

Interview with Robert 'Pete' Bogner and David Edwards

Crew 80R, 767th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group

Conducted by Sean Sims on May 10, 2011

Interviewer (INT): How would you like me to address you?

PETE: I beg your pardon...

INT: Repeats the question.

PETE: I'd like to be addressed as 'Pete' Bogner (SN 0697094; MOS 1092; Crew #80R). Peter is my middle name.

INT: OK

PETE: Too many 'Roberts' and I became 'Peter'.

INT: I heard Ester use that name the last time we were here.

PETE: I don't think the guys knew my real name.

DAVE EDWARDS: (SN 33599610; MOS 757; Crew #80R): We called you Peter ever since I can remember.

INT: Today is Tuesday May 10th, 2011. My name is Sean Sims. I am here interviewing Pete Bogner who served as a B-24 Pilot with the 767th Squadron, 461st Bomb Group. His Group formed part of the 49th Bomb Wing, which was stationed in Italy as part of the Fifteenth Air Force. Mr. Bogner, thank you for your time.

INT: Can you tell me a little about your parents?

PETE: My Mother came from a family of eight children, four boys and four girls. My Father came from a family of eight children with six boys and two girls. My Grandfather on my Mother's side was both deaf and blind. He was struck by lightning in a field. My Grandfather on my Father's side was Peter Turk(?) Bogner from whom I got my name Peter. They came from Austria, my Father's people.

INT: What type of occupation did they perform.

PETE: My Grandfather on my Father's side came from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He had served during the Civil War, and after the war, he was associated with the Pennsylvania Railroad as a blacksmith, sharpening tools. The Pennsylvania Railroad came through Wooster, OH – they had sort of a field operation there - and my Grandfather met my Grandmother there - her name was Peters. He became married -- and they didn't have any natural gas in those days so they manufactured gas for the street lights by burning coal and coke, so the six boys worked a shift of four hours a day, twenty-fours a day making artificial gas.

INT: Were you drafted or did you enlist into the Army Air Corps?

PETE: I went to Wooster College in my home town. I was not the brightest bulb in the Marquee and I never studied in high school and I was living at home going to college and I realized I wasn't having any fun and I wasn't doing very well in college...so I dropped out of school. I worked with my father for the rest of the year with the promise that I would go back to college. So I enlisted in a school in Tennessee, a Presbyterian School called Kings College. There was a total of 380 students in the whole college. It was like a private school. There was a total of fifteen to sixteen students in a class which was exactly what I needed...there was the personal attention because I had never learned how to study.

Fortunately, they had a course by the Government that would teach you how to fly. I think it was 100 hours of something so you could get a private pilot's license. So, myself and my two roommates decided that we were going to take this flying course. Then as the war grew on and the war got more and more attention, we quit in our Sophomore year, went to Cleveland and enlisted in the Air Corps.

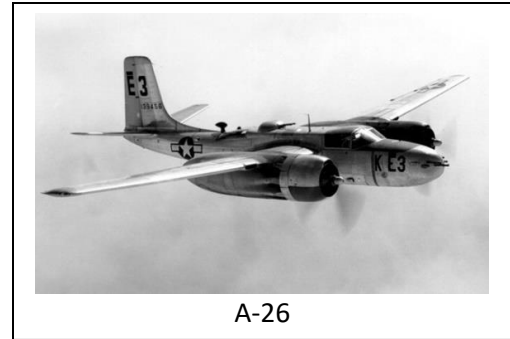
INT: Do you recall your first days in the service from that point on?

PETE: My first days in the service -- I went to San Antonio, Texas – that was the Headquarters for the Air Force. The first flying lessons I had was with a civilian primary instructor, no Army people, and we flew a new plane that had come out, called a PT-19.

It was a single-engine, two people – front and back – had plywood wings on it. It was absolutely no problem for me because I had already learned how to fly. So, I went from Primary at Vernon, Texas, to Basic Training at Enid, Oklahoma. From Enid, I went to Frederick, Oklahoma for twin-engine. After



graduating in twin-engine, somebody was looking after me, I guess, because instead of going overseas, I was assigned to the 19th Tow-Target outfit in El Paso, Texas. What we did in the Tow-Target outfit was we had – I think it was an A-26 or something, a twin-engine plane that towed a target. It was a B-24 thing so that they could practice gunnery on that. Fortunately, it was 150 yards back so they were shooting at the target and not at us.



A-26

I had a commanding officer, a fellow, a Captain Dudley, who was a B-24 pilot. He was nice enough to come to me and say, “Bogner, I think you’d do better if you went to B-24 School” than what you are doing now.” I said, “Well, whatever you think, I’ll do.” So, I went to B-24 School in Smyrna, Tennessee.



B-24

I thought I was pretty good when I graduated from the Air Corps, so I got engaged to a girl that was in Wooster College when I went to Wooster College for that short period of time, but I didn’t know her. I had a friend that was at Wooster College that was a friend of mine going through high school that was teaching math at the College and so he came to me and said, “Pete, I know a red-head at Wooster College and I can get a date for you.” I said “That’d be fine,” so through him I had the date and we got along fine - she graduated, and I went on in the service. The following year after I graduated from B-24 School we were married and very shortly after that I went back to my Tow-Target outfit and the Government, in all its wisdom, decided we were going to change the base from a B-24 base to a B-29 base. But they soon discovered they couldn’t use it as a B-29 base because there was a mountain at the end of the runway and they couldn’t get up in the air far enough to get over the mountain so they gave up, but in the meantime, I was on my way overseas to pick up a nice crew.

INT: The twin-engine school you mentioned before and the planes you were flying with it was that a B-26 aircraft?

PETE: The twin-engine plane was a – No, I think – I’m not sure, but I think it was a Beechcraft.

INT: OK

PETE: Like a civilian plane.

INT: From your experience flying a B-24, can you tell me what you feel some of the flaws of the aircraft were and some of the advantages?

PETE: What?

INT: After piloting the B-24, can you tell me what some of the aircraft’s disadvantages were and some of advantages?

PETE: The only disadvantage was it couldn’t fly itself! Dave could testify. The wingspan was 105 feet -- had 2700 gallons of gas in the wings -- was 48 feet long from front of the nose back to the tail gunner. It had wonderful wings –Davis wings -- it was a little bit flimsy and flopped around a little bit, but was a great plane to fly.

INT: Can you tell me a little bit about how you got to the European Theater from the US? Can you trace your journey from the US to Italy?

PETE: We started at – where did we fly out of –Wichita? {To Dave}

DAVE: We did, but we were in Pueblo, Colorado. Remember?

PETE: Yeah!

DAVE: Then we got a...flew out of there to Wichita.

PETE: We got a brand-new plane.

DAVE: Boy was it shiny!

PETE: Then we flew from Wichita to – where was it - ?

DAVE: Grenier.

PETE: Yeah, it was Grenier Field, New Hampshire. Then flew from there to the Azores Islands. From the Azores Islands we left about one or two o’clock in the



morning to fly ... at that point it was first decided that we were going to go to the European Theater. So, we left at one or two o'clock in the morning with 'Air Silence.' We weren't to talk on the radio. There was a reason they would call us on the radio if the weather was bad, and we would return to the base. We did not know there was a reason our plane's radio was not receiving. A message came through to turn around, that the weather was terrible over the Atlantic. In our ignorance we continued to fly toward the Azores. Dave would know about the biggest, blackest front we ever saw. We decided to go up and see if we could find a light spot to go through. We got to about 23,000 feet – couldn't find anything so decided we would just go through it. It was so terrible going through – we were just going up and down 2 to 300 feet at a time. I was worried because with all the up and down the gyro-compass the equipment would be out of whack. So we got to the middle and it was very calm – went down – wasn't sure our altitude meter was right – but we did come out and we were over the Atlantic not very far over the water... maybe 2,000 feet or something. Scooted around and went through the front, got on the other side of it – the South side – climbed above the clouds and the Navigator got a Sun-fix, gave us a heading to go to the Azores Islands, and after taking a couple of other Sun-fixes, came up with the idea that if we held the heading we were on, we should be over the Azores Islands in – say, forty-five minutes. So, the forty-five minutes came and for some reason we caught another lucky break. The sky opened up and there was the little tiny Azores Island underneath us. We were the only ship that got through. We waited a week until the storm went by. Then the rest of the squadron took up with us. We took off and went through the same damn front again to get to Marrakesh, Africa. We stayed there until Christmas. Had turkey and a box lunch as our Christmas. The Arabs with their tunics were everywhere and you had to watch your plane twenty-four hours a day – the Arabs would steal everything that could be stolen.

PETE: Then we went from Marrakesh up along the coast of the Mediterranean to Tunis. Landed at Tunis. Spent a couple of days waiting for the front to go by again. Then we crossed over the Mediterranean and landed in Italy. Left our plane - was at a camp for three or four days until we got word that the 767th Bomb Squadron needed one crew.

PETE: They loaded us all in a truck going north to a little town of Cerignola, Italy. It rained and it was like seeing...those old scenes from World War I and it was mud and they were sloshing around.



And the driver of the truck went into Headquarters and got the list of where we should go, and we would go down a mud road a little way and he would call out a name and one of the crew members would jump out of the end of the thing with his luggage and there would be a little opening in the door. The door was a tent. A light would come out and he would go inside and disappear. We would go a little bit further and we would do the same thing did that for ten guys. I was still in the plane - the last one and I knew that my Bombardier had gotten out just before I did at one tent, so I got out and went into the tent where I was supposed to stay. There were four officers that were going to live in that tent. That crew was going home except that one of the crew members had been sick and missed a flight and he needed one more flight to go home so he was flying with another crew. That crew was shot down. I was to sleep in his bed that night. And the guys were shipping out the next day. It was not a very happy scene.

PETE: But I knew if I could go back I could pick up my Bombardier, so asked the guys in the tent that I was going to stay in, "Where was the Headquarters for the planes? He pointed down toward a light about two blocks away, several of them, ... the guys were having a party and we ate in a barn. I walked in the door and the first guy that saw me came over and tried to pick a fight with me. I'd never seen him before. Fortunately, the Captain of our base came over and said, "You're a new crew man, right?" and I said, "Yes, we are, we just got in." So, he said, "These guys have been drinking for two or three hours. You don't want to be in here. Come on, I'll take you over and we'll get some food. Then I'll show you around the base and show where you'll be," so that's how we got started.

INT: When you were flying over the Mediterranean, I talked to Dr. Edwards and he said you were looking for survivors from ships...is that correct?

DAVE: That was on the Atlantic.

INT: That was on the Atlantic?

PETE: Yeah.

INT: So did you ever have a chance to name your own bomber? Your own ship while you were flying combat?

PETE: We never flew the same ship... We flew whatever ship was in shape to fly, that was repaired from being shot up, that was the plane we flew.

INT: By the time you arrived in the European Theater, how many missions do you have to fly to complete a tour of duty? (Initially the requirement was 50, then dropped to forty and finally to 25)

How many missions? [DAVE– twenty-five total] Twenty-five. Twenty-six to go home. Fortunately, we were - we flew over in a new plane – we repaired one of the old shot-up planes, took the engines out and put new engines in, fixed them up a little bit and flew home. We were very fortunate to be able to fly over and fly back.

INT: Were there times in Italy when you would prepare for a combat mission and because of mechanical failure, or problems with the airplane had to turn around and fly back to base?

INT: The aircraft would malfunction and you would have to go back to base?

PETE: I only know of turning back one time. We took off with a load of bombs and we lost an engine on take-off. My co-pilot reached up to hit the “Feather” button on the engine to keep us from turning in the wind, and he feathered it but the blade kept turning sharply ... I slapped his hand away and said, “Don’t feather the engine.” We were already turning this way so we simply went in a complete circle, came around and landed again. Got about seventy-five feet off the ground. Remember that? [Evidently to Dave?]

INT: So what was the greatest danger when you were flying over a target doing the bomb runs? Was it enemy fighters or was it the flak shells?

PETE: Really didn’t see much about fighters. The only way we knew there were enemy fighter planes is the Americans – if there was going to be in a dog-fight

with the Germans -- would jettison their fuel tanks and they would come tumbling down through the sky, shining in the sun. That was how we knew there was fighting going on somewhere, but I don't think we were ever attacked by German fighters.

[DAVE: The situation was - the only thing we saw - as far as I can remember was the airmen flying over us. I remember the B-25 outfit or maybe it was B-24, they'd come up and get in formation with you and go over here so they'd be away from you so the stuff that was going to come for you - they'd get down in the clouds.

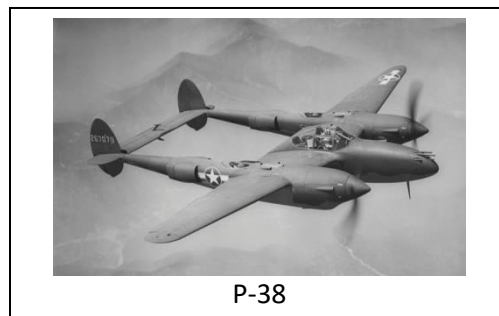
INT: So it was predominantly P-51 Mustangs that flew escort? Were there ever any other aircraft for you, maybe P-38 Lightnings perhaps that flew escort for you guys?

PETE: No

PETE: When we flew --- When you go on a bomb run you never go directly to the target. We would always bypass the target, go to an IP point, turn, come back so the people on the ground with the anti-aircraft could sort of sigh in relief, "Boy, they're not going to hit us today." Then we would come back downwind. The procedure was, we would go in and drop the bombs, change the direction immediately, change your altitude, change your air speed then you got the hell out of there.



P-51



P-38

INT: Were there many casualties in your unit -- in the 767th Squadron?

PETE: What?

INT: Were there any casualties in the unit? From the time you arrived until the war ended?

PETE: No, I don't think so.

DAVE: There was some in ... some numbers in the crew next to us in the tent ... they went over to Yugoslavia, I think. They got down there and I think only one of them came back.

PETE: Well, I know that - Dave probably knows more about this than I do, but we had a crew of B-24s getting ready to go overseas – training -- that fellow’s name was “Chick” (?) and he had an Engineer on board who was not a really good soldier. He was out drinking every night and carousing around. And we told “Chick” he had better get rid of the guy because he was going to kill him. And he said,” Ah, Nah, nah, no, he’ll be OK when we get overseas, he’ll be OK.”

PETE: Well, the procedure is, when you go over as a crew... I flew with another crew as a co-pilot to get the procedure of flying in a squadron.

INT: Does that mean your tour of duty would have ended before your other crewmates?

PETE: I would go just by myself with another crew. Then I could fly as a first pilot with my crew. Chick was on his first mission. We were going to, I think, a small town in Austria -- He sent his Engineer back to -- this was an older plane and the gages for the gas were in the back deck – back to level the thing so that the gas flow was even. He turned the valve, sat down and went to sleep and pumped every gallon of gas out of the plane and the whole crew had to jump out of the plane. Chick never knew whether any of the guys ever lived that was in his plane. He made it. He landed on the ice on Lake Balaton, Hungary. [See Map] The Germans were on one side and the Russians on the other. The Russians came out in a dog-sled and picked him up on the ice and took him back and in about three weeks – four weeks – he made his way back to his base. By that time, they figured he was gone and they had shipped all his stuff home. He ended up that was the only flight he ever took as a pilot – never knew what had happened to his crew.



INT: I read a story one time – there was a Veteran Survey filled out from your Bomb Group --- the question was posed, ‘Were there any issues with morale?’ I’m not sure what the man’s position was on that, but he said, ‘Flying back before they’d reach Italy, some of the people had jumped out – opted to jump out over Switzerland and they kind of just left the plane up there. Were there any issues of morale in the Bomb Group when you were there?’

PETE: I don’t think we had one problem with morale (PETE and DAVE talk over each other). That’s true.

INT: Repeats the question.

DAVE: Might have been, but we didn't let it take place. (Laughs)

INT: So by the time VE Day came how many missions had you flown?

PETE: Twenty-five

INT: Now there was...(Pete interrupts)

PETE: You have to understand that there's a grade system in the service, so the four officers lived in one tent. The enlisted men lived in a tent and we were not allowed to eat in their mess hall, and they were not allowed to eat in our mess hall. We could play cards together at night, but we couldn't associate intermixed. I think that worked out pretty good.

DAVE: Do you remember HOPPES – would always come in his uniform ... One time he, I don't know how to express it but, he got a...in his face and Bam! He left out ...”

INT: Did you participate in the post-VE Day Mercy Missions to the POW Camps in Austria?

PETE: The what?

INT: The post-VE Day Supply Missions to the Prisoner of War Camps in Austria?

PETE: Ah, No.

INT: Did any members of the crew participate? Do you recall?

PETE: Are you talking about when the war was over?

INT: The Mercy Missions? The supply drops to the POW Camps in Austria?

PETE: No, I don't think I am getting the question right...

INT: I think it was from the 9th to the 15th, after the war had ended, they used the B-24s to fly supply drops to the Prisoners of War in Austria. You don't recall that? The Mercy Missions?

DAVE: What we did was we had food packages, and remember, we would put them in a barrel with great big wrappings and insulation and we would fly over a place and drop into a clear field, but we had to look and see if there was anybody

down there first. Then we would come back around and drop it. Three or four times.

PETE: I remember we used to – didn't we have pamphlets that they gave us to strew around...?

DAVE: Yeah, yeah. That was my job too.

PETE: Trying to prove to them that the Americans were not bad people, we were trying to help end the war. This was around October (??) or something

INT: And this was while the war was still going on that you dropped pamphlets or was this afterward?

PETE: This was while the war was still going on, and it was hard on the people. I can remember we always had a target that was on the outskirts of a town – a marshalling yard for a railroad, or there would be an oil refinery, but when you're flying over, and the flak is coming up and you're bouncing around, and sometimes the flak is getting too damn close to you and you think the next one is going to hit you, but for some reason it doesn't, and you look down and you look at little ants of people running out of a building, and they run down the street into a bomb-proof building and they disappear. And then there is nobody. But for just a fraction of a moment, people are scared to death and they scurry on. Then as soon as you drop the bombs, of course you're out of there because you've got to go through the flak again before you get out of town.

INT: Was there any particularly memorable experiences that you had on any one run? Possibly something unusual that happened?

PETE: No, I don't think so. I remember when we came home from overseas we had a couple of passengers that were assigned to us to come home in our plane. They were - I think B-17s – and by the time that we got them home and showed them how smoothly a B-24 could land and take off, they were amazed compared to the B-17 which drug its tail. I remember one got out and said he had real respect for the B-24.

DAVE: ... the B-24 was the main number of bombers was ahead of the B-17.

INT: Were you awarded any medals during the war?

PETE: Did I win any medals?

INT: Were you awarded any, yes?

PETE: NO. Never got a medal. Got a good flying medal - that's it. Never got another medal.

INT: Was that the Air Medal?

PETE: Air Medal, yeah, got three. Every four or five missions or something and you got an Air Medal...

DAVE: Yeah there you go, you got an Air Medal and I think you got an area ...--- (the two talk over each other) – you got one for wherever you were. {Campaign Ribbon for each Theater in which the person served]

INT: I think the ‘Ruptured Duck’ came after you were discharged.

PETE: Yeah, after you got out – they sewed it on your shirt.

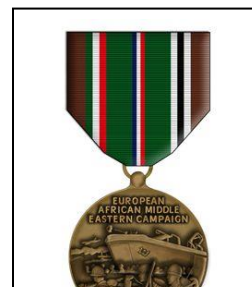
INT: Dr. Edwards said on the radio one time you heard “Axis Sally” Broadcast? Do you recall ever hearing any of these?

PETE: Ahhh – we had a station you could listen to Axis Sally, Yeah. Remember that? Axis Sally?

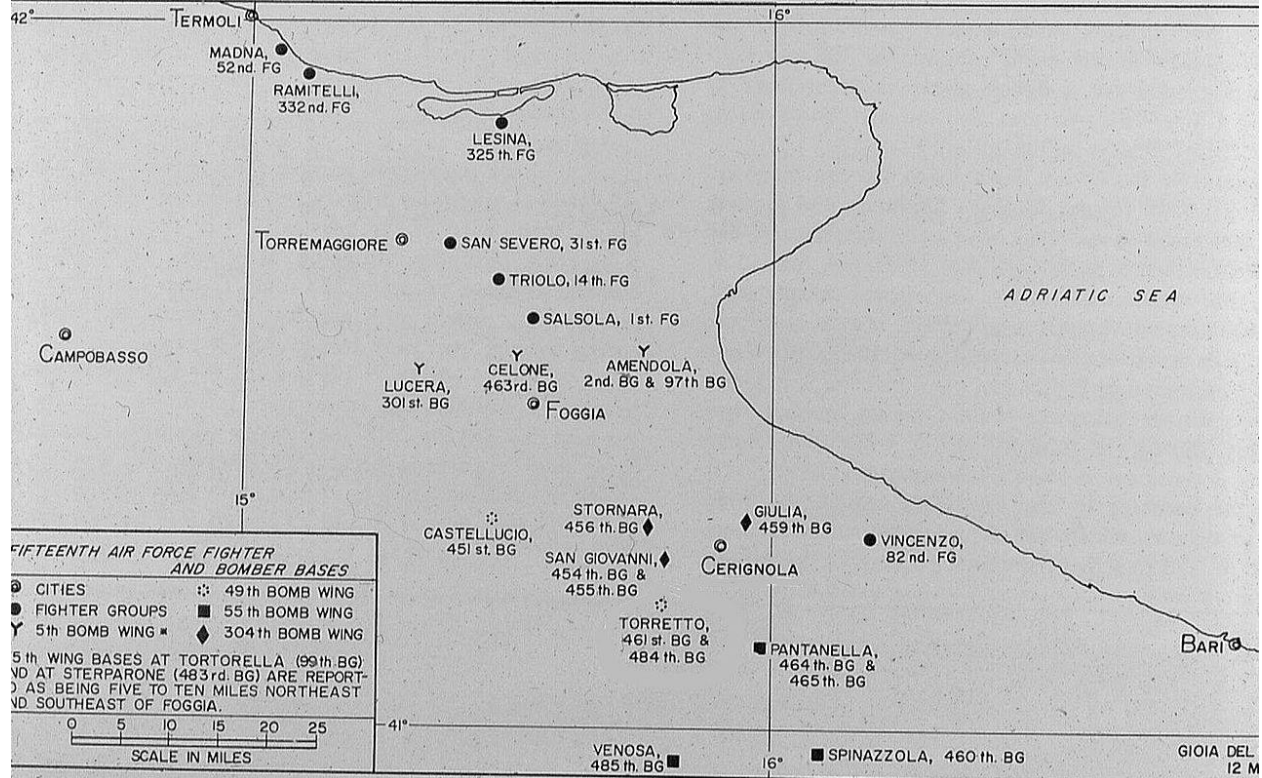
DAVE: Oh Yeah. We finished the mess hall and when they did, she congratulated us on how beautiful it was. (Chuckles)

INT: How did you stay in touch with your family?

PETE: No Cell phones...ahhh...No telephones. The only way was by Air Mail. You used to – it was kind of fun to go pick up you mail because you could see who was getting boxes and when it was boxes it was usually candy and cookies and you could follow that guy to the tent and participate. I remember HOPPES, (Robert A. Hoppes; SN 0834435; MOS 1092; Crew # 80R) my co-pilot, would get gifts from home, and the four officers were living in a tent and there was an electrical system designed out of – I don't know – parts we stole out of the plane -- each bed had a little light. When things were quiet in the tent and HOPPES thought everybody was sleeping, he would start to open his box of gifts. So, we would hear him rattling over there and we would all turn the lights on and go over and help him eat whatever he had.



INT: So I read that you had arrived at TORRETTA Airfield on New Year's Eve, 1944 and you were assigned to the squadron in January. I read through the Bomb Group Records and they said that January was marked with really poor weather and the conditions of the field were really muddy and there was approximately 300 crews there and only about 170 aircraft that were serviceable at the time. Did that mean you had to wait longer before you were going on your missions?



PETE: No.

DAVE: We were flying right away.

PETE: We had usually three days for the crew to recover from a mission when we could go to ground school which was very limited. We could fly a plane that was repaired to make sure it was OK, or we could just rest and get one of those beautiful haircuts and flying on the third day...So roughly every third day, weather permitting.

INT: Do you recall what month you started flying in combat? REPEATED THE QUESTION twice

PETE: It was in January – first of January 1945.

INT: And that was the five flights you were supposed to make with another crew, correct?

PETE: Uh huh.

INT: OK. Did you feel a lot of stress or pressure when you were flying?

PETE: NO – it was no picnic, but no! I think – probably jealousy on my part - but I think we had one of the best crews that the 767th Bomb Squadron ever had.

DAVE: I think we had the best pilot.

INT: Was there any member of the crew that carried any kind of ‘Good Luck’ charm – anything special?

PETE: Nah

INT: What did you do for entertainment?

PETE: Cards

INT: Cards?

PETE: Just play cards.

INT: When you were granted leave did you take the opportunity to leave the base?

PETE: Never left the base except one time to go into the little town of Cerignola. I’ll tell you a story because as I went into town the balconies were out over the sidewalk. The first one I came to, an Italian woman was on the balcony and she shook her fist at me and spit on me. I turned right around and went back to the air base and I never went back to Cerignola.

DAVE: We guys.... I was impressed by the cathedral that was there. Not just an ordinary church, it was really ornate.

PETE: Well, do you remember the barn and the house that backed up on our airfield? There was a farmer lived upstairs and the cows and stuff were down below?



INT: Did you keep a personal diary or any memoirs when you were over there?

PETE: No

INT: Did you or any of your crew members take any pictures of yourselves when you were over there? Possibly playing baseball or something?

PETE: No. They had an organized game. I did not participate. I didn't know anything about it. I (Dave starts talking) I don't know if you guys (Dave talking over him)

DAVE: basically -- actually we didn't do any -- we more or less...our duties around the camp... rest

INT: Beside yourself and Dr. Edwards, there are only two other members of the crew with whom I have contact...One is Bill Oldenburg (William T. ; SN-32953735; MOS 612; Crew # 80R) in New Jersey and the other is Bill Sims (William C. : SN 14108362; MOS 748, Crew # 80R), my grandfather. I was wondering if you would care to share any memories you have of them?

PETE: No, I think that Bill Sims was outstanding as a Flight Engineer - the most conscientious guy I ever knew. When you got on a plane with Sims, you could bet that he had everything going great. The rest of the crew - I think as a whole - got along fine. Never had, as far as I know, any serious problems.

INT: Dr. Edwards told me a story one time that one door gunner, John Schleicher (SN 36839765; MOS 612; Crew #80R), used to carry extra flak vests on the airplane. Is that correct?

PETE: I guess it was, but at the time I knew nothing about it.

DAVE: Always sort of protected you and didn't give anybody a black mark, and I guess it would have been Sims duty to do it

PETE: How old was Schleicher, 17 or 18?

DAVE: Oh, Very young. While we were in Pueblo, Colorado training, he went into an airplane to take out the headsets. That was what he did, and he came out and got under the bomb bay and it rolled him all the way to the back of the airplane and it scared him pretty bad -- he was scared to death.

INT: Was there anything about Bill Oldenburg in particular that you remember? He was the Nose Gunner, correct?

PETE: I knew that he went into farming after the war. I went to visit him one time on a farm and he had I think it was a threshing machine and I think it was probably two to three years old and it would have won first place in any competition for looks. It was absolutely spotless. If you knew Bill Sims, everything he had was absolutely spotless.

INT: Yeah, I remember Grandpa's house.

PETE: Do you recall when your service ended?

PETE: My service ended when we parked the plane in New Hampshire, turned over everything I had that belonged to the government, .45 sidearm the belt with the watch - everything...

INT: They made you give back the watch?

PETE: Had to sign for it – everything. We had thirty days to do whatever we wanted to, I guess, and took a train out of New Hampshire. I remember we were coming somewhere on the Pennsylvania Railroad – I guess they called it a BREAK IN RECORDING – wooden seats and we became detached from the train. The train went on down the railroad and we were stuck. Air and the cinders and dirt came rolling through the plane. We got off of the plane at Camp Atterbury, Indiana and the guy came up, took one look at us and said, “Where the heck have you guys been?” We told him we just got back from overseas and had been on a train became unhooked and the stuff came all over clothes. He said, “You go get cleaned up and we’ll process you right away and you can get out and get home.” So, we did. Another lucky break for us.

INT: Did you ever fly once again once you got home?

PETE: No, I didn't. I tried being a passenger on small plane and it was nothing like flying a B-24. I didn't have any money and I couldn't fly -- couldn't pay for it. Decided my life was going to be in the construction business and never flew in a 24 again.

INT: Did you use the GI Bill to enhance your education at all after the war?

PETE: No, I did not. I didn't finish college and I figured the best thing I could do, and I think I was right, was I was married. I knew what I wanted to do, why should I go to college? I wasn't going to work for anybody; I wasn't going to have fifty or sixty people working for me, so I decided college was not for me.

INT: After the war did you maintain any of the close friendships you had made while you were overseas?

PETE: No, not really. No. This guy, Dave, was the fellow who kept track of all of the crew. [Pointing to Dave]

INT: Did you attend any reunions after the war?

PETE: We had our own reunion and we had three of them. Never went to an organized one for the 767th or the 461st Bomb Group – No.

INT: Are you aware that there is an organization for the Bomb Group?

PETE: No

INT: That was one of the things – I had received some of the materials my father had accumulated over the years. The Bomb Group actually produced its own newsletter and they did have some meetings like California and Ohio and places like that.

PETE: No, I really wasn't interested in... I guess...

INT: Wanted to put it behind you afterwards...

PETE: No, it wasn't that, I really didn't know any of the other pilots. Never got together with anybody, but our crew. As far as I was concerned, the crew was the main part and I had never associated with any of the pilots other than the guy who tried to pick a fight with me.

INT: My Grandfather told me at the end of the war he was offered a Lieutenant's commission if he would have gone out and participated in the Pacific campaign, were you ever approached for anything like that

PETE: We were coming home from the war in Europe - I had the orders for our crew - and we had a meeting and we decided -- we had a choice. We could all split up and all radio operators could go to the radio operators...and navigators could go and pilots and co-pilots could go - and we decided as a crew that we had come over together and we were going home together. So, on the plane out over the Atlantic, I opened the sealed orders and the first paragraph of it said that we were assigned to duty within the Continental limits of the United States for the duration of the present conflict which meant we were never going to go back over to the Pacific to finish. We were through, we were done.

INT: After the war ended and a couple of years later and the war when the Korean conflict came about did you think you would ever be recalled for duty?

PETE: No, I didn't. My feeling about the Korean War and the Vietnam War, which my Son was in, was a war that should have never happened.

INT: You mentioned earlier, when we started, when you came home that you pretty much went to work the next day. Is that right? Did you eventually take over that construction business?

PETE: I never took it over, I was part of a construction business, but I worked there 43 years. It was the best days of my life. I loved construction.

INT: I'm going to change tapes here for a minute

PETE: You're not really tired?

INT: No, I'm fine

INT: That's the end of the questions I wanted to ask Pete Bogner. At this time I'd like to open it up in case you have anything you'd like to share personally, or you feel I didn't ask,

PETE: I didn't understand your last question...

INT: At this point I've run through the questions I wanted to ask you so I wanted to open up and let you add anything I missed or which you'd like to add that you thought was important.

PETE: I don't think there is anything I could add. My crew, as a crew... I think I would compare it with an old adage, the harder you work, the luckier you get and we worked and we did get lucky.

INT: DR. Edwards, would you like to add anything?

DAVE: Well, I would just like to say that we had a lot of good experiences. We have met, four times, haven't we?

INT: Hershey in Pennsylvania right?

DAVE: At your (Pete's) place one time (PETE – yeah) Went up to the lake and your place one time.

PETE: Hershey Pennsylvania...

DAVE: Uh went and then we went to ... Station and then we met down here at the farm, and I think you've been here one time. (Pete – Yeah)

DAVE: I just want to say that of all the pilots I've ever flown with couldn't equal him. (choking up)

PETE: Thank you. One of the best Radio Operators I ever had (Chuckles from a group in the rear)

DAVE: Well. Maybe it's not reciprocal, but that's not what I meant. You got us through lots of times when we could have been in peril. You remember when we got in that down-draft from that other Group in front of us? Well, he put it in a dive. ..smaller plane... We got about fifty feet above the ground and he straightened it out and the wings were spread about two inches apart.

PETE: We got back in the formation too.

DAVE: Oh yeah, we came home, but that was it. I remember one time we were flying and there was ... apparently there was a signal he was going to turn left he would turn left and when he would signal he would turn right he would turn right, but there was one time when this guy started to turn the wrong direction. That was the only time we ever...

INT: There was one time a bomb got stuck in the bomb bay...

DAVE: Oh yeah, where there was a bomb we had to kick out -- we had to go and kick it out.

INT: Again, today is Tuesday, May 10th, 2011 and I'm here with Pilot Peter Bogner and Dave Edwards, the Radioman, who both served on the same crew with the 767th Squadron in 1945 with the 461st Bomb Group. Gentlemen, thank you for your time.

PETE: Thank you!

Crew 80R

Pilot	Robert Peter Bogner	SN 0697094
Co-Pilot	Robert A. Hoppes	SN 9834435
Radio Operator	David S. Edwards	SN 33559610
Tail Gunner	William N. Foote	SN 14188972
Bombardier	Allen R. Knight	SN 0785074
Nose Gunner	William T. Oldenburg	SN 32953735

Left Waist Gunner	John W. Schleicher	SN 36839765
Navigator	Alfred Seideman	SN 02070224
Top Turret Gunner	William C. Sims	SN 14108362
Ball Turret Gunner	Charles W. Wagner	SN 36312838