you know. There is what I do see one other question here. Did you did you have any impression when you were in the unit of Colonel Reader, the commander of the unit?

Nussenbaum: I didn't see much of him, he used to come in, very pompous. He used to come out and inspect the troops and make anything. It seemed to me was making believe he was General Eisenhower. One of the funniest things, when we first got these little pins, insignia pins.

Beyer: They're insignia, right.

Nussenbaum: We put them on for the first time and a few of us were walking had them on our field caps I think they called them, whatever. And it was dusk, the sun whatever was left on her must have glinted on the things the only thing that showed up was the white bar in the center. People or soldiers who had walked by must have thought we were lieutenants. So, they'd salute us and we... And we'd stand and look at them like they were crazy. You know, after the first two did it, I said, you what, we may it be nice to salute them back. There were some funny moments in the Army. By the way, I personally think that... that well known... Don't tell anyone. I think that, that well-known story that goes out about the four Frenchmen or the two Frenchmen seeing a guy with...⁴I think that's made up. But it's a good the good bit of publicity, so don't tell anyone.

Beyer: I won't tell anyone.

Nussenbaum: Don't tell anyone.

Beyer: You know, I was interviewing a Ghost Army veteran, whom I will not name, and he was telling me the story of something he had done that was not a good thing. One might say that, you know, it was criminal, and he says, "Well, you know, you can't tell anybody about this." And I said, "Did you not notice the microphone sticking in front of your face and the release that you just signed saying that we can use this material?" Then he went on to tell the story.

Nussenbaum: There probably is limitations, anyway.

Beyer: He said, yeah, it probably is still beyond that but... I... I always... I sometimes tell a little bit of that story. I don't know this is probably terribly bad form, but I have always bridled a little bit at the expression *the greatest generation*, because you know there's good and bad people in every generation. There's a lot of good

⁴ Nussenbaum is referring to a popular Ghost Army anecdote: Two or four Frenchmen viewing an American soldier carrying a tank on his back, exclaimed, "Mon Dieu. Comme les Americains sont forts", not realizing that it was a dummy tank, made out of rubber.

people in your generation, who served and did a lot of things. But not everybody's a hero.

Nussenbaum: No, I think what they meant by that, the *Greatest Generation*, is not only that the Army served, but that the whole country changed completely. People began after the World War two, I, II [correcting himself] -- people began to move out of the cities and move into... into the rural areas. That was a complete change in this country.

Cohen: Yeah.

Nussenbaum: People were able to afford their own homes. Everybody could drive an automobile and employment was pretty good. That's what I think where they mean. I think it's meant by the *greatest generation*.

Beyer: Fair enough.

Nussenbaum: I think we were a very lucky generation, the ones that made it through the war. Our country saw fit to do well by us to see that we got ahead, and they did and and you know by doing, it, they changed the whole outlook of the way the country is run.

Cohen: Like you say almost like a pivotal generation.

Nussenbaum: If they had these kids to go to school... a lot of things that you have that came, because these kids were able to go to school. There is more to it than meets the eye.

Beyer: Fair enough. And I'm okay being schooled on that... that's that's a... that's good.

Nussenbaum: That's my outlook.

Beyer: It's your interview.

Nussenbaum: I think what started the downfall of this country was a coming of the Beatles.

Beyer: You sound like my father.

Nussenbaum: I honestly believe that. After then, we were country that having a good time and doing well and then they come to these four crazy guys who once in a while sang a decent song, but most of times a lot of garbage, and they, all of a sudden, changed the whole outlook of things that the younger generation will weigh out, but that's the old fogey's way of way of looking at it.

Beyer: Well, Seymour, thank you so much for spending two and a half hours with us.

Nussenbaum: I didn't think my voice would last that long.

Beyer: For a while, it looked like you were keeling over, but you got a second wind.

Nussenbaum: No, I have back problems.

Beyer: Yeah, I know.

Nussenbaum: I can't sit still in the same place for very long. You probably noticed my chair is swinging around. And my daughters, every time they come over, they say, "Dad, sit up straight, you look you're going to fall off the chair."

Cohen: Well, It was a real pleasure meeting you and thank you both for letting me join the Interview. And really on behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum & Library [139:28], thanks. Thank you, thank you both.

Nussenbaum: [indecipherable] different things, exhibits?

Cohen: It is. It started off as a library and then expanded into a museum. Right now, we have an exhibit on the Allied Race to Victory. So, it's... it's worth looking on the internet, because they do have detailed captions as well as the photos and pictures. There was prior to that... there was an exhibit commemorating D-Day and that's the first time, where I saw dummy... dummy boats right off the coast that were being planted, as well too. Yeah, so, so, I found that very fascinating to see graphically, you know, as well and you also can see exhibits of...

Nussenbaum: Those things weren't meant to deceive anybody. The dummies, the ones that we attended they're tied down to the ground. They were just meant to interfere with low-flying planes.

Beyer: Not the balloons. She's talking about dummy landing craft.

Cohen: They were used to show a buildup along them the part of the coast where the Germans expected the invasion to take place.

Nussenbaum: I didn't even know about that.

Beyer: It's part of Operation Fortitude. It's one of the reasons that people are always getting Operation Fortitude and the Ghost Army mixed up. Because the... inflatable landing craft as part of that...

Nussenbaum: What were those things? Inflated?

Beyer: Yeah, very similar. I'll send you some pictures. I have a great picture and I don't think they ever used this configuration, but I have a picture of an inflatable landing ship tank, LST with... with inflatable tanks on it. So, it's the inflatable landing craft. all fake, but I don't think they ever used that together like that, but they did use just the fake landing craft. They would have them down in harbors opposite of Pas of Calais as part of the [Operation] Fortitude deception. The same people made them as has made the tanks.

Nussenbaum: Where were these things made? In the States?

Beyer: They were made by a consortium of rubber companies in the United States. So, some of them were made at U.S. Rubber in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Cooper Tire and Rubber in Columbus. There was stuff have made at Goodyear in Akron. Stuff made down in Memphis [and] the Scranton Lace.

Nussenbaum: I'll give you a little side story. When we were in the factory section, we had rolls of, I don't think it was rubber by that time, I think it was neoprene. Rolls of neoprene, we didn't ever what to do few of us made mini mattresses. It was about this wide and it went from our heads down to our hips and had one valve then blew it up I would buy mouth and when we got into the those pup tents and blow those things up they were fairly comfortable and you can roll them up and put them on your backpack. Not so many people know about that.

Beyer: Adapting to the circumstances, improvised.

Nussenbaum: Right.

Beyer: All that is left is for you to make sure that you... you end the recording and save the recording and...This has been a wonderful time, Seymour. Again thank you so much for spending the time and...

Nussenbaum: I have a question, is this going to remain on the... some place on here is it going to disappear?

Cohen: Yes, it should for it well it should remain. Eventually, we would like to create the oral history page, where a person could see the video, which would eventually, be edited by the production team and... There'd also be a short biography on the webpage itself, like a summary. And we also have a transcript of the interview that I could send you both, and you're welcome to review it and, if you feel, there's some glaring thing that should be left out that would be fine. So we would then have a link for the transcript from the upcoming webpage. I can send you an example of other interviews that have been done.

Nussenbaum: I'd like my family to see this.

Cohen: Okay, so the other thing that we can do and again we'll have to wait till we get back into the building... is that we do provide the interviewee with one or two DVDs. So, I'm happy to make the request. So, that we can take care of it. I know we're supposed to go back at some point in June in a staggered way, but I will follow up.

Nussenbaum: Okay, thank you.

Beyer: Did you ever get to see the oral history interview you did at the World War II Museum?

Nussenbaum: I think so. It was three days of so much going on. First of all, I had a very emotional reunion with... Bernie [Bluestein]. He got there before I did, and he was waiting for me. Told them at the desk when I show up, they should call up and tell him. When he came off the elevator with, with Keith [Bernie's son] ...he saw me. I think there were tears coming down his face.

Beyer: Sure.

Nussenbaum: Seventy-five years we hadn't seen each other. Like the first time I met...Harris, Ned Harris. That's also about seventy-two years he walks through the door and he looks at me says, "I don't remember you looking like this." He would have had a ball. Ned was a bit of a showman.

Beyer: He died before we got the movie done, I think. No, no, he saw the movie.

Nussenbaum: He was in the movie.

Beyer: He was in the movie. He saw -- I can't remember, if he lived on to see the movie on public television. I think he might have.

Nussenbaum: I've met three of the people that were in the movie. I met Ned Harris, I met Stanley Nance and I think Arthur Shilstone,

Beyer: They came to the --where it was you and Arthur and Nick Leo--

Nussenbaum: Leo and Macey?

Beyer: Macey. No, Neil Selzer? No, Selzer was in the hospital. I'm trying to remember who the fourth one was...You Nick and John Jay, not Harvey. Jarvey. No, he's passed away...

Nussenbaum: I didn't know. I have a picture of him in my... I know from passing by, I'd see him in the mess hall or in the PX.

Beyer: He was a fun guy. I got to know John really, really well and I was really sad he just died. And Bernie. Did you know Bernie Mason?

Nussenbaum: I never knew Mason, but I met his son and his wife, his widow.

Beyer: Yeah, he just he just passed away. Very nice guy. So, I'm sure this is endlessly fascinating to you, Leah, and to the people compiling the oral history, but I'll try to end again.

Nussenbaum: They'll edit all this stuff out.

Beyer: I hope so, I hope so. You know, you never know in those casual conversations when interesting things comes up so that's why if we were doing this and I know Leah's still recording and if I was doing this as a television interview I know my cameraman would still be recording, because you never know what piece you're going to find. What interesting nugget is going to be there?

Nussenbaum: I still have lots of stories you haven't heard.

Beyer: Do you want to tell one more? Put you on the spot, okay, tell me one.

Nussenbaum: I remember going in with one other guy. This was with Helmut and we went into a French cafe – we wanted to get something to eat. He spoke French fluently. So, he ordered something and the woman behind the counter was very surly behind the counter. She said, "We don't have any food." He says, "Well, what do you have?" "Beer." So we had a beer. We were going to leave and all of a sudden, the door opens up and it's like six-foot five Frenchman and two or three other guys come in. This guy looked like something out of a Walt Disney movie. He had boots on with a knife stuck on top of each of his boots and a bandana around his neck. Turns out he was from the Franc-Tireur, the [nickname for the] French underground. He said, "Oh, American." And we got to talking. He says, "Can I do something for you?" Helmut said, "We came in here to eat something, but the woman says she has no food." He looks around and says, "No food?" He takes his fist like this and bangs it on the thing and a big jug jumped up and she came running out. And he says, "Bring food." She did. And she brought food... Technically, she was on the German side...

Cohen: Interesting.

Beyer: I must go. we can always to another two and a half hours later.

Cohen: Thank you so much it has been fabulous, thank you.

Beyer: I'm going to stop and should you ever... if you want a Take two, get back in touch with, with me please...

Nussenbaum: Okay.

Cohen: Nice meeting you, thank you.

Nussenbaum: Thank you.

Beyer: Hey, I'll call you on your birthday.