1st Lt. Jay "Bud" Mynatt
B-24 and B-17 Co-Pilot

Tell me what your job responsibilities were.

Bud Mynatt: Well, of course, the pilot was aircraft commander. And I was his right-hand man, his right-hand assistant. I had to be able to do anything basically that he could do on his request. I flew the plane when he wanted me to and he flew it when he wanted to. I basically just did whatever the captain said.

How did it work swapping out every 15 minutes?

Bud Mynatt: We did not swap out that often. However, in the course of a mission we would both do quite a bit of flying. If we were on the left side of the lead ship I probably would do a good bit more flying than the pilot would If we're on the right side he'd probably do the most because of the formation flying. We flew in as close as we could and the pilot closest to the ship he was looking at is naturally the fellow that could do a little better job and a safer job and would do more flying usually.

Did you ever fly lead?

Bud Mynatt: No. We flew deputy lead several times, which is right-hand wing of the lead ship.

Tell me the importance of the lead ship flying a stable flight path.

Bud Mynatt: Lead ship was usually a squadron commander - in some cases even a group commander. Deputy lead was any good pilot. The lead ship, of course, was primarily responsible for straight and level and very consistent flying so that the people strung out behind him, if there's any variation in his flying, it rippled out and just got worse and worse back through the group, you know. And it was up to the lead ship to keep everybody else pretty well in the position they belonged in.

What kind of leadership skills did you have to have*?*

Bud Mynatt: Well, 'course I had the basically the same…I did have the same pilot training that my aircraft commander had. I feel like I was as good a pilot as he was, except that he had a little more experience. He

had been flying longer than I had. but I have to say I was a good pilot. I guess all of us thought we were.

Tell me about how you saved someone.

Bud Mynatt: One time…I hesitate to even talk about because it was a situation where we were still in training in the United States flying out of Mountain Home Idaho and this particular night we were on a high altitude night navigation flight.

Our navigator was our sole person to keep us on course through celestial navigation. It was a test basically for our navigator. Well, he got us lost, I hate to admit. But, it wasn't all his fault. We had a 120 mile an hour side wind that we didn't know about. So after a couple hours flying we were pretty far off course.

Pilot William (Bill) Whitlow sitting Off-camera during the interview: We ran into weather.

Bud Mynatt: And ran into bad weather and then when we got to the Pacific Ocean, turned around to start back to Mountain Home, we were far south of where we were supposed to be.

Then, we got in such bad weather we got lost and finally through the grace of God, I reckon, ran across one of these little airports that the Army was keeping open during the war for emergencies and had an operator, radio operator, 24 hours a day and this little old town of uh…

Bill Whitlow: Milford.

Bud Mynatt: …Milford, Utah. Well let me tell you, we landed a B-24 on a runway that was about 3,000 feet long and two feet deep with snow. The snow probably let us land. Otherwise we'd gone into a lake.

But anyway, as we were coming in for a landing our landing lights were on. We came across the town, we could see the little old town of Milford as we was coming across, and suddenly I saw a hill rise right up in front of us and I jerked the wheel back and hit full power and our wheels hit that hill and bounced. I chalked full power and we bounced over the top of that hill, over a big fence, steel fence also. Hit the other side of that fence and slid all the way to the end of the runway and stopped. If we'd had not hit that hill.

Bill Whitlow: I never saw the hill.

Bud Mynatt: He never did see it.

Bill Whitlow: Never saw the hill. I had my eyes straight ahead on that runway sort of thing. It was actually an open field. Still had some sheep or something on it. And we hit with the airplane and the wheel shuddered and next thing you know we're in the air again. Bud hit the throttle, put full power on and we just sort of floated right like a bird right over the fence and down onto this thing and, and we…

Bud Mynatt: It was just pure luck. Pure luck.

Bill Whitlow: …we actually almost slid over a cliff on the other end.

Bud Mynatt: 'Course Bill was having a fit 'cause I'd jerked the wheel away from him, but the next time we were in combat, had come back from a mission, late, long mission. we were trying to land at our base, as I recall, without rudders.

Bill Whitlow: It was socked in.

Bud Mynatt: Socked in really bad and we'd had to make a couple of passes at the runway to try to get lined up to come in.

Bill Whitlow: Well, we had no rudders, Bud.

Bud Mynatt: No rudders. And on a B-24 without rudders you're in a heap of trouble.

Bill Whitlow: And number three engine was out.

Bud Mynatt: Number three engine out. We were in bad shape. But finally, Bill had us lined up. We were coming in at a drift, pretty strong drift, but headed towards the runway when suddenly a P-47 fighter, who was out of fuel basically looking for a place to land, any old port in a storm. He had to get down.

He was coming in on our field to land and I saw him coming straight towards us. We were on the down wind on the approach leg and I jerked the wheel strong to the left, pulled full power on all four engines, Whitlow yelling, "What are you doing? What are you doing? Did you see that P-47?" He went under us 15 feet perhaps. How we missed him I don't know. But anyway, we got back down on the ground.

The P-47 pilot got on the ground also and he later came up to Bill telling him boy, he sure appreciated us seeing him. He never saw us, never saw us. And he says, "You really saved my life and you all's

too." Bill said, "No, I didn't." Says, "You go talk to that boy right over there. He's the guy who saved your life."

Bill Whitlow: I didn't see him, 'cause I, once again, I was lined up at that runway and I was looking straight ahead.

Bud Mynatt: He was having a time.

Bill Whitlow: And when he popped power forward on, three engines the airplane just naturally, two engines on this side and the outboard on that side, went this way, run, and we had a hell of time getting the power off of number two engine and, and so we'd had no rudders. We couldn't of… We, we'd a gone right over like that, but finally we turned up…left the air on in there, both him and I on the damn controls and, "I got 'em. I got 'em." Straightened it up and went on out. We made seven approaches before we got it on the runway. I…they gave me the DFC for it, but he's the one that should have got the DFC. He should have got the Congressional Medal of Honor for saving our lives.

The B-17 was controlled by cables and the B-24 was hydraulics.

Bud Mynatt: We did all of our training in Mountain Home, flew overseas and flew out first about 12 missions in B-24's.

Bill Whitlow: Nineteen.

Bud Mynatt: They'd fly that many, 19 missions, in B-24's. Then the Air Transport Command came, got all the B-24's to take them to the Pacific and brought us a total new group of brand new B-17's. We spent two weeks in training transition on B-17's and finished our missions in B-17's. So we flew about as many missions in one as we did the other.

Tell me about the different handling characteristics.

Bud Mynatt: Well, to me, the B-24 was an easier airplane to fly. Hydraulic controls were easier. The…to me it was a quieter plane. It was a smoother plane. A little faster plane. And if I were flying around the United States I'd much rather fly a B-24.

But in combat I think about anybody that flew 'em both would prefer a B-17 for the primary reason that it could carry its bomb load up to 30,000 or even 32,000 feet and you could still safely fly that airplane, where a loaded B-24 at about 24,000 feet began to get sloppy.

The controls, you know, you just felt like you were drifting. You couldn't fly a good close formation past 24,000 feet and when you're under anti-aircraft fire, which we were almost every mission pretty badly, there's a lot of difference in 24,000 and 30,000 feet because you were almost out of range of flak at 30,000 feet.

If you were in range it was just a few seconds and you'd flown out of their range. And at 24,000 you was in range for a long time. So I'd take B-17 for that reason. And it was also a tough airplane. You could just shoot the living daylights out of it, tear it up and just, you know, just make a general mess out of it and still get it home.

I heard it was more survivable in a ditching situation.

Bud Mynatt: I have been told that by people who were involved in them. We only had, well it wasn't really a forced landing. We did have to land one time coming back from a mission. We landed in Brussels, Belgium for lack of fuel. We didn't feel like we had enough fuel to get across the channel and back home. And we had to land there on…real low on fuel, but that wasn't any big emergency. So I would think the B-17 was a stronger body frame than the B-24.

Bill Whitlow: That's for ditching.

Bud Mynatt: Yeah, for ditching. Or forced landing of any kind.

Tell me about a typical mission.

Bud Mynatt: Well, we were usually awakened by the CQ, Charge of Quarters, at say by 3:00 in the morning, and were given about an hour to get dressed, go eat breakfast and get in the briefing room. Breakfast was usually bacon or sausage and a lot of toast and coffee strong enough to keep you awake for a week, powdered eggs. I don't ever remember any fresh eggs. But a lot of jelly and toast and a good enough breakfast. Good enough breakfast.

But then we'd go to briefing. In the briefing room all the pilots, co-pilots, bombardiers, navigators, they would have a big wall as big as this wall here with a map of Europe and England on it and they would open the curtains and there would be our mission with a red ribbon telling us where we were going and how we were coming home would be thumb-tacked up on that big map.

They'd tell us where we had to start our bomb run and we flew either three squadrons, which was a regular mission or what they called a maximum effort was all four squadrons would fly. Usually it was three.

But we would try to stay as close together as we could, all three squadrons and, of course, each squadron tried to hang in with as close a formation flying as they could do, because the closer you stayed together better chance you had at keeping the fighters away from you.

We had 10 and sometimes 12 fifty caliber machine guns on our plane, and 12 of those aircraft to have over 100 guns and that would…if you'd fly in a real tight formation the German fighters would hunt somebody else to go after. That's what it amounted to.

So, but once you got on the bomb run you were straight and level till those bombs were dropped. It didn't make a damn what happened. You just had to hang in there and get shot and shot down, a lot of them. But you just had to hang in and drop your bombs and then try to get away.

We'd always go back a different route than we came over. And they tried to steer us away from flack. But, of course, over the target areas usually was a very heavy flack situation, because we were after military factories, anything to produce a war effort in these big cities. Naturally the big cities took a terrible beating also, but that was incidental. It wasn't on purpose. The targets were always to do with military.

Then what happens?

Bud Mynatt: We'd still try to stay in formation all together. Of course if a plane got hurt and couldn't keep up he had to drop down. For example, if he lost his oxygen system he had to drop down pretty fast to get down to where they could breathe. That put him by himself and at great risk and that happened a lot. Happened to us once or twice. But we'd get back to…once you got to the Channel, English Channel, you usually felt pretty safe because by then there were plenty of fighters and everything else to help you get home and we would land.

Bill had ear problems, pressure problems, in his ears and we'd have to come down step at a time. We'd have to come down two or three thousand feet and fly around a few minutes for him to get his ears cleared out before we could come down some more a lot of times.

And sometimes it'd take us quite a while to get down and everybody else was home on the ground time we got there. But anyway, we always got back in one shape or another. Couple of times in pretty bad shape, but then we'd go to what they'd call debriefing back to the

briefing room where you told your story of what went on during that mission, if anything at all unusual or out of the ordinary, how good you thought you did or didn't do. Just any questions they'd ask you about the mission.

For example, on one mission, and I believe it was in August of '44, our group saw and reported, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the first ME-262 jet fighter in the world and it hit our group. And to me I don't think it had ever been reported before. Bill might remember more about that.

But the briefing officers didn't believe what we were saying about the speed of that aircraft, where it was down below us flying the same direction we were and in a few seconds it was way above us headed towards us and came through our formation at about twice the speed of anything we had ever seen before and they didn't hardly believe us. But, within a week or two there were several of them and it was then found out that the Germans had the first jet fighter aircraft in the world.

What did you do after debriefing?

Bud Mynatt: Well they usually gave us a good shot of whiskey if we wanted it. And sometimes two shots. That's what you're talking about, most people get kind of jittery and that'd settle them down a little bit.

I never did. I don't remember but two missions that when I came back I was really upset like where I didn't wanna eat or couldn't go to sleep or anything like that. 'Course I had just turned 20 years old and I thought I was invisible and bulletproof and I just uh…an ordinary mission didn't upset me. It'd scare the hell out of me now, but it didn't then.

What about those two missions that shook you up?

Bud Mynatt: Well, we just got shot up so bad. One mission we got over 200 holes in our aircraft and another mission we got over 300 and that was holes big enough to stick your finger in to big enough to crawl through. And that was a B-24 and they patched that thing up.

It was olive drab in color and they patched it with aluminum flush patches and flush rivets, shiny aluminum, and we renamed that thing The Great Speckled Bird, 'cause it was speckled all over with those patches. It was the damndest looking thing you ever saw. But it was in sub-depot for several days being put back together. We'd lost our trim tabs, a number three engine. That wasn't the time we lost our rudder, I don't believe. We lost our oxygen system, though.

Bill Whitlow: The trim cable was severed.

Bud Mynatt: Yeah.

Bill Whitlow: Cables were severed. We had no rudders at this point.

Bud Mynatt: Well, we either…we were in awful bad shape. I was pretty well shook up. When on landing the right engine quit when we pulled the power off of it. So both engines were out on the right side and we couldn't taxi, so we just had to roll to a stop and get out.

And that was the one time that I got scared pretty bad and then over Frankfurt, Germany the weather was closing in on us and kept forcing us down, down, down. We had to bomb visually. Radar was in its infancy. We didn't have any such thing on our planes and so we had to drop our bombs visually and so when the clouds came down we had to go down with them, stay below the clouds.

And over Frankfurt, Germany we were at 15,000 feet. Well we were just getting pasted something terrible with anti-aircraft fire because Frankfurt was heavily fortified because it such a strong city for manufacturing and we got shot up.

That's one the times we got shot up so bad and the anti-aircraft fire, you'd see it burst out in front of you. If you only saw it, why it usually didn't hit you. But a lot of times you could feel it, and when you felt it, gave…the, the holes come all through that airplane. The shrapnel, you know, usually was little pieces really, usually.

But we were getting shot up so bad that I really felt like that our time had come. We lost several airplanes on that mission. I was sitting there, Bill was flying. I was looking out the bubble window looking down at all the anti-aircraft bursting coming all around us. Thinking about my high school, I just graduated from high school, my family and my girlfriend and thinking I'd never see them again and I really and truly thought that was my last day on this earth. And when I got home that day I was pretty well shook up. I had a tough time sleeping.

Was that the worst day you ever had in Europe?

Bud Mynatt: The worst day I ever had was our first mission, which was a patsy of a mission. It was D-Day, June the 6th was our first combat mission, and as we flew over France, maybe it wasn't D-Day we dropped our bombs. It might have been the next day. Did we drop bombs on D-Day? Or it was the next day or two.

Bill Whitlow: We flew two missions on D-Day.

Bud Mynatt: Yeah.

Bill Whitlow: We didn't drop them the first time 'cause we couldn't see.

Bud Mynatt: First time we did not drop.

Bill Whitlow: Didn't know if they were still in the boats or on land or how far inland. We had no information so we brought them back.

Bud Mynatt: We brought them back. They sent us right back up.

Bill Whitlow: Refueled and went back again and dropped them.

Bud Mynatt: And we did drop them then. Well, our target was a bridge, a river bridge in a little small town in Northern France. It was the Air Force's job to destroy any way that the Germans could bring reinforcements up from France, south…or Central France. We were to blow up all the bridges, all the highway bridges, railway bridges, all the airports and this particular bridge was our target which we flat laid in the river, tore the bridge all to pieces.

Just not too long after daylight, it was early morning, but half of that little old French town went with it. And I'm telling you to this day that bothers me and for several days after that I then knew that war was hell and what was all about because Lord only knows how many people got killed on the ground that day who never knew what hit them and had no reason to be killed. But for us to knock that bridge out we had to knock out some of that little old town with it 'cause it was right in the middle of the town. And that bothered me and still does.

What kind of tactics did you use to get back as a straggler?

Bud Mynatt: Well, we were stragglers 'cause we'd lost our oxygen system and had to leave the formation, come way down. Fortunately I do not remember running into any anti-aircraft fire or fighters either one. We just got down pretty low, headed straight for the Channel and got home as quick as we could without any problems, so it was a fairly easy run for us. In a lot of instances it was disaster.

Explain the tactics.

Bud Mynatt: Well, I think we came across the Channel at about 1,000 feet. That's as low as we got, I guess, coming across the mainland I don't…I think we was flying mostly about two or three thousand feet.

How did you deal with the loss of someone or other aircraft carrying your friends?

Bud Mynatt: There was chapel, and as matter of fact, an old church; several hundred year old church on our airbase. It was a little town called Eye, E-Y-E, was the name of the little village and their church actually was, our airbase took it in, as it did a bunch of wheat fields and farms and everything else.

But not many people used it to my knowledge. If the fellow that went down was in your squadron or you knew him personally, of course you felt awful bad about it. In some cases we'd leave word with 'em, "If we don't get back you all divide this stuff up." And occasion we did divide some stuff up.

It…but it was just a sad situation, but it was halfway expected. We knew the loss ratios and we knew when we went out that very likely everybody wasn't coming back. 'Course we never thought it was gonna be us. You always felt, "I'll get back, but somebody won't," and usually somebody didn't.

But fortunately we always got back, but as far as things really upsetting, we lost a crew out of our own Quonset hut where we lived. That bothered us, of course, pretty bad, but I don't…I guess you just…was expecting it.

Did you feel that 35 missions was a survivable number?

Bud Mynatt: Well that happened while we were flying. As a matter of fact we did not like that. But, there wasn't a thing you could do about it. However, in retrospect, 35 missions was safer in '44 than 25 was in '43 by a long shot. '43, when the 8th Air Force started daylight bombing was just terrible and we just did not ever, except possibly two missions, run into what they did about every time they went up.

So the 35 missions I suspect most of us felt like that well if those boys could fly 25 we certainly ought to be able to fly 35. Didn't bother me.

Didn't they eventually up it to 50 missions?

Bud Mynatt: I did not know that. Now, of course, in fighter missions they had to fly a whole lot more than that. But in the bombers, to my knowledge, 35 was as high as it got, unless it was different in the Pacific theater and I doubt it was because those missions were so long. The mileage they had to cover was great and their missions, where ours had run six, seven, eight hours – I think the very longest mission we ever flew was close to 12, which is about as long as you can keep one of those things in the air.

But that's why they took all the B-24's over there. They could modify the bomb bay to carry an extra thousand gallons of fuel and could run those gawd-awful long missions they had to fly. And the B-24 flew them all 'till the coming of the B-29.

What was the cold like up there?

Bud Mynatt: It was miserable. I'd say most of our missions were flown at 25, 20 to 25 below zero in B-24's and colder than that in 17's because we flew higher, and you know, your temperature drops about three degrees every thousand feet. So if you're flying 30,000 feet why you were 10, 12 degrees colder than flying at 24,000 feet…

Bill Whitlow: You'd get icicles.

Bud Mynatt: Yeah, you'd get icicles on it we had electric suits but they kept you too hot 'cause you'd sweat and then your hands would get wet and they'd get so cold some…you'd have to take your gloves off. So the electric flight suits were just like an electric blanket that we plugged it into our generator system, you know. But they were not comfortable at all.

And without them, just with heavy clothing, fleece-lined clothing and everything, you were still too cold. We finally found out if you put on a pair of silk gloves and put on, then put on fur lined leather gloves your hands would stay pretty comfortable, even at 25 below zero. Hands and feet is what bothered you…bothered me the most. But it was a pretty miserable day every time.

Was it hard to be on oxygen for so many hours?

Bud Mynatt: Well, it was uncomfortable. You got used to it after you had flown so long. A hero we had on our plane, to my knowledge, or my feeling was our tail gunner, fellow named David, little bitty fellow, who got airsick every time he flew. But he wouldn't quit flying. Wanted to fly every mission; wanted to fly it with us.

But back there in the tail gunner's position, the most uncomfortable place you can get and the roughest ride you can get, and he threw up in his oxygen mask every mission. And then he'd have to bust the frozen vomit loose out of his oxygen mask so he could keep breathing. But that poor son-of-a-gun would not give up and never did. But he was the most miserable fellow you could ever imagine. But to talk about oxygen systems, that boy didn't like it, but you had to live with it.

It didn't bother me that bad. 'Course the early planes had high-pressure oxygen systems and if flack hit them – blew the plane up. That's what brought on the low pressure systems where you had these small tanks that looked like a gas tank on a grill, gas grill, now you know, stuck around all over every where, except they were made out of aluminum and they weren't very heavy.

So you could have what they called a low pressure oxygen system. Had to have a lot more of them, but it other than just the inconvenience of having that old mask on all that time and then it freezing up around your face, sometimes your nose, you'd get a little moustache of icicles sometime from your breath.

Did you ever feel responsible for the aircraft if something happened?

Bud Mynatt: Oh, yeah. Well, I knew it was place if anything happened to Bill it was my airplane. I had to be able to do whatever needed to be done. And quite a few co-pilots had to bring the plane back on occasions, but, 'course I'm fortunate that I never did. We always got back together, but as a co-pilot I felt just as responsible for that airplane and that crew as Bill did.

I had the advantage that it was his responsibility. So occasionally on a few times we'd get a little mischievous and get ourselves in trouble, but it was always Bill that had to bear the brunt of the trouble. The aircraft commander had to take those lumps.

Describe to me what flack was.

Bud Mynatt: Well, flack was an anti-aircraft gun that shot either an 88-millimeter shell or a 105-millimeter shell. Now, that means 88 millimeters is about two and a half inches in diameter and a 105 is over three, I guess, in diameter. The shell, the explosive part, was about 10 inches long. It was corrugated like a hand grenade. So when it exploded it went into hundreds of pieces of metal and that metal was called flack.

When they exploded, the powder was very black and the burst was, I'd say, the size of a truck. And boy sometimes you'd fly through 'em just instantly, and you can ever smell it. If you felt it and smelled it, it went off right within, oh, right by you. And that's when you'd get shot up so bad. But sometimes the air would actually be full of those black puffs because they'd stick around awhile, you know, before they dissipated and sometimes you'd just see thousands of them. And those Germans were good with those 88's, I'm telling you. They were good.

What was it like seeing the fighter escorts?

Bud Mynatt: Well, it tickled us to death. Several of our missions, earlier missions, we did not have fighter escort. They'd take us over into, say, Belgium, perhaps they'd get that far. Then they'd have to turn around and go back for a lack of fuel.

The Spitfires, the English fighters, couldn't even go that far. They were basically strictly for home defense. Had no range at all. But the P-51 was the first plane we got that had good range to it and when those P-51's came and started flying missions with us we all breathed a sigh of relief because they would keep the Luftwaffe off of you; engage them in dog fights.

They were a better plane than the ME-109's were. More maneuverable, faster and basically they just kind of saved our life. They made life a lot easier. And that's another reason that they jumped the missions up to 35. It was a great difference to me when you could look up and see what we called "Little Brothers" 'cause boy, they were nice to have along.

What do you remember about your last mission?

Bill Whitlow: Ham. Ham, Germany.

Bud Mynatt: Ham, Germany. Well…

Bill Whitlow: Almost got us killed.

Bud Mynatt: Yeah, that was a rough mission. But all I kept thinking about was, "Please Lord, let us get back. Oh, God, don't let us go down on this mission. We're almost home-free." And all the way back that's all I could think about, was getting that airplane on the ground. And boy, when it got on the ground we was the happiest bunch you ever saw. Just couldn't believe it.

How much battle damage could a B-17 take?

Bud Mynatt: Quite a bit. Most of our battle damage happened when we was flying B-24's. But, we have seen a lot of B-17's beat up pretty bad. They could handle a lot of damage and still get home. I feel like they could probably handle more damage than a B-24 could. Although that's kind of hard for me to say when we brought one home twice that was just shot all to hell.

Did you have a relationship at all with the ground crew?

Bud Mynatt: Well, we just petted them all the time. They petted that airplane, we petted them. In fact we'd sometimes go down to the mess hall's kitchen at night and take a fifth of liquor to the chef down there, swap it out for all kinds of food, take it to the ground crew. Sometimes take them a little liquor when we could get a hold of some. We petted them, we liked them. They liked us and we had a real, real good relationship and they wanted that plane to come back as bad as we did.

Were you married when you went over to Europe?

Bud Mynatt: No, I was single. I was 19. I turned 20 years old the day we left Mountain Home, Idaho to go overseas April the 18th.

Did you ever interact with any of the English people?

Bud Mynatt: Yeah. Women primarily.

What kind of relationships did you have with the local people in England?

Bud Mynatt: Well, we had a good relationship with the people in this little village of Eye where we…where our base was. There was a pub, you know, everywhere there's an English pub and that is the heart and sole of the social life of an English Village.

This little pub was called the Devil's Hand Basin. That's where I learned to drink Scotch because you couldn't get anything else. But, the whole town's people at night, that's where they'd all gather and we'd gather with them and talk and tell tales and became friends and had a good relationship with them.

We got to go into London on three day passes about once a month, maybe or something like that and, of course, that was for a different relationship. But, we had a good time in London always. But as far as

the people on our base, we got along real good with them, and they seemed to get along fine with us.

The British soldiers were no allowed to come home. They may be stationed 15 miles from home, but they couldn't come home. They didn't get home, I believe they couldn't get home but once a year if my memory serves me right. Which was another reason that the English soldiers disliked us so much. We were at their home all the time and they even though they might be close by, they, they couldn't get there. They weren't given passes.

Did you ever help celebrate Christmas with the local kids?

Bud Mynatt: No. We weren't there, 'course at Christmas time, but you could have done that, or a situation like that, at any time.

To what do you attribute your survival of the war?

Bud Mynatt: Well, I guess luck had more to do with it than anything else, but we were a well-trained group having trained as a brand new bomb group at Mountain Home for several months, before going overseas. So we were, I think, a well-trained group who could fly really good formation. I think that helped us safety wise. Kept the Luftwaffe off of us.

We were both good pilots. Bill remained a pilot and retired a pilot – a captain with the national airlines. But I'd say luck had as much to do with it as anything else.

Did you realize the magnitude of the change in war technology as evidenced by the advent of the atomic bomb?

Bud Mynatt: Well, it came as, uh…wasn't a total surprise to me, because I'm from Knoxville, Tennessee, which is next door to Oakridge where that bomb was born. We knew that that was going on over there, or something similar. It was highly secret, but we knew they were trying to develop an atomic device. So when it happened, I was not all that surprised.

The biggest surprise to me was the Japanese let it happen twice. And, of course, it was all over then, and I'm one of the people who believed that blowing up those two cities up saved the lives of thousands and thousands of American soldiers.

If we'd have invaded Japan, it would have been pitiful. So, I think it was the right thing to do. It changed warfare forever, I'd say. And like

you say, it didn't take a thousand airplanes anymore. It just took one, and the damage they could do with that one bomb was more than all thousand of us could do put together, easily. So I was already out of the service by that time, by the way. I was home.

Describe the difference between the teamwork required by the guys flying your planes versus advanced technology where there's only perhaps a pilot and copilot or a computer flying a plane.

Bud Mynatt: Well, technology has taken over warfare just the same as it's taken over business. The war we fought is totally antique. Man, it is totally history, and I hope that things like you're doing here will keep that history in the minds of the up and coming population. They will never see or hear of any such thing ever again, except through documentaries or history books.

But, there is absolutely no correlation with the war we fought and the Gulf War, just no similarities whatever. And, a plane now, like you say, be flown with one person or two, and that one plane – not with atomic stuff but just with their regular high tech weapons can do more damage than our B-17's could do and much, much more accurate. With us with the Norden bomb site and visual bombing, if we hit within a hundred yards of our target, we thought we were really doing pretty dog-gone good, you know. Why, these new ones, you hit within, five feet and through the clouds. You don't even see your target. Fantastic!

Did you guys ever have any experience with Mickey bombings, or radar bombings?

Bud Mynatt: No.

The Mickey was a radar system where they removed the ball turret and put in a big radar dome where they could bomb through the clouds.

Bud Mynatt: No, I never saw that. I was home, back home in November of '44, and so what went on after that I just read in the papers.

Are there any other comments about your war experience that you would like to add?

Bud Mynatt: Well, I just, would say that I hope that mankind can find someway to settle their differences except war.

What place does the B-17 have in history?

Bud Mynatt: I would hope that people remember the B-17 and the B-24, and by the way there was more B-24's than there was B-17's built and were flown. Twenty-four's were flown more than 17's, but 17's got most of the talk and the publicity, basically, because of the European theater of operations.

But anyway, I'll give you an example that struck home to me. Last fall about this time – I'm from Tennessee, Knoxville, University of Tennessee has the largest football stadium – university stadium – in the nation. Seats 107,000 people. Well, it seats 103,000 – there'd be another 4,000 standing up ever game.

But with 107,000 people in that stadium last autumn, a B-17 and a B-24, which had been on display out at our airport for several days, was leaving to fly to South Carolina to another display. And as it left, those two planes flew in formation around Nalon Stadium, where 107,000 people were there. When I saw them, I said I wonder if these people know what that is? And 107,000 people stood up and cheered. You could not believe the noise, till those things were gone. Everybody there knew what they were.