

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010
RG-50.030*0589

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Grant Shultheis, conducted by Stephen Mize on October 8, 2010 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, D.C. and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

GRANT SHULTHEIS

October 8, 2010

Question: It's the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Today is Friday, 8 October, 2010. It is 10:35 hours. This interview – oral history interview is being conducted by **Steven Mize**. The oral history interviewee is **Grant Shultheis**. Mr. **Shultheis**, when and where were you born?

Answer: Where was I born?

Q: Yes, sir.

A: **Latrobe, PA.**

Q: And wh-what year? What's the date of your birth?

A: 19 – well, I – 1920.

Q: 1920. Okay, can you briefly describe your childhood?

A: Pardon?

Q: Can you briefly describe your childhood?

A: I still didn't get it.

Q: Ah, can you –

A: I tell you what, I'm deaf in this ear.

Q: Okay. Can you describe your childhood, growing up. What was it like growing up in – in **Latrobe**?

A: Uh-huh. Okay now, what do you want to find out?

Q: Your childhood.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

4

A: Child?

Q: Your childhood. What was it like when you were a child?

A: Yeah, what about it?

Q: Yeah, w-wer – what – wa – can you describe what it was like, where did you grow up, and –

A: **Latrobe, PA.**

Q: Right, and I understand you grew up on a farm?

A: Well, yes.

Q: Right.

A: When I was eight years old we bought a far – my dad bought a to – a poultry farm.

Q: I see.

A: And that was back in 1928.

Q: And what was your job on the farm?

A: Taking care of chickens – mostly with chickens. That's what it was, a poultry farm.

Q: Right.

A: And we did a lot of custom hatching. Say like you was a farmer or something, and you had a hundred eggs from your chickens and you wanted to increase your flock. You brings your eggs to us, and for two and a half cents an egg, we would

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

5

hatch those hundred eggs out for you. And then they – and if you got a hundred chicks out of it, you'd be lucky. But nobody ever really did get a hundred percent, because of the eggs were not always fertilized. The rooster wasn't doing his duty. He had to do that, you know what I mean. So, but that's what we did, we – we had thousands of chicks. We had two incubators that would hold 10,000 eggs, and we had a hatch come off every Monday and every – every Monday and Friday. And then we'd take these chicks out, and say like if you had – oh, we'll say a hundred eggs, then we'd call you up and let you know th-that the chickens – the chicks, when they'd be ready. Then you'd come and – and get your chicks and pay us for the chicks – for – for the eggs that we hatched, or for all the eggs. Cause if you gave us a hundred, well you'd be – you very seldom get a full hundred percent hatch, because a lot of them – a lot of the eggs weren't even fertilized.

Q: Did you enjoy it?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did you enjoy it? Did you enjoy the chicken farm?

A: Yeah.

Q: You did. Can you tell me about how and where did you meet your wife?

A: My wife?

Q: Yes.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

6

A: Well, she – she – she's dead now. She died about t-two years ago, and – but we were married for 58 years.

Q: How did you meet her?

A: I have four – four children.

Q: Right.

A: I had four, and I lost a daughter – I lost – yeah. We had one daughter and three boys. Well, I got the three boys yet, and boy I'll tell you, they're – they're – they're wonderful. And any person – you know, with a lot of the people, when they get married they say, oh I'm not gonna have kids, it cost too much to raise them, and that. Well, boy, I'm glad I did have them, because they take good care of me. The one – this **Jerry** here, the one that ha – who you give the keys to there, he – he – he's one of my sons.

Q: Yes.

A: He's the second son. And I have three altogether.

Q: How – how did you meet your wife?

A: How old?

Q: No, how did you meet your wife?

A: What do you mean? Say it again, please.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: How did I meet her?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

7

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, she was two houses away from me. And her brother and I was friends. When they moved up there in the country, next to us you might as well say, why, him and I got together cause we were both almost the same age.

Q: Now, why did you go into the army?

A: Why did I go in the army? Well, because they told me to, for one reason, and the other reason, I wanted to go. I did want in before I got married, but after I got married, then they took me. Cause see, I'm blind in one – in this eye, the right eye. When I was five years old, I – a guy that didn't care where he threw his garbage, what do call them, you know, they got a name. Anyhow, it – he – he was going up an alley. We lived in tow – when thes – this is when we lived in town, before we bought the farm, and I was five years old then. And we had a fence around the – Dad had a fence around the ge – our yard, and that, and my mother always put me out there to play with my toys while she cleaned her house, when I was little. Well, this here guy who were – whoever it was, was drinking pop, and the – and his bottle – bottle went empty, I guess, so he just tossed it over the fence into my – into my Dad's yard. And Mom always put me out in the yard, cause it was safe to play there, because it – she had a lock on the – on the gate, so I wouldn't get out and get run over with a car, wi – which I – which I did anyhow. I got ran over three times in tha – to be exact. Each car went over me, but none of them the wheels – only one

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

8

the wheels hit me. Anyhow – let's see now – I wasn't going to tell you that. Th-Th-
The – the – so anyway, the – this time that I got hit twice right – right in front of our
house, cause it was in the wintertime and we were in – in a – was in a – this – the
outskirts of the town, like. And my two older brothers, they wanted to go across the
s – **Ligonier** Street, that was the main street going down through **Latrobe**, and
make us new – new fort, because they want to have a snowball battle. And my
mother said no, you can't go, cause if you go over there without **Grant**, he's gonna
go across the road and get hit with a car. Well, she was right there, because a-and –
and my dad, my dad was an invalid ever since he was two years old, and his – he
got sick, and his mother took him to the doctors and the doctors gave him the wrong
medicine, and he wound up with polio, and he was crippled, and he had walked on
crutches all his life from – well, in s – he was – well, I – I forgot just how old he
was, he wasn't very old. He was two years old, I think it was. And, he started out on
crutches. He walked on them until he was 41 years old, and then – then here he got
bursitis in his shoulders, and he couldn't use his crutches no more, so he went to a
wheelchair. And he lived in the wheelchair and – until his death, which was 36
years later. And – but he had a – an office job, and he worked there 45 years. And I
told him whenever he retired, I says, but one thing about Dad, why, none of your
sons are gonna work as long as you did at one job, because we were all too old for,
you know, to get started on it. But that was my dad.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

9

Q: What year did you enter the army, sir?

A: The army?

Q: Yeah, what year?

A: Year was – gosh, I don't know.

Q: Do you remember your training, what – what training, army training was like?

A: Yeah, we – yeah, we – we ki – we – we trained there, you know, I went to **Maryland**, is where – is where th-the gi – the recruits went.

Q: Was it difficult for you, army training?

A: Difficult?

Q: Yes.

A: Never.

Q: Never.

A: I loved that stuff. I – I liked that, especially when we went out in the firing range, that's what I liked the best.

Q: Were you a good shot?

A: I became a crack shot, and that – and then, whenever we finished, when we had the Germans down and – and they gave up altogether, and the war was over in **Europe**, why then I volunteered to be a sniper. Got out up where – pretty nice ge – cause we were gonna go to **Japan**. And we were starting to train for them, whenever they dropped the atomic bomb. That made the difference in the whole

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

10

outfit, for everybody. And so they – they – they canceled everything after that, and – and so when that – when they dropped that bomb, we couldn't believe it, one bomb could do all that, because we been bombed before, being in the service. And, oh, they tried to kill me a good many times, but they – I always out shot them. Let's put it that way. It's a heck of a thing to do.

Q: Do you believe your – did your training prepare you for combat, in your –

A: Yes.

Q: It did?

A: Real good.

Q: Can you describe the first experience of combat in your out – your –

A: Well, the first guy I shot, it made me sick, cause I – when the battle was over, I went up to see, because whenever I – he was laying behind a log, and he was shooting at me, an-and he missed me the first shot, and I ducked down behind a – a – a tree. Cause th-the Germans had the ri – the civilian population had to rely on the woods to keep their fires burning in the wintertime, cause there was no coal for them, or nothing to – to heat up – oh, I tell you the – the German civilians, they took a beating. And the – the Germans took the – all the food, mostly, that they could get, ta – and they didn't have enough to eat half the time, and the – that's the – that's the civilians. But I'll tell you, the German civilians were better to us than what the English were. And we were su-supporting the – **England** and everything

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

11

else, and doing all that stuff. Cause I was in **England** there for nine months, I think it was. Anyhow, I was in the military police then, and they – so I got their bo – I got acquainted with wa – one of their bobbies, which is, that's what they call for, you know, police, over there, a bobby. And him and his wife decided to have four of us come to their house for Christmas. Well, that was a pretty good deal, you know, at least we thought so until he – he says – well, we were – I was on like a – a – a different outs – outfit, because they – they went and they gave us the st-stamps and that, you know, for th – to get your – your vittles to eat. And then – then you – anyhow, he says, do you have any – any stamps, food stamps, that's what they called them. And I says, yeah, I said, I got mine yesterday. He said, let's see it. And I pulled it out and handed it to him, and that was a mistake, because he never gave it back to me. He says, well, if you're coming to eat, he says, we gotta feed you. But I wasn't counting on supplying the food. But anyhow, it was nice, and that was a good gesture. And so he had the four of – he had four of us come there. And I was telling him – his wife, she's just a little squirt, and the – but she was nice. And she – and she's asking me, you know, like, about my family and all that stuff, and I told about my wife, and that, and she says, well, I'm gonna make her a baby doll. I said, well, that'll be real nice of you. She said, one of those days it'll come rolling up to your house door. So – but it never came. She forgot about it, or didn't have a chance or something. I don't know, maybe something happened. But that was nice, and –

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

12

but it didn't last long. So anyhow, I – we went and – and we – we went on into – we got a kra – we went over the – over there where **France** was, you know.

Q: When – when was that? When did you go to **France**, sir?

A: I-I can't really say now. I'm not sure.

Q: Okay. That's fine.

A: But I was in – I was in **England** nine months.

Q: Right.

A: That part I do know. I crossed that ocean four times during the war, and when – we were lucky, we a – we always – the Germans always didn't have a – their submarines in the right place, because we'd go across, you know, like a – a whole – whole mess of ships would go at one time, and oh man, it'd be stuf – stre – stretched out for miles. I saw one going down, where a torpedo, it – it missed our ship and – and hit the one farther away and – and I – and I always liked to watch – I'd go up to the bow and I'd watch the – the tor – the fish, I forget what you call them now, you know, they were big son of a guns, and something like a shark. Well, the sharks didn't like them because they – they beat up on the sharks. The – the fish are as bad as the human beings, ain't they? They fight with each other. And they always jumped in front of the ship. Always wondered how the ship kept from running over them. They didn't – never – we never seen any of them getting hit. They'd just keep diving, you know. And that was interesting there.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

13

Q: Your unit was instrumental in pushing the Germans back at the **Rhine** river, you crossed over the **Rhine**. Do you remember –

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember that, crossing over the **Rhine**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Can you talk about that?

A: Well, they – we – we just kept – kept fighting them, that's all. And they – they finally gave in, the enemy did. But wha – I always remember one German lady, she come out on the – on her porch. We just chased the – the German soldiers out of this here one town. And when we were going into it, and we stopped for a – a – like a rest, why this lady come out and she says, I want 12 of you men to come in my house. Well, we didn't have any idea why she want 12 us men in there. So 12 of us **[indecipherable]**, we went in. And she sits us around the table, she goes over to her oven. In them days the Germans had put in all coal stoves in their kitchens. And she opened up the – the oven, and there's 12 apples in there she baked, just for us guys. And she – she gave each one of us an apple. And I'll always forget – I always remember that woman. I – how I wished I would have got her name and address, because she was so good to us. Then she took me around, I don't know why she picked on me, but she took me around her house, showed me all around in there, her house and everything. And she had three sons that was in the army, German army.

But they were all prisoners of war. We had one, and **England** had one, and the Russians had one. I said to her, well, I said, I'll tell you, I says, you're pretty sure of getting those two – two of them back out of those three, alive. And I says, now the one we have and the one the – the – at – let's see what a – well, we'll say **England**, and the one they have, the British, th-the – I said, the one the British have and the one we have you're pretty sure of getting those two back. But, I says, the one that the Russians have, I says, I can't tell you about them, I said, those guys are nuts. I said, all they want to do is kill everybody. And so that's exactly what they did.

Q: Were the Germans good soldiers?

A: You bet they were good soldiers. And when they were shooting those guns, they were dead shots, too. Now I had one shooting at me with a machine gun, cause we ran a – he-here's the way it was. I don't know whether you know any – you know how ya – how the army when they're – when you're tra – going into a battle like, well, we're go – we're going along, coming up – up through this field that, and someone says that – that the Germans are up ahead somewhere. Well, we always had scouts out, two scouts. They'd be about oh, say, 200 yards ahead of us. Now, they were not supposed to shoot any bra – any Germans that they seen, but they were supposed to give us the silent signal. The silent signal was a – y-you laid your rifle down, you grabbed ahold of it and – by the barrel and by the – and by the back

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

15

of it, and you put it above your head and go like that. That is your signal that the enemy was there.

Q: An up and down movement.

A: Yes, they – and they – and they didn't make a sound. Well, anyhow, then when we got that message, by boy they just – they blew a whistle and we just spread out and start digging in right away, because we knew we were running into a trap. And so the Germans, they smartened up. They thought by us cat – by us having those two scouts there, they were told tr – told, do not shoot the scouts. Th- The German did. He says, wait til they get through your lines, but make sure they don't see you to give out and give the – us the – the warning. Says go, and – wait a minute now, I think of something about that – anyhow, he says, let them go through your ra-ranks, but make sure they don't see you. And then, when they get through it, grab them, and then we'll put them in – in prison, then, for the – you know, the – the – the ten – well, anyhow, the prison. And so anyway, that's what they did, cause we lost both of our scouts at first, but we got them back after a bit, cause one of our shells went and blew the fence down, and wa – th-then they shot out of it, and they got back with us again. And they said that when they were – the Germans ran, he says, we ran right with them. He says, those shells and that you guys were shooting at us, well, they didn't give a hoot who they killed. So anyhow they – the scouts, we ha – we had them scouts, but whenever they give that signal, we would – we would

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

16

– see, we'd be going in the single file, maybe might be three or four in a row, you know how they are when you're marching. And as soon we got that signal boy, you s – just spread right out. And everybody got their – we had little shovels. You probably sm – maybe you seen them already. And we'd dig a foxhole and get down in under below the ground surface. And then that – then the – we were ready for fight then. But if you – if we didn't see that signal, why we would walk right into this trap. Now, we ran into one of them traps, and all of a sudden they start shooting. And I hit the ground right where I was, you – whenever – when they start shooting, nobody has to tell you to get down and stay down, you learn that quick, because you want to live a little longer. So anyhow, we went and – wait a minute now. We – well, we – we got up there an-and then the Germans start shooting at us, and we got down and then we start shooting back. Well, I was out, right out in the open spaces there. Well, my buddy was, when he was shooting his rifle, I was reloading mine. And when I was shooting mine, he was reloading his. So we had a steady sho – stream of bullets going up where the machine gunners were. So anyhow, they went out and he – he turns on me. I was laying down on the ground shooting there, and I didn't have no trees or nothing to get behind, I was out in the open. And my buddy, he – he got the only tree that was there, he – he dove behind it. Anyway, and the Germans saw me. So he turns the machine gun on me. Now, he [indecipherable] like, well, we'll just – there, there. We'll just say here

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

17

[**indecipherable**] right here. I stretched out this way, see, and up – the Germans are up that way, and he starts shooting at me, and he come about that far away from my body. He dug a hole, a trench with that machine gun, from my head down to my feet, about four inches deep with those bullets. That's – an-and I was laying right there, all that dirt was flying in my face and all over my body and that. And I was trying to crawl inside of my helmet, but I wasn't do – doing good. My head was already in there. So I got to thinking, if I laid still, he'd think he killed me, and he'll go and shoot somebo – at somebody else. So whenever he stopped – he had to stop and reload, you know, and when he'd run out of shells, why he'd take a couple of minutes for him to get the new belts i-in there of shells. Well, while he was doing that, I was lay – laying there figuring out what I was going to do to him. Anyhow, I had dirt and mud and everything in my face, and all over my body and everything else. The whole way down my body, I was just covered with dirt an-and m-mud, you might say. So anyway, I – I got a – while – while he was shooting, h-he to – he change his – his targets then. He looked for somebody that was – he could see, cause he saw me laying there and he figured he'd killed me, see? Well, that worked. Anyhow, he starts shooting at somebody else. Now, when he starts shooting at somebody else, I was the only one in the outfit that had rifle grenades. The captain come out to me when we – fe – before we started out that day and he says, **Shultheis**. I said, yes sir? He says, you're my grenadier. I said, yes, sir, I said, sir.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

18

He says, yeah, what do you want? He said – I said, what's a grenadier? He ha – he said, you're the guy to stop the tanks. So I pulled one – I pulled out the gre-grenade, he gave me a ba – a pa – a bag like, see, I would call it a bag. Anyhow, it fit over your shoulder and it had six grenades in it; three of them phosphorous and three expl – high e-explosion. So I said to him, what am I supposed to do with these? He says, you're supposed to stop the tanks. I picked it out and I said, sir, I said, you think that this little thing here is going to stop one of them great big tanks? He says, I know it will. I says, what do I shoot at, whenever I shoot at that tank? And he says, the tracks. Now, I never knew this before that – before that day. He says I – when the tracks are gone, there's a – a little track in the center of the tank, and it – and it runs – it keeps those su – tracks on the wheels like, even, so that they don't come off. And he says, all you gotta do is hit that wheel, it's about that big, he said. But that's like telling you to go jump in the lake. Anyhow, I said yes, sir, I says, I think we can stop them all right then, if we can – if I can hit that – if I can just hit that there part where you just told me. And so anyhow, he s – he – he agreed with me on it. So he went and let me figure it out myself. So – but I – I never saw a tank after that. S – but I did use them on – on machine guns, and boy it worked good. So anyway, this one whose – this machine gunner that was shooting at me, I th – I thought, if I stop jiggling around here, that th – that he'll think he killed me, because he was pretty far away, you know. So, by gollies, it worked. I laid still and

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

19

he sh – quit shooting at me. I guess he must have stop – must have ran out of shells and he had to put another belt on, and while he was putting that belt on, I – I – I rigged up my – my grenade launcher on my rifle, and you shoot those grenades with a blank. So they told me, they says, for God's sakes, make sure you don't have a live round in your rifle when you shoot that, because he says, if you shoot that with a live round, you're gonna blow your own head off, whenever you would shoot that – that grenade, he says, instead of it going that way, it would stay right where it was and knock your head off. So th-that – that's a good – good lesson. So – so I never did, I always checked it all – all the time, make sure. So anyway, I said to my buddy, I says, I'm gonna fix those babies now. And he says yeah, you know, what are you gonna do? I says, I'm gonna send them a phosphorous grenade. So I put a phosphorous grenade on cause they are – they were the worst. The high explosions, they were bad, but th – but the – the others, they were worse, they – oh, man, they were miserable. They – cause when they – when this phosphorous grenades went off, they didn't quit burning when – if it hits you. Say like if a – if it hits you in – in your arm, that would burn the whole way through your arm. It'll melt your – even melt your bones, they said. And that's how hot it went. Anyway, I said to my buddy, I says, okay, I says, I'm ready to shoot, I says. You watch up over the top of them trees, see if you can see it going. And I stuck the huge – you always stick the – the stock of your rifle in the ground and raise the barrel up. And I was laying there

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

beside it there, and I raised her up, and I said, you wa – I says, are you watching?

He said yeah. I said, well, here it goes. I reached down and I pulled the trigger.

Well, that grenade, you could see it. I-It goes pretty fast, but you can still see it going. It went – oh, it made a beautiful bow right up over the top of the trees and come down. And on the way down, it must have hit a – a limb, because I don't think it went off at the ground, because it seemed like it – when the – when it disappeared and you couldn't see it, why, it was – wasn't enough time for it to hit the ground when it exploded. But when it exploded, it made a great, big puff of smoke, and flames, and – and – and it – and the phosphorous was everywhere. And I heard them guys screaming up there where they – where I was shooting at, so I – I – I'm pretty sure I hit them, because that was them screaming. Now, I never seen any of them, or anything like that, because they were pretty well camouflaged.

Anyway, we – we – that stopped that whole [indecipherable] that whole battle. The Germans jumped up after I shot that, and they ran ba-backwards, back over – to get away from us. Our outfit, they – they got up, they ran back the other way, I ne – I never figured out yet why they went that way, cause it was a **gort** in the wrong direction. So anyway, we didn't see no more Germans that night. And the me – and my buddy, he s – he's young. Come on **Shultheis**, come on **Shultheis**, everybody's leaving us. I said, I'm not leaving til I get my rifle reloaded. And I ha – I had to take all my stuff off my rifle, and that – you know, the launcher and everything, and – to

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

21

get to my rifle to work right with the bullets. And then I put a – a c – a clip with nine rounds in it, then I was ready to go. Then I stood up, and when I stood up there wasn't a soul around, just him and I. Our men got up, they went the one way and the Germans went the other way. And that's another thing I never understood, why we went backwards instead of going forward. Anyway, we – we didn't have no more problems with them that night. And then – then my buddy and I, we went back to where the – kind of back to where the machine gunners were and they had to stay up all night on guard, so we – we each dug a slit trench. Now, a slit trench, I don't know whether you know what a slit trench is or not. Oh, you know? Okay, that's just where you can lay down in it, it's big enough. We di – we dug that, each one of us dug a bed, you might say. Filled full of leaves and then crawled down in under them leaves and go to sleep. And the – we let the – we let the machine gunners stay awake that night. So –

Q: Did they soldiers you served with, were they good soldiers?

A: Who?

Q: Your – your soldiers, the ones you served with.

A: Our si – our service –

Q: Yes.

A: – our soldiers were good soldiers, yes. And – cause they listened to what the – what they were told to do, and they did it.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

22

Q: Do you remember the **Dachau** concentration camp?

A: Did I remember what, sir?

Q: The concentration camp.

A: Yes, **Dachau**.

Q: Can you describe coming into contact with that camp?

A: Well, it – it was a big camp. They – and they say it had 30,000 men and – and women in there. And they had a lot of people in there, that you might as well say they starved them to death, practically. Now, whenever we got in there, got the gate open and that, what happened, see, the f – the first guy in – in the line, he saw – he saw the lock. So he just pulled his rifle up and shot it. And when he hit it, it just flew in pieces, cause we was using armor piercing shells at the time, cause we was doing a lot of force fighting – fighting in to the – in the force – force. Now like – well, say – say like where they have a – make the cuckoo clocks. Well, that part there, we were into that, and boy I'll tell you, no wonder they call that the Black Forest, cause it is really dark. The sun don't even get down through the trees.

Anyhow, we went – we were on there and we – and we come and – and I come to a – a – a German truck, and stand there. And I can see some blankets in there and I thought, oh boy, that'd be ideal thing. I climbed up in the truck and it was full of dead soldiers and the blood all over everything, oh what a mess. So I got out and let

the whole bunch go. I let the dead keep the bla-blankets. But that's just the way things went.

Q: Do you remember which gate you entered at **Dachau**?

A: Well, there was one gate by – we came to was – it was more a – it was more like a – say like a front gate. See, there was a gate here, and then back here, they had the furnaces right here, and – and then – then they were over some more buildings here. And then they had other buildings where, like the prisoners stayed in, inside of that gate. Now, the Germans had, I would say, oh, 200 yards of field, all smooth cut.

There wasn't a tree [**indecipherable**], so that if any of their prisoners escaped, their soldiers were supposed to shoot them and kill them. And they – and they had a lot of time to kill them because they had that whole say – we'll say 200 yards to – to go before they got to the woods. And so anyhow, I – the – we – we – I had a German in my sights that I kept in my sights there, because there was three prisoners chasing him after we opened the gates, see? And I said to my buddies, I says, look at that, I says, that German, he's running away from those guys. And I says, he's in **A-1** shape and – and those three guys are in starvation shape, and I said, they'll never catch him. And he was heading for those woods. So I got down on one knee, took the safety off of my rifle and – and I just got that guys – back of his head riding on the top of my front sight. And they said, what are you gonna do, **Shultheis**? I said, I'm gonna knock that guy off if he – if it looks like he's gonna make to the – to

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

24

those trees. Cause I said, once he gets into those trees, I says, he's a free man, be an – and because he ga – he can have a – a thousand places to hide. And – and I says, I don't think those guys are gonna be able to make it. Well, they – they were doing pretty good though, they – they were running and – and that German soldier was running, too, because they were after him. Anyhow, I – I noticed that the gap was getting closer, see, they were gaining on him. And I said to one of the guys, I says, well, I says, I guess I won't have to shoot him after all. I says, I think they're gonna make it. So they – here they caught him before he got to the trees. Now, if I – if I thought he was going to make it to the trees, I was going to shoot him, because he – he probably did a lot of things to those guys, and it didn't matter to me; he was a German, so that's – he was – there was no limit on him. You could shoot as many as you want to.

Q: What did the prisoners do when they caught up with him?

A: Oh, the – well, they grabbed him. That's one thing they did do. One guy grabbed one arm, and the other guy – another guy, he grabbed the other arm, and the third one, he took the pistol from the German and shot him in the head. That was the end. That German, he was screaming his head off. And then all of a sudden you heard the bang. Then I saw the head drop down whenever he shot him. Now, they were – well, the he – they were pretty close to the woods. He come pretty close to have me help him, but I didn't have to. They did a good job themself.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

25

Q: When you first entered the camp, what did you think you were seeing? Did you know what the camp was? Did you know what – why – what its purpose was?

A: Well, we weren't quite sure what the camp name was, or anything like that. It just happened to be in the line – in our line of fire as we – as we went – marched along. Cause we just go up one mountain and down another one.

Q: What did you see – what did you think when you first saw the prisoners, when you entered the camp?

A: I couldn't believe anyone could be so rotten. That's what I thought.

Q: Did you communicate with any of the prisoners, did you talk to anyone?

A: Well, no, we didn't get a chance to, cause we were always driven – always after the Germans – soldiers, and we – and we – what we wanted to do, we wanted to keep them moving so they didn't have time to dig in and put a row of machine guns across our path. So what they did, they went and they gave their men orders to make sure they hid good, and camouflage themselves and everything, so that our – our two men that was in the lead, didn't see them. And when he got to the other side of the Germans, grab them, and then put them in the concentration camp.

Q: So what – you were actually fighting the Germans while inside the camp?

A: Yes.

Q: And did you – how long did that last, how long did that battle last?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

26

A: Not very long, cause we went straight through, cause we were – we were chasing the Germans at the time, and then we wanted to keep them from pa – getting – getting a – a trap set for. But we still – we ran into one of them. And that was a – the one where I was just telling you about where he almost shot me. And so – but he didn't – he didn't hit me. That was the main thing.

Q: Did any of the Germans attempt to surrender to you?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No, they fought right to the end. They were – they were good fighters, I'll tell you that.

Q: Did you look around the camp? Did you just actually see any of the barracks or the crematoria?

A: Well, we – what we could see, wa – you couldn't see too much at first, because it was like boarded off like, you know, say like the dead, and stuff like that. Now, they had a big pile of dead laying in there. We saw tha – I saw that. But we no more than got into the gate, I'd say oh, I don't know how far in we got, not very far. But when you come through the gate, then you saw the furnaces. And then – an-and – and the – the dead was piled up a pile, right out there in the ground, just laying on top of each other. And what they were doing, they were taking them and they was putting them in the fire and burning them. But I guess it made a terrible smell,

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

27

because they said that the – the German population was complaining, because it stunk so bad, you know, from the – the bodies being cooked.

Q: How long were you inside the camp?

A: How long was I what?

Q: Inside the camp.

A: Oh, about maybe 15 minutes at the most. Because see we – like I said, we were chasing the Germans so that – and at the time and we didn't want them to like make – have time to dig in trenches and that for their machine guns and that. And so we didn't stay. So we were – we were brought out right away. Probably some of them didn't even get in there, some of the men. But –

Q: Can you describe how you came across that key?

A: Oh yes. I was – I was going int – into the – into the n – n – around the fence way, you know, in – into the camp, we'll call it. And here I happened to look down and I saw this key laying there. And th-the people coming out of – out, was running right across it. And – and the **G.I.s** that was going into the camp walked over top of it too. Now, I was in a couple times in fra – like – well, let's see, where they – where they had the – had the shoe mines and stuff, they had [**indecipherable**] mine – [**coughs**] Excuse me. And the Germans were great for that there – having mine fields for us to walk onto. Only once that I got real, real close to losing a foot. But the lieutenant saved my hide. He – he was right behind me and here he happened to

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

28

look down and he saw I was gonna just step on one. And all he did

[indecipherable] he says, **Shultheis**, he says, stop immediately, he said

[indecipherable] he said, stop, he says, a mine on – a mine there. And a – and I was coming down with my foot and I froze right there, I never went another inch. And I looked down and there was a mine. If it wasn't for him, I would have a wooden leg now. He saved my li – my hide there. And the first – first one – time, why we were going, we had our – we started at three o'clock in the morning, it was pitch dark. We got out of our foxholes and the captain says, now, you're – you're to bring back – we're gonna – to bring back some Germans alive. And he – and he says, for God's sakes, and a few other words that you're not supposed to say, and he says, don't shoot them all, he says, we want to – we want to question them. He says, we're gonna – we're gonna g-go – we're gonna go after them about right, and he says, we want to know what we're gonna run into. So, anyhow, I – tha-that's – that's how that one went. Anyway, we – we went across the field then, and – and the – the one scout stepped on a mine. Now, he was about, I'd say two – maybe a hundred yards ahead of us. Well, we didn't know what happened, we just heard the explosion, so we stopped, and the lieutenant s-scattered us guys around – around this place where – where that noise come from, and you hear – what it was was one of the – the scouts. Anyhow, I said to him, I said, sir, I said, I'll go in there and I'll get that guy, and I'll bring him out. He said okay, but he says, wait a minute til we

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

29

get you a medic, he says, you're gonna need it. I said, all right. So he told his sergeant what to tell his men. The sergeant went over, he told the first guy, sa – medics wanted up front. And they passed it down the line, like the guy behind him and you know, like that. And then I took a few minutes and – and the medic come up. So the medic come out when I told him. I said, th – one of the scouts has some – he went haywire in here, I says. We don't know exactly what it is yet, and the lieutenant told me to wait til you got up here because I'm going in after him and bring him out. And he says, okay, he says, let's go. So I says, all right. So we went in and there – and I found him right away, he was laying by a bush, and he had one leg – one foot off. That's what those shoe mine were for. The Germans discovered it take at least four guys to get a – a wounded guy back to the rear, and that's four li – guys less shooting at hi – at his men. So, anyhow, we got the – th-the medic bandaged his – his stump up, and we got him up on his one good foot. And I had the – I had his arm around th – my neck and – and the medic had th – had a o – the other around and the – and we just ready to start out and he says, I could carry him better if I was on your side, he says, do you want to trade? I says sure, I says, I can carry him no matter which side. So – so anyhow, we chi – we swi – switched. I took his arm off my neck, I went over and got his other arm, put it around my neck, the medic come on around. He puts his – put the other arm – his other arm around his neck, and na – and I says, are you ready to go? And he says yeah. So the medic

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

30

says, all right, let's go. Well, he took one step and he blew his foot off. Right where I was standing, I don't know how I missed it. I never even seen th – a mine there.

And he's the only guy of all of them that I saw wounded that cried up – up front, on the line. And here, when he went in – when they sent him home after they got his artificial foot and that, why, he drank himself to death. And he – and his mother says that he couldn't stand being crippled.

Q: Getting back to the – to the – the camp, and the concentration camp, so you continued to pursue the Germans out of the camp?

A: Yeah.

Q: And did you come into contact with any of the surrounding population around the camp?

A: Well, we – we never had no – n-no trouble like that, see? Most of it was, they were in like fields and stuff like that, and woods. And there weren't too much house to house fighting, we didn't do much of that.

Q: What wa – wha-what is your most vivid memory of the camp?

A: Well, I guess it was that – I guess it was just the part – well, I – I'll tell you the – the – my most memory of that is, is whenever they were shooting at us, and – and if you didn't shoot back, why you'd – you'd wind up in the graveyard. And I had an **M-1** rifle they gave me, that was a wonderful gun. Boy oh boy, when you put a

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

31

sight on that, why he was a goner. Now I had chances of shooting more than what I did, but I captured them mostly, and I turned them over to the officer in charge.

Q: What did the prisoners do? Did they – did they attempt to escape the camp itself when you entered, or did they stay where they were inside the camp?

A: The prisoners?

Q: Yes, the prisoners.

A: Th-They – they were – they – they would say – they were ha – they had an stationary, and the – and they always somehow, I don't know just how, they put the – put these men in there. Cause actually I really never seen them put them in, they – they – they gi – prisoners were standing there and then they – they went over to make sure he didn't have no weapons on him. And so – now, I captured quite a few Germans. I captured six at a time, three different times by myself. And so anyhow, th – I – I – I never had any trouble with any of them that I captured. And they – they – now, I went into a place – well, here we – they said to us this – one day the captain come on, he says, well, you guys is go-gonna get a ride today. And – and it was darn near getting dark, and – and we – we were – we were gonna get a ride to – anyhow, he says, I want 12 men on every tank. So that's – we had to ride on the other side of the tank. We rode all night long, never stopped once. And oh man, we were about froze. It was snowing and blowing and that. So we stopped at daybreak and we were in a wide open field. It was all – like it was big, big gl – hay field, see?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

32

And there was been – been mowed. So – so then we stopped, the guys bailed off of that tank and ran to a woods which was about approximately a hundred yards away to get wood to build a fire. Everybody else was – you know, we – we were darn near froze to death. So anyhow, I heard him tell the sergeant, just look at them guys. Every one of them, he says, go over there and heading for them woods and they left their weapons here on the ga – on the tank. [coughs] Excuse me. And so I thought, oh well, if they can all go in there, I says, I think I'll go, too. So I slid down off the tank and – but only I took my rifle with me, they didn't, cause they wanted to have their arms free to carry wood back to make a fire. So I go over there and here I get into the woods and the – and the Germans had trenches dug the whole way along that [indecipherable] there. Oh, it must have been a mile long, pretty near. And – and that – and the – and the ditches, the trenches weren't real deep, but deep enough what they could lay down in it and you wouldn't be able to hit – see – even see them, let alone shoot them.

Q: Sure.

A: And so anyhow, here they moved out the night before, or we would have been in hot water right there. So, I got over there near these guys running around like Indians, like a bunch of nuts gathering wood. They took it all back and t-t-t – to the tank and made a fire. Well, I see a shanty in there. I – oh, I'll be darned, I think I'll go see what's in that. I went over and I opened the door and I went in. Here was a

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

33

tool shed, like shovel, pick and rake and stuff like that. And so I went out and shut the door and [indecipherable] there was three loaves of homemade bread and German bread there on a shelf. Well, I didn't bother them, but I thought about eating one of them. And I walked around the – around the building, there's another door. I opened up and I walked in and holy man I couldn't believe my eyes. Six Germans in there in bed, all sound asleep. I went around – let's see, how'd I do that? Oh, I went around, I put my hands under each one of their pillows to see if they had any weapons in there, like a pistol or a dagger or something like that, because I was out numbered six to one right there, and they could have killed me real easy. So anyway, there was nothing. So then I went around again, and I took the top blanket and pulled it down to their ankle. They never opened their eyes, they just sit up in bed, got all that blanket, pulled it back down and – and laid back down again. I said, well alright you guys, you don't want to wake up, well, I'll wake you up. So I reached in my pocket and I pulled out a phosphorous hand grenade. I pulled the pin out of it and I held the lever down on – I don't know whether you know anything about grenades. Oh, you do? You know how you hold it down? Well, I was hanging onto it. I had my hand in the coal stove, they had a coal stove there, like a potbelly stove. And what I was gonna do is drop that grenade in there and beat it out of that darn sh-shed. And all of a sudden I heard, all right **Shultheis**, what in the hell are you gonna do now? I says, oh, here is my sergeant, he come

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

34

looking for me. So I said, these guys won't wake up, I said, I'm ga – I'm just gonna wake them up, that's all. He says, well, what are you doing with your hand in the stove? Well, there was no fire in the stove, it was out, so I s – told him about it and I says, I got a hand grenade here and I got the pin pulled out and I – and you're in my route, get the heck out of that doorway, because I said, I got nine seconds to g – from the time I let go of that grenade, before it goes off. And I want to be out of here and get into one of those trenches out there before it explodes. And so here, in our talking, one – one of them Germans woke up. He's sitting up there in the top f – top bunk, his legs hanging down, he's rubbing his eyes, you know. And I walk over to him. And he never seen me and he had his – both hands up there, rubbing his eyes there, getting the cobwebs out of them, I guess. And when he opened – took his hands down, he's looking right down the barrel of my rifle. I says, all right, I says, the war's over for you guys. I said, get the ba – get them out of that beds. He said one word, **brrp**, they all just jumped right out of bed so quick and they all landed in the middle of the floor. There they are, all standing there with their long-johns on and a pair of socks, that's all they had on. I says, as of right now, you are all prisoners of war. And here, in the meantime, my tanks th – they were getting ready to take off, they – I heard the motors starting up out there. They w – they'd sit there for awhile to you know, get them warmed up. And I said to them, shake it up, and get your clothes on fast, I said, the tanks are getting ready to pull out and I don't

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

35

feel like walking any more. So, I said, I'm going outside, and you come out when you get dressed. But, I said, don't hesitate, shake it out. So they got – th-th-they – they were – they oper – they c-cooperated pretty good. They come out and as each one would come out I would, you know, shake them down and see if I could feel any pistols or knives on them and that and none of them had any on. And I – and I showed them the tank that I was on. I says, now, I says, that's – that's the – the one I want to go on, that's the one I belong to. Either head for that th – tha – for – for that there **Lanair**(ph). And they said okay, so I said, all right, four **[indecipherable]** dudes, they got into a part, and so I had the six of them there. And the one says, there are three loaves of homemade bread in there, can I go get them? I says, no. I says, we don't have time to get them. I said, you hear them motors running down there? I said, them tanks are ready to take off. And I said, they're not gonna wait for me. But when I brought them out, and they saw me coming out of the woods with six prisoners, they s – they slowed their motors down and waited. And I took them over and I gave them to the – gave them to the lieutenant there at our tank, and that was the last I ever seen them, so I don't know how they made out, or what they did with them.

Q: Going back to the – the camps, sir, you said you were in there for 15 minutes?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you fighting the entire time, and if so, what was the intensity of the fight?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

36

A: No, I – there was nothing there to shoot at, the Germans were – they – they – they weren't – they weren't in the camp or nothing when they got – when we got there.

Q: Okay.

A: When they knew we were coming they moved out to another place, that I don't know for sure now whether we ran into them or not, because we was always running into a bunch of them somewhere.

Q: Did you take any photographs when you were inside of the camp?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did you take any photographs when you were inside the camp?

A: Well, I don't know. They – th-they – they – they – they – I don't think it was any inside of the camp whenever we were there. On-Only maybe the guards and stuff like that. But we didn't even see the guards, I don't know where in heck they disappeared to.

Q: How were the prisoners behaving?

A: Well, they were pretty weak, for one thing. And they were – they were – they cooperated and they'd tell us where anybody was, and all that stuff. They showed us how they had to sleep on bare boards and that, they didn't have no blankets, and heck, it was wintertime. Gee whiz, they must have froze to death trying to sleep together. They – th-that's the – that's the way it was, they – they had a hard life.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

37

Q: And they were speaking to you in English?

A: Yes, at – that's what a – that's what amazed me. Those Germans, they could speak English as good as we could, yeah. They must – I guess they have a – have a – all that in school, and that.

Q: Was there ever a time that you – that you felt threatened by any of the prisoners, or –

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Okay. And did your – did you – did your unit call for medical assistance for the prisoners? Did you get food and provisions into them, or –

A: Me-Medicine, and that?

Q: Yes, exactly.

A: No, we – I – I don't know whether they did it after we pulled out or not, but we di – we didn't stop for that. But our – our job was to keep them running so they didn't get a chance to dig in. Now, this one, where I was telling you about how they were shooting at me that time, well, that was one of them, one of the places we caught up to them. But there, what they did, they captured our – our s-scouts and then they found out that the w-wa – from them, I guess, what wa-was behind them, which was us. [coughs] Excuse me. And – but we – we managed pretty good, I thought – [break] that, you know, is down, I'm telling you.

Q: Yes.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

38

A: Boy, you're gonna have a lot to sa – listen to.

Q: Indeed. When – were you in **Europe** on **V-E** day, at the end of the war in **Europe**?

A: Well, I-I imagine I wa – wa – oh yeah, I was over in – I was in **England**, cause that's where I got ba – that's where I got into the infantry.

Q: Right.

A: See, I wanted to be in the infantry anyhow, and they – so they put me in with the 42nd **Rainbow** division. And – and if you were over there, maybe even – maybe you was even in that. Was you in the **Ra-Rainbow** division, or weren't you?

Q: Now, where – how did you hear that the war was over?

A: Oh, the – oh, the – when they dropped the bomb. That's when the – cause I was – I was going to school then, over there, cause that – the wa – the war was already over there. The Germans told me when the war was over, but I blame near shot the guys, cause I figure he was a German and that he's the guy to shoot. So, I started to hear these trucks coming down through the fields and that with the headlights on, and it was – it was daylight. Anyhow, I thought, who in the – we – we couldn't understand because we didn't get wind of any war being over. The Germans were the ones that told us the war was over. Anyhow, this –

Q: Were they German soldiers who told you, or civilians who told you the war was over?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

39

A: Soldiers.

Q: The soldiers.

A: Yeah.

Q: As they were retreating, or –

A: They – they were coming down, they were coming back from the front lines themselves and they're coming right into – into our section where we were at. And I blame near s-start shooting at them, because after all, they were my – my enemies. And – and this one – and this one soldier said to me, he was sitting in the back of the truck, he says, didn't you hear the news? I said no, what news? He says, the war is over. I says, it is? I said, nobody told me about it. He – that's how I found out, from the Germans, that the war was over.

Q: How did you feel?

A: Pretty darn good. I was still alive.

Q: How long did it take before you were shipped home?

A: Not very long, I'd say – well, maybe a week, two weeks at the most.

Q: And did you go immediately back to **Latrobe**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about seeing your wife for the first time.

A: Oh, that, that was – that was heaven. I – I was up at the **[indecipherable]** that's where they bought me, when I got off the ship. We got on the ship when – and I –

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

40

and darn if I didn't get seasick on the dumb thing. And I crossed that ocean four times. An – anyhow, we ca – I come and I got on the train, and the train conductor, I said to him, does this train stop in **Latrobe**? He says no. I said, well where does it stop at? **Pittsburgh**. Well, I said, **Pittsburgh**, I said, it's just as far as – I was in **Johnstown** at this time. An-And he told me, you know, that he stopped at **Johnstown** and the next stop was **Pittsburgh**. And I said, I don't want to get off at **Pittsburgh**. Well, he says, that's tough luck, he says, the train doesn't co – stop anywhere else. So what I did, I – I hitchhiked home. And here I – first there was a – a young couple, they brought their bro – the girl's brother, I think it was, back. He was going back into the service again, he was out on furlough. And this was in **Johnstown**. So then I – so that the – when my train come then, why, I asked the conductor, I said, th-this – does this train stop in **Latrobe**? He says no. I said, well, where does it stop at? He says **Pittsburgh**. I said, well heck, that's too far away. I said, that's about as far as I am now, and – cause **Johnstown** and **Pittsburgh** about the same distance. So anyhow, instead of going – coming home on the train, I hitchhiked a ride. And this young couple that brought her brother back to – to leave on the train there in **Johnstown**, why they picked me up and they took me so far, and then I was stuck, I was out on the highway there, and there was – there was snow, and the blowing, and I was about freezing to death, and anyhow, I-I was standing there thumbing, you know, and here comes a trailer truck with a bighearted

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

41

guy behind the wheel. He stopped. He said, how far you going there **Joe**? And I says **Latrobe**. He says, hop in, he says, I'm going past there practically, he says. So I jumped in there and – and – and we stopped at one place there and he got coffee and that – and I called my wife up, it was after – after midnight then. I said, I'm getting closer [**indecipherable**] I said, I'm co – I'm a-coming. So then yeah, I says, he's gonna let me off here at – you know when you get to – on the highway out there where it comes to **Latrobe**. And I says, y – he said he'd let me off there. And I said, we'll be there in a little while, I says, he stopped to get a cup of coffee, and I says, then – and then we'll be on our way. Well, he di – he lets me off at – right at the crossroads there, and when he pulled out, here comes a – the old **Ford** out with my wife in it. My wife and two of her aunts and her brother, and he was driving the car. I'll always remember him, he says, you sure you got the right guy? So anyhow, that was our – my trip home. Then I went down to my – my dad's place to see my mother and dad, and that was al-almost three o'clock in the morning. And then Mom says to me, she says, [**indecipherable**] here, you take my bed, you and **Jenny** take my bed and I'll go sleep with Dad. So that's what – that's the way we did then, for that night. Boy, it – it was wonderful being home, I'll tell you. She come a-running – she come running out of the car and she met me the halfway on – on the – on the highway. We were standing out there necking and it's a wonder we didn't get run over. But it was – it was something though, to see her again. I said, see, I told

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

42

you I was going to g – make it home. But I had quite a few times – I even had an airplane shooting at me. He – he – he was strafing our – our outfit. We were co – we were in a convoy, and then – and again I was up riding on the tank. We did a lot of tank riding. And here he comes down the line, and at first – we were – first saw him, why the one guy says, ah look, here come one of our fighter planes. Well just about the time we looked, he opened up both guns on his plane, you know, he had one on each wing. And – well, there is only one wing, it was only one wing on them, I think. Anyhow, on the side of propeller was a machine gun. Now, when we saw the bu – the tracers coming out of that – out of those wings, we knew that he was not our friend at all. So anyway, I went and I put a – a – a rifle grenade on my rifle. I hurry up and got that on and got it all ready for him. I was ga – because heck, he was only about as high as the ceiling here. And so he's coming down, he was shoo – he – he did some damage and he killed a few guys, but – but he missed me. Anyhow, the guys all jumped off that tank but me. I stayed on and I – me and the – and the machine gunner. I wanted to see that machine gunner bring that plane down. Heck, he was only that high, I was – couldn't see how he could possibly miss it. So, we could see his bullets going – going down, you know, and when they were – when he was shooting at – at all the rest, you know, as he's coming down the line. So anyhow, I – let's see now. Oh, I'm already with the grenade, that's it. So I got it ready for him and I had the safety off of my rifle, and I had it to my shoulder, and I

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

had that – had the play up – taken up on the – on the trigger. All I had to do is just put a little bit of pressure on it and it would have went off. So, when I s – looked at him, and I says, heck sakes, this here – this grenade is supposed to cover a 50 foot diameter, you know, like a circle. And I said, if I hit him, I'm going to blow my own head off. I said, that's not going to be any good. So I didn't shoot. But I was going down there and – down there because a-another plane come right behind him, and the guys start shooting at him. And here he – he pulled his plane up so you could see the bottom of his wings, where he had our insignia on it. And th-the American insignia was a flag. And so then they, course, they stopped shooting at him. So then I watched him and when he come down a piece, went a piece, why I – I don't know how that German knew that guy but – that guy was behind him – but anyway, he climbed for altitude. Now he went up, I would say, approximately a thousand feet. Now ma – I'm not – might be a way off, but anyhow, when he made a circle, well the – the other di – guy who made a circle, the German, so did our man right behind him, when he circled. And he ga-gave two bursts out o-of his – his – his – our man did, at the German plane. Well, he hit him both times, and when he hit him, I was watching him and the – the – when he shot first, why all of a sudden – the plane was going like this – all of a sudden the nose dropped down, and – and the plane was going down, it was heading towards the ground then. So th – our plane didn't shoot no more after. But the farther down he come, the more smoke

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

44

come out of that plane. And then finally it hit the ground and it exploded. Well, I watched that plane the whole way down and when it exploded, but it – th-the – the driver, he-he never made it out. And he was only a young fella too, because when he come down and passed there at one time, I saw him sitting in there with both thumbs on the – on the triggers, when he was shooting at me. And I thought, if I stand still, he'll miss me. Well, I had the bullets coming both sides of me. Well, the one – the one side, he got pretty close at getting me on that one, because I was leaning against the – the duffle bags of the – of the g-g – **G.I.s** in the – in the tank. They had them strapped to the **[indecipherable]** o-on the – on the outside of their tank. And two bullets went through that – that tank I was – or that sleeping bag that I was leaning on. But I didn't know that until after he was gone. So he missed me again.

Q: When you returned home, did you talk to any of your family about your experiences in the war?

A: About being in the war?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh yeah. They got tired listening to me. They were just glad I was home.

Q: What did you do after the war?

A: I went back to working on the – on the farm for my dad.

Q: And how long did you do that?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

45

A: Well, I – I also worked on a farm too. And I got a farm second day I was home, and – milking cows and stuff like that, because I liked farming. The only thing was the pay, and – and then the – when the war was over, why the prices started climbing, you know, and so I – my wife and I talked it over, we thought it's time I got a raise. I was making a hundred dollars a month, and I got my house included in it. So I went to the farmer – farmer that I was working for, and I says, how about a raise? I says, the price of living's going higher, and my family was getting bigger now, I – cause I had – I had two – two children right in a row, one right after the other practically. And I – and I had a daughter and a – and a son. And so, course I made extra – the expenses. He says, oh, you just had to tell me **Jenny** is – that was my wife's name – she'll have to live within her means. Oh boy, did she blow up when I told her that. That didn't – that didn't the – hit right. So anyhow, I looked around, I started looking around, and I've si – and I found a – a guy owned a horse farm, a Mr. **Steiner, Steiner** was his name, and I went to see him. Oh, he says, how much do you want paid? Well, I was making a hundred and – hundred and five dollars a month before, and I says 200 dollars a month. He says all right, and he took it. So I was – I worked with him then for oh, a good while. And – but so then here, after we – after we lived there, we lived in – right on the farm, the horse farm, we had about 40 horses. And he had good horses there, well – well bred stock. And so I went and – well, he – he went and he – he wanted my wife to do a lot of stuff

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

46

for nothing. And he was a millionaire himself, the bugger. So anyhow, you'd – she – she – sh-sh – it wa – it wa – it was out of this world. She wasn't able to do that because she was taking care of like – say like me and my – my – well, my – my sister – my daughter and son. I had a daughter and a son then. So then they – they were – they were – they were born, a-and whenever – whenever we got the job – well, I got the job, and so I was working, I was taking care of these horses. We had about 40 horses altogether. And I liked that job, it was pretty nice. But the only thing is, he wanted her to do a lot of extra work. Now, he was used to having fellas there that had foreign women for wives. They went in and they did all that work for nothing, and that's what he wanted, see? And I said to him one day, I said, Mr. **Steiner**, I said, I'm the one that applied for the job, not my wife. I said, she got – she got the house to take care of and two kids – we had two kids now, we had a girl and a boy, and – or a boy and a girl, I should say. And – and I says, she got two kids and a house to – and a house to take care of and me, and I said, that's enough for one woman. So then, here she – here she got all worked up over some stuff or something, and she wound up at a hospital. Well, while she was in the hospital, which was about three weeks, he didn't allow me off the farm to go see her. And that didn't go down very good. So – and she come home, she's mad as a wet hen and – and so I says, well, I couldn't help it, I said, that's – that's what he – he wouldn't let me go, and I says, and I had to have a job. So then, one day I come in –

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

47

well, we got it all straightened out with him then, about that. And then one day I come in the house and she's sitting there in her pa – kitchen crying. I said, what's the matter honey? Oh, Mr. **Steiner** is here – was here. I go, what in the heck did he want now? She says, he says, well, I got you at least doing some – some things. He wanted her to milk the – we had two cows. He wanted her to milk the cows, strain the milk; we had a cream separator. Churn – churn the cream into butter and we – we – we would get a – I think two pound of butter a week for doing that, that was going to be our pay. And – and I says, doggone him anyhow. I says – I says, I'm gonna quit. I says, the Russians haven't taken over yet. So – so I – I quit. And he – oh, he said when I told him that next morning, I said Mr. **Steiner**, I got bad news for you today. And I think this was on Thursday. I says, Saturday is my last day working here. He says, I kind of figured you do something like that. And I said, well, I says, I gotta look out for my wife. And I says, she's not that healthy. So anyhow, he says – all he said was, see that you have your furniture on the truck by dinnertime on Saturday. And on Saturday we had a – our furniture on this truck and no place to put it. So – so then her aunt, she was living in a – a red brick house on top of the hill by sing – Saint **Xavier's**. Do you rig – do you know where Saint **Xavier's** is? Oh, well anyhow, it's on the other side of **Latrobe** up on – up on the highway. Well, it was, it burnt down there, they had a fire and they cli – that took care of that. So anyway, why – we go – we got out of that jo – well, anyway, well,

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

48

what I did, my dad and mother's neighbor, he worked at **Latrobe** Steel. And I called him up. And I knew him and I told him who it was and I says, how's the chance of getting a job down **Latrobe** Steel? And he says, pretty good. And he says, I gotta go to **Pittsburgh** tomorrow, but he says, before I go down – go, I'll get the ball rolling, and you call me at six o'clock tomorrow night. Then I says, all right. So at six o'clock the next night I called him and he says, where do you want to go to work, it's all set up for you. I says – I says, well, when's the next time that I can – when can I start? And he says, how about Monday? I said, good deal, because this is – I think this was Saturday whene – I called him. A-Anyway, I went. So I w – I went there on Monday and – and th-that's when I started, and I worked there 35 years. I became a ham – a hammer driver. And we – boy, I'll tell you, I couldn't believe I made money so easy. Yeah, you know. So, th-they – the first job I had the – was shoveling a – a load of gravel, spreading it out. Another guy and I, we went down and down and we got them shovels and we had this big pile of gravel there and we st – we s-spread it all out for a roadway there where – where it was they were making, and all we did was sit around the rest of the day waiting for someone to come out and get us. And they paid us for it. I couldn't believe it the – it was that way. So then that's when I was wishing I'd started when I come home from work – from the army.

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

49

Q: Looking back on your war experiences, did it change how you felt about **Germany** or Germans?

A: Yeah.

Q: In what way?

A: What about it?

Q: How di – did it cha – did your experiences in the war change how you felt about Germans or **Germany**?

A: Yeah, I think in a way it did.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, I found out that y-you didn't get everything for nothing, you had to work, too, you know. And – and th – I – and I really enjoyed working at **Latrobe** still, especially when I become a hammer driver [**indecipherable**] and a lot of the times th-the driver wouldn't feel like going to work or something, he'd take off. Well, that meant th-there'd be an o-opening for another driver for that shift. And boy, I did a lot of overtime, get time and a half for it.

Q: Later on –

A: Yeah?

Q: – you would watch your son **Jerry** –

A: Yeah?

Q: – go off to **Vietnam**. Given your own wartime experiences, how did you feel about **Jerry** going to **Vietnam**?

A: Well, he-he – he seemed to like it okay. H-He – he be – he was a Marine. That's the one that's here now, **Jerry**. And he was a Marine and – and course we ha-had to make fun of him being a Marine. And he s – I said, guess what the – what the guys in – in the army call the Marines? And he says [**indecipherable**] and I says, it's worse than that. I forget now just what we did call them now, but we used to say that – that they – they always were looking for a fight. And then ti – so I said to him, he – he has a little dog his wife bought, and oh he's a – a little house dog, he's only about that – so long. And the little bugger, he's always wanting to pick a fight with somebody. I always tell my son, I says, this darn dog of yours got Marine in him. He says, how do you figure that? I says, he always wants to have a fight. I said, he don't care how big the dog is, he's gonna fight with him anyhow.

Q: And did you talk to **Jerry** about your war experiences before he went to **Vietnam**?

A: Yeah. Yeah, we had – we talked about that, but he – he's the only one in the family that went oh – no-none of the other boys went. And then I had a brother, he was a – **Dick**. He was in World War II like I was. He – he be – he was a – a machine gunner, and he got smacked in the head once with a bullet exploded th-th – that the pilot was shooting at him when he was going on a mission. And – and he

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

51

was a [indecipherable] gunner is what he was. Anyhow, the bullet missed him and it hit the ceiling beside him, ba – right in back of him, and smacked him in the back of the head. And as a result, he lost the sight in this eye. Him and I got the same sight, only different his eye – I lost mine from my own dumbness. When I was five years old, I broke this here pop bottle with a hammer and as a result, why they took 35 pieces of glass out of my eye, and par – and part of the pupil. And that left me with a 15/200 vision. Well, that's no vision at all, and so – yeah, I – I w – I would – I would s – be driving along, if I was in a straight stretch or something, I would shut the one eye, leave that – leave that one open, see, and I couldn't even see the road with the darn thing.

Q: We're recording this interview. What would you most like future generations to know about your wartime experience?

A: That I'd want people to know?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, I guess it's – I don't know, I – it was all exciting, you know, especially, you know, when the shooting started. And I used to write home to my wife and if it would be raining or something, and I'd be out there in a foxhole, I'd tell her, well honey, I got running water in my house today. Yeah. So, I betcha – I imagine she was pretty well worked up.

Q: Was the war worth fighting?

Interview with Grant Shultheis
October 8, 2010

52

A: Was the what?

Q: Was the war worth fighting?

A: I think it was. Yeah, I really do. Of course, it's not so good shooting one another. But I used to think when I was over there, now here I am up here in the – in – let's say like the front lines, I'm shooting a lot of these guys and I says, I never seen those fellas before in my life. I said, he never done nothing to me, nothing like that. So why I'm out there trying to kill them, you know? And then about that time they would shoo – take a shot at me and it darn near hit me, then so I start shooting back.

Q: All right sir, thank you very much for your interview, thank you.

A: Okay. You wa –

Q: Thank you for –

A: You mean you're all over?

Q: We're all over. And thank you for your service sir, we very much appreciate it.

A: Well, that's good.

Q: It is 12:10 hours.

Conclusion of Interview