

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
DARRELL J. KRENZ
U. S. Army, Korean War Prisoner of War
2000

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Krenz, Darrell J., (1931 -), Oral History Interview, 2000

User copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 100 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 100 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video recording: 2 videocassettes (ca. 100 min.), ½ inch, color.

ABSTRACT

Darrell Krenz, a Columbus, Wis. native, discusses his Korean War service as a bazooka operator and a sniper-scope gunner with the 34th Regiment, 24th Infantry Division; the interview focuses on his experiences as a prisoner of war in a camp controlled by a Korean officer called Tiger. He talks about duty in Japan prior to the Korean War, service on the front line in Korea, and the equipment his unit used. Krenz details the incident where he was taken prisoner including attempting to run, being wounded, white phosphorus burns, and treatment by his captors. He describes the march to prison camp without shoes, lack food and drinking water, and being joined by captured missionaries. Krenz speaks of life at the Mampo prison camp including the problems cold, and lack of food, and poor medical care. He provides an interesting discussion about his survival techniques as a POW mentioning taking clothing from deceased soldiers. Krenz comments on his feelings toward soldiers who turned on fellow prisoners to receive extra food or other favors from their captors. He mentions taking classes about Communism and being offered the opportunity to remain in North Korea after the war and the reaction to several prisoners who decided to remain. He touches upon the prisoners feels when they heard they were going home, illness, and his hospital stay in Japan after he was released. While a prisoner Krenz kept coded lists of prisoners' death dates and other information about what happened in camp, this list and its code is discussed briefly. He comments on joining the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as his work with the Tiger Survivors organization.

Biographical Sketch

Krenz (b. July 28th, 1931) served with the 24th Infantry Division during the Korean War. He was taken prisoner of war in 1950 and was held first by the Korean Army and later by the Chinese. He was released from prison in 1953.

Interviewed by James F. McIntosh, 2000.

Transcribed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2002.

Transcript edited by Abigail Miller, 2003.

Interview Transcript

McIntosh: Yes. That's pretty good. A pretty thing.

Krenz: Good for the picture.

McIntosh: All right, we're talking to Darrell Krenz, and it is the 7th of July, the year of 2000. When were you born, Darrell?

Krenz: 28th of July, 1931.

McIntosh: Where?

Krenz: Columbus, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: And, you entered military service?

Krenz: 19th of January.

McIntosh: January?

Krenz: 1949.

McIntosh: '49. And you enlisted, or —

Krenz: I enlisted.

McIntosh: U. S. Army?

Krenz: U. S. Army.

McIntosh: Okay. USA. Okay. Now, where did they send you first?

Krenz: My first base was Breckinridge, Kentucky, with the 101st Airborne.

McIntosh: Now, was that a choice of yours?

Krenz: No. That was where they automatically sent us.

McIntosh: 101st. Breckinridge.

Krenz: Kentucky.

McIntosh: Yea. I been there. All right. And then you had your basic there?

Krenz: I had my basic there.

McIntosh: And that was a twelve-week deal?

Krenz: Ah, yes, I think it was twelve weeks.

McIntosh: Okay. Now, did they move you into any specialty training there? Or did that come later?

Krenz: Ah, we had a chance to go on to higher education, I guess, in the 101st Airborne, at Georgia. Instead, I thought I wanted to see the world and I put in for overseas, preferably the Far East. On April 1st, of 1949, I was in Japan already.

McIntosh: Still in the 101st?

Krenz: No, I was open for anything they gave me.

McIntosh: Right. What outfit did you tie in with?

Krenz: I went in with the 24th Division.

McIntosh: 24th.

Krenz: 34th Regiment.

McIntosh: 34th Regiment.

Krenz: That was in Kyushu, Japan, the southernmost island.

McIntosh: Right, near Sasebo.

Krenz: Yea. That's where I was. Sasebo.

McIntosh: I've been there.

Krenz: Yea?

McIntosh: Yea. I've been there. On the Hospital Ship Haven. Which was around Korea during the war.

Krenz: I was stationed at Sasebo for fourteen months. Then the Korean War broke out.

McIntosh: Okay. Now, when that war first, when it first broke out, you were probably the units, that 34th Regiment was sent right over.

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: How did they send you over? By ship?

Krenz: Yea, we were in a ship, like an old hospital ship. Very crowded, and hot.

McIntosh: Right. And you were sent over to Pusan, of course?

Krenz: Right.

McIntosh: That was the only available port at the time. And did they shove you right up in the line, right off the bat?

Krenz: Yea, we got on a train and we went, I think, up near a town called Chonan (??) in Korea. And that was our first gig. Chonan.

McIntosh: And what was your assignment within the 34th Regiment?

Krenz: At that time, I was on the bazooka team. And also I qualified for many other things. I actually was qualified for the sniper scope rifle, which was awarded, not given. It was awarded to me. There was two of them in our whole 34th Regiment that got them. And I was one of them.

McIntosh: Oh, you were a good shooter.

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Was that an old Springfield?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: 1903, I guess.

Krenz: Yea. But then they had a special scope on it.

McIntosh: Oh, sure.

Krenz: Beautiful scope.

McIntosh: Did you have a chance to use it?

Krenz: Oh, yea. Only after we encountered some tanks, North Korean tanks, or Russian tanks, whatever you want to say. And our rounds would kind of just bounce off of them. From the bazooka.

McIntosh: Oh.

Krenz: We had —

McIntosh: The bazooka, yea. Now, tell me about the bazooka team. Two man team?

Krenz: Two ammo bearers, and myself.

McIntosh: Oh, I see, one shooter and two —

Krenz: Two ammo bearers.

McIntosh: Two ammo bearers.

Krenz: But we realized they sent us, what we called blue rounds. Practice rounds.

McIntosh: Blue rounds.

Krenz: Practice rounds.

McIntosh: Didn't help much?

Krenz: No. But, in Korea, or in Japan, when we were practicing with them, we had real ones. But when we went overseas, and they kind of fouled up something there.

McIntosh: Did you get that squared away?

Krenz: We had no time. We didn't have no more rounds. We just —

McIntosh: You were overrun before that happened, you mean?

Krenz: No. I got a chance to smash the bazooka. My company commander told me to get rid of it. Bust it up. Just in case.

McIntosh: Yea, well let's not get too far ahead, here. So, when you were on the line, was the line moving? Were you falling back?

Krenz: No, we had just come up. We started falling back.

McIntosh: Primarily because you were overwhelmed by numbers?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Would that be the — you just had too few men on the line?

Krenz: Basically, that's probably it. Yea. Some friends of mine, from our platoon, were out on an outpost, and they were getting overrun.

McIntosh: Right. Just too many. But you were trained well enough that that wasn't a factor?

Krenz: I believe, myself, I was. But maybe, you know, like I said, I qualified on all these weapons, and all that.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: I had, then I got my sniper scope rifle back. Did pretty well. Like I say, I was overrun.

McIntosh: So, how long were you on the line, then?

Krenz: In that town? Probably two days, we were sitting there. And they we were getting all blowed up, so we pulled out. We hiked it back, walking. At night.

McIntosh: The whole regiment?

Krenz: Yea. So, then we set up a line again, just along the way some, you know, places.

McIntosh: Sure. Tell me one question I always wanted to ask. And I never, I asked a couple but I never asked enough yet, to make up my mind. How many men in your regiment had had combat experience?

Krenz: Well, probably not many.

McIntosh: A percentage.

Krenz: I know my platoon sergeant, he was in the Second World War. And he was a career man. But he got killed.

McIntosh: But most of the guys, like yourself?

Krenz: Just young kids.

McIntosh: And hadn't really been on the line. First time.

Krenz: Yea. Eighteen years old.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: Most of us. Pretty well all of us.

- McIntosh: Do you think that played a part, that was a factor in your fighting ability of your regiment?
- Krenz: Well, I suppose.
- McIntosh: Hard to say?
- Krenz: We did a lot of field work. I thought we were pretty well equipped, and everything. But I read some of the books, and some of these guys didn't have nothing. We had —
- McIntosh: I mean, in equipment?
- Krenz: Yea. I think our regiment was pretty well set. We had, in our platoon, or the other company, was, had the heavy weapons.
- McIntosh: .50 caliber machine guns?
- Krenz: We had the .30s in our particular one, but they had the bigger, and then they had the 20 millimeter, I think they were.
- McIntosh: Sure. Did you have mortar teams, too?
- Krenz: Sure, we had mortar teams. 60s.
- McIntosh: How about the tanks? What did you have, anything to offer the tanks in the way of stopping, other than bazookas?
- Krenz: Yea, we stopped a couple of them. We got in behind them with hand grenades, and we blew the tracks off one particular one, that I remember. And then he just went spinning in a circle, and so, they had to come out of the tank, eventually. And they did. That is one that I particularly remember, for sure.
- McIntosh: Did they get food up to you in time? And all this, or not?
- Krenz: We ate all these C-rations.
- McIntosh: C-rations. And water wasn't a problem for you at that time?
- Krenz: No. No.
- McIntosh: So, tell me about getting overrun. How did that occur? What were you doing at the time?
- Krenz: The time I got captured?

McIntosh: Yea.

Krenz: We were on an outpost in the northern part of Taejon. And we could see them coming, you know, lots of them.

McIntosh: On foot?

Krenz: Most on foot. Yea.

McIntosh: No tanks?

Krenz: No. Not any tanks at that time.

McIntosh: And they were North Koreans?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: And that is early in the war. The Chinese hadn't shown up yet?

Krenz: Yea, they didn't show up until October. We were starting to get overrun, so we jumped in a six-by-six, a truck, you know.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: There was only like five of us left, at that time, out of the platoon.

McIntosh: You mean, out of a hundred guys? Hundred and twenty?

Krenz: No, in a platoon, there is four squads, nine men per squad.

McIntosh: Oh, I was going to say, I was thinking of a company.

Krenz: Yea. And, there was five of us left. One, two, there was six of us left.

McIntosh: Six out of thirty-six?

Krenz: Yea. So, we jumped into this truck and we started heading in town, which we did not know that the town was already surrounded.

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Krenz: See, because we went right into them. If we had stayed where we were at, maybe we could have got out. I don't know. But —

McIntosh: Pretty patchy, though, right then?

Krenz: Yea. Pretty unstable. But we drove right into them in the town. And they picked four of the other guys off, eventually. There was two of us left. We were in a ditch line and we were out of ammo.

McIntosh: They just ordered you out of the truck?

Krenz: No. we were out of the truck by then. We started to get running away, because they demobilized the truck.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: The driver got hit real bad. And we were at a dead end. We just took the wrong turn. So, we ended up in a ditch, and we stayed in that ditch that night. And the next morning, there was three of us left. The next morning. And the North Koreans walked down the railroad tracks. We were in a kind of a ditch in between the railroad tracks. And they come walking down through there. And, of course, we had no ammo left. We were just laying there, and they spotted us.

McIntosh: That's all it took.

Krenz: And we tried, we did try to run, but one guy behind me, he got shot. And the two of us, we hit the dirt. But they come after us.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: We were both wounded at the time, too. One in front of me, and me.

McIntosh: From what? Rifle fire, or mortar fire ?

Krenz: Rifle fire.

McIntosh: Where were you hit?

Krenz: I was hit in the buttocks. And the same bullet actually went through the guy in front of me's arms. We were crawling.

McIntosh: Oh, my. It went through-and-through you?

Krenz: Yea. Well, I had some white phosphorus burns, too. Mortar fire. I think that must have been our stuff that got captured, and they used it back on us.

McIntosh: Oh, the white phosphorus all came from the United States.

- Krenz: Oh, yea.
- McIntosh: Any white phosphorus that our, and I took care of a lot of those. I was on a hospital ship in Korea, and I took care of a lot of white phosphorus.
- Krenz: Yea, I have scars all over my legs from it.
- McIntosh: Right. I had a terrible time dealing with those guys.
- Krenz: Yea. Can't get it out.
- McIntosh: Well, it went too deep. It burned too deep, and was really a problem, because I never knew when to start grafting, because I wasn't sure how deep the damage was. And it really made a big problem in dealing with those guys. So, okay, they rounded you up. Did they bind you, or tie you up?
- Krenz: Right away. They made us take our shoes off. Well, to back up a little bit, there was four of them soldiers at that time, and they lined us up. It looked like they were going to shoot us. Which we had seen GIs with their hands tied behind their backs. We seen a jeep with a couple of MPs in it, and they were tied up and just burned them up. Threw gas on them. So we thought we were going to be gone, you know. Naturally. And they were hollering and screaming at us. They had their rifle butts, they had that Russian made —
- McIntosh: Burp gun?
- Krenz: Burp gun. Yea. Right in my face. And an officer, a North Korean officer, came running down the railroad tracks and he was hollering and screaming. And he spoke perfect English. And he said, "They were going to shoot you," he says, "but we will take care of you. We will feed you," and all that. Well, that wasn't too much so, either, but then they took our boots and our shirts.
- McIntosh: Sure. I didn't know they'd want the shirts. I knew about the boots, I can understand.
- Krenz: Well, they felt, if we tried to run, they could see us easier.
- McIntosh: Ah. White skin.
- Krenz: Right. So, and our tender feet, they say.
- McIntosh: Right. That would stop you running.
- Krenz: Yea. That is the first thing they did to us. Then they put us into a hut. A few days later, then, they moved us. There was more GIs.

McIntosh: Which way? Moving back up north?

Krenz: North, yea.

McIntosh: By foot, or by truck?

Krenz: Foot.

McIntosh: And, how about getting fed, now? During this time?

Krenz: They never, I never had a thing to eat for at least four or five days. And then they came with some millet balls, like they cook it like you would mush, until it got just right. And you could make a ball out of it.

McIntosh: Not rice?

Krenz: No, no rice. Millet. Like you go to a —

McIntosh: I know what millet is. Little tiny seeds.

Krenz: Yea. Little tiny seeds, like canaries eat.

McIntosh: Yea.

Krenz: But they gave us one of them.

McIntosh: A day?

Krenz: Yea, they started giving us pretty well one a day of them.

McIntosh: Totally tasteless, I assume?

Krenz: Oh, yea. Nothing to it.

McIntosh: How about something to drink?

Krenz: They gave us water, when we could get it. But, usually on the road, there was no water, either. They did give us water, once in a while. But very little of anything Korean.

McIntosh: So you kept marching north. At night, they would put you in a field, and everybody would sit around?

Krenz: Yea. Pretty much so, at first. They kept us in these old school houses, a lot, on the

way. Which weren't bombed out. Some of them were kind of just shacks. We got to see more and more GIs and, you know, they gathered more on the way. I can remember this one school we were in, had this big windows in the front, and this airplane came over, one of these Navy Corsairs, I guess they call them. Two man planes, training planes, kind of you call them. They came over and took a look at the building and just took off. A couple of minutes later, it came back again and opened up on the building. And killed, they made us all sit in lines during the day. Killed a couple of GIs then, and they also killed a guard, too. But they just made one pass at us, and that was it.

McIntosh: That was kind of hard to see an American plane coming down to shoot you.

Krenz: Yea. Yea. He had to get rid of his bullets, I suppose, someplace.

McIntosh: He assumed only the enemy would be there. Did the North Koreans shoot at him as he came down?

Krenz: Not that I know of, no. I never heard any shooting from anybody. He made one quick pass, and he is gone.

McIntosh: So, then? Where next?

Krenz: Oh.

McIntosh: Did you end up somewhere? Did you finally stop?

Krenz: We stayed in officers' quarters in Pyongyang for a couple of weeks. And that was, of course, a nicer building. In fact, it still had pictures on the walls, Korean pictures. I don't remember who they were, now. It was kind of nice to stay there, but we still didn't have no food, and this and that. We were starting to get dysentery, and all that stuff. Guys were getting sick from drinking bad water. So then they moved us out of there, and it started getting cold at this time. You know, ready. And then we were in a corn field. It was cold enough for somebody to freeze to death at that time.

McIntosh: Still didn't have any protection for your feet?

Krenz: No. We still had just what we were captured in in July. But then we started losing men. If they had a shirt or, something, you know, sometimes a guy had a shirt or something, they didn't take them away like they took ours. Then we'd eventually —

McIntosh: Take them off dead guys?

Krenz: Take them off, yea. Take them off them. They wouldn't need them no more. Never did get any shoes, though. Those North Koreans liked those shoes and

boots, I guess. So, eventually, they started us marching up north. That is when this guy, the Tiger, took over.

McIntosh: He came out of nowhere?

Krenz: I don't know where he come from. On Halloween eve, we were alerted that we were going to move out the next day. And there was a fellow that was a missionary. He was captured, also. He was. We called him Commissioner Lord, from England.

McIntosh: A civilian

Krenz: Yea. Oh, we had a lot of civilians with us. Missionaries. Women and children.

McIntosh: Oh. In your group?

Krenz: Oh, yea.

McIntosh: How big was your group by this time?

Krenz: We had a count of around eight hundred.

McIntosh: Men, women, and children. Civilians.

Krenz: All mostly missionaries, and nuns.

McIntosh: And were those people generally British, or — ?

Krenz: Turkish, there was. Yea. And English, probably, yea. We had some Turks.

McIntosh: Were they separated from you?

Krenz: They kept us separated, but they were with us. But they kept them kind of separated, yea.

McIntosh: Different area, and that sort of thing? Okay. So, this guy shows up?

Krenz: Yea. The next morning the guy shows up, and that is when he alerted us all that he was going to be the boss.

McIntosh: He spoke good English?

Krenz: No. Through an interpreter. And he called for an officer to come forward, to take charge. And nobody really wanted to go. So, finally, he was quite mad. You could tell by his voice, you know, screaming and hollering. Pretty soon a Lieutenant Thornton, he walked up and saluted him and he turned around and shot him in the

back of the head.

McIntosh: That was a demonstration for everybody?

Krenz: Yea. Yea. We knew he was the boss, then. And that is when they gave us orders that if we fell behind in line, the last person, there was guards behind us. If we fell behind that line, it was automatic, you'd be shot. And we started marching through the mountains. That is what he said, he pointed at the mountains like that and said, "Over the mountains." So that is when we started out.

McIntosh: This guy must have been angry all of the time.

Krenz: He shot over three hundred people on that march. Right around three hundred people.

McIntosh: He personally did all the shooting?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: He really took over, completely. Of his own people?

Krenz: Yea. If you fell behind the line, no matter what for, if you got sick, if you had dysentery, whatever, you got shot.

McIntosh: Didn't make any difference? Okay, you couldn't wait? If you had dysentery, you had to let it go as you were walking?

Krenz: That's right.

McIntosh: That is unspeakably cruel.

Krenz: Yea. That's what happened, though.

McIntosh: How about the other soldiers? Were they of the same ilk? I mean, they treated you the same?

Krenz: You mean the guards?

McIntosh: Um-huh.

Krenz: Yea. Basically, if you got out of line, or something, they'd smack you with a rifle butt, or something. You know. And kick you. You know, you could sleep when you are walking. They call it sleep-walking. But you could do that. And you just maybe touched the guy in front of you, and walk.

McIntosh: They marched you day and night?

Krenz: Sometimes, yea.

McIntosh: Seems that everyone would fall over from lack of sleep.

Krenz: Well, I'm not saying every day, and every night. But at times, day and night.

McIntosh: I see.

Krenz: We really only rested on that march was when the Chinese came down that road. They put us on the sides of the road for like two days. The Chinese came, six and eight abreast, on the road. They took up the whole road.

McIntosh: Marching?

Krenz: Yea. Going south. That is when the Chinese entered the war.

McIntosh: Do you recall what time of year it was, by this time?

Krenz: Yea, it was in October, of '50.

McIntosh: And so, your group of eight hundred was at the side of the road until the Chinese got through? And then back on the road? Where were you headed?

Krenz: We were headed for a place called Mampo, in the northern part of North Korea. We were quite a ways up, on the Manchurian border.

McIntosh: Near the Yalu River?

Krenz: Yea. The Yalu River.

McIntosh: I talked to a fellow Friday who was a prisoner for three plus years in World War II. He was with the 32nd Division, from Wisconsin, here. And ended up in a prison camp in Mukden, China, which is just across the Yalu River. So, you finally got there. What was the name again?

Krenz: Mampo.

McIntosh: Mampo. Okay. M-a-m ?

Krenz: It was an old Chinese, an old Japanese fort at one time.

McIntosh: Mampo. M-A-M-P-O?

- Krenz: Yea, I believe that is it. It's on the map. I don't think —
- McIntosh: No, I've got a map. Tell me about this compound. What it was like.
- Krenz: Oh, that one was a group of buildings with a fence around it, already. And it was a big school house, and some other out-buildings. We used to call it a school house, anyway. With a series of rooms. Where we stayed for quite some time. Can't remember exactly, now, how long we stayed there. That is when he really started to do us a lot more damage.
- McIntosh: What about the civilians on this march? Did they kill them as rapidly as they — ?
- Krenz: I never actually seen any civilians get killed. I don't remember. They all seemed to make the march pretty well. Although some of them were really older. I remember, I did see them on the march but I didn't see none of them get killed.
- McIntosh: And when you got to this camp, were they still with you?
- Krenz: Yea. This is the winter of '50, and all that. That was a bad one. We'd probably lose ten or twelve men a day.
- McIntosh: From?
- Krenz: They either froze, or malnutrition, mostly.
- McIntosh: Frozen. Inside, you didn't have any protection inside those houses?
- Krenz: No. We had no —
- McIntosh: No [unintelligible.]
- Krenz: No. In fact, the room that I, no, just the floor, dirt floor. The little building that I was in had actually four sides. The one side was all, the mud was all gone off it. I mean, it was snowing and blowing in on us all the time. We rotated, kept turns sleeping. It was a building about twelve by twelve, and there were like thirty guys in there. And we slept, sometimes on top, sometimes across each other, and all this.
- McIntosh: To keep warm.
- Krenz: But we kept rotating, somebody by the door one night, and the next guy, his turn by the door. Or, if it was cold in that spot, we took turns all the way around. We lost men there.
- McIntosh: I don't know how, how did you protect your feet?

- Krenz: Well, by that time we had wraps, and then anything we could, you know. We had lost a lot of men and we took their shirts, and we'd wrap our feet in rags, and whatever. We still had our fatigue pants on, which were getting pretty worn. We actually kept them clothes until we got turned over to the Chinese, when they gave us some clothes.
- McIntosh: How long were you there, in that camp?
- Krenz: Well, not particularly long, when the springtime, we left. The Spring of '51. They moved us further north. Can't quite remember the name of it now. Chang-son, or something like that. I That was way into the hills. Then they started feeding us a little bit. At times, a little bit better.
- McIntosh: Like what?
- Krenz: Well, we got, call it maize?
- McIntosh: Corn.
- Krenz: It's a purple, ah —
- McIntosh: Purple corn.
- Krenz: And it was cooked the same. And they'd give us a ball of that a day. Regularly. And water. To wash our spoon off with, or whatever of us had utensils. That gave us water if they had water. They set up a little hospital for us. But we had no equipment no medicines. We had a doctor with us, a Doctor Boyson. He's still alive.
- McIntosh: Army doctor, or civilian?
- Krenz: Army doctor.
- McIntosh: Were these civilians still with you when you went up into the hills?
- Krenz: The civilians were still there, yea. So, I can remember the doctor having to operate on one of the guys. That was when we were in the first place, in the winter of '50. He had appendicitis so bad, he operated on him without any anesthesia.
- McIntosh: What did he use for a knife?
- Krenz: I don't know. I didn't see the operation.
- McIntosh: He must have had some equipment with him.

Krenz: He must have had a knife of some kind. The kid lasted for months after that, and finally died. Oh, after that, I guess, we just sort of survived.

McIntosh: How long were you in the hills?

Krenz: We were there until late '51.

McIntosh: So you were there almost a year, huh?

Krenz: Yea. And then they took us by truck, started going south. And then they took us by boat for a ways.

McIntosh: From where? Oh, inside Korea. By river?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Oh.

Krenz: On the Yalu River, and that was real late in '51. And then they turned us over to the Chinese.

McIntosh: Oh. How was that different?

Krenz: That was different because they gave us all the rice we wanted to eat. Times were good then, for us.

McIntosh: A different camp?

Krenz: Yea. A completely different camp.

McIntosh: Where was that? Do you recall? It was in China or was it still in North Korea?

Krenz: No, it was still in North Korea. Right on the river, though.

McIntosh: Right on the Yalu River?

Krenz: It was right on the river. Right across the river was Manchuria.

McIntosh: Got it.

Krenz: And, in the winter time, they'd take us over to Manchuria for to get wood, to cook the food for the soldiers.

McIntosh: Did the Yalu River freeze?

Krenz: Oh, yea. Froze solid.

McIntosh: So you could walk over?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Bring wood back to the camp for cooking?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Were you in a large barracks at the time?

Krenz: At that time, I was in a small one. There was like a two-man room. We both had a bunk. It was dirt, of course. Then, they later on built a barracks for us, of course. And there was probably fifty or sixty in a barracks.

McIntosh: Did they give you some blankets?

Krenz: Later on they gave us some blankets, yea. The Chinese did.

McIntosh: Okay. And your shoes?

Krenz: Yea. But they weren't used to Americans with the larger feet, you know.

McIntosh: In fact, the shoes were too small.

Krenz: We had to cut the toes out of all of them. You know. But, they had soles on them. They were made out of, like, car tires, you know.

McIntosh: Flip-flaps.

Krenz: Yea. But they treated us a little bit different than the North Koreans. The North Koreans were brutal people. If you didn't look at them just right, the guard would come in and beat the hell out of you, or something. You know. But, the Chinese, they talked to you a different way. They made us go to school every day. And learn about the Chinese, or the Communist, government.

McIntosh: Government. Indoctrine.

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: How about their English?

Krenz: Perfect English. Most of them. Most of the instructors had —

- McIntosh: People who were there.
- Krenz: Instructors.
- McIntosh: Pidgin?
- Krenz: In fact, the instructor that we had was, he said, he was, got his degree out of Texas. University of Texas. But they spoke perfect English. But they never learned the slang. I mean, you could use a lot of slang, and they didn't know what you were talking about.
- McIntosh: They had book English.
- Krenz: Yea. And then some of the GIs started teaching them slang, and then they got, well —
- McIntosh: (laughing)
- Krenz: Well, that's part of the thing. I've got documents that I brought out of Korea. I mean, documents, just pieces of paper with numbers on them. They are very old.
- McIntosh: They sure are.
- Krenz: These numbers all mean something. Some are dates on here where GIs either got killed or died on the march. Dated and the numbers mean their initials. And I thought, well, they knew they were POWs, they could look up their initials, and see who actually they were. And, actually, some of these numbers on here are numbers of some of our GIs that I felt that didn't do the other GIs any justice. You know, they'd do anything for a cigarette. They'd turn you in if you stole peppers or something, they'd turn you in. Get reprimanded, or go to the hole, they called it. They'd take you downtown and put you in a hole for a couple of days.
- McIntosh: Just in a pit?
- Krenz: Yea. In a pit.
- McIntosh: With no food or water?
- Krenz: They did give you water. I'd say that. They were very generous with the water, but the food ration was slightly less.
- McIntosh: Boy, these are really fragile.
- Krenz: Oh, yea. They are getting really old now. Here is some names of the —

McIntosh: And these are, by numbers only, huh?

Krenz: Numbers only, yea.

McIntosh: How would you be sure who they were at a later date when the numbers --

Krenz: Well, I'll tell you. When you live with a guy for three years, or so, or two years, you get to know where they are from.

McIntosh: Oh, sure.

Krenz: You know, and all that. And here is a name that comes up. Some of the guys that weren't, myself, in my mind, that were not, well, we called them turncoats.

McIntosh: Turncoats?

Krenz: To put it mildly.

McIntosh: Yea. Well, they were doing extra favors.

Krenz: Yea. Extra favors, things for extra favors. And they'd get a little wine, or maybe, a little something too. Well, those things got pretty bad.

McIntosh: Did you ever see any of these guys after the war?

Krenz: I'll tell you, most of the don't, none of them show up at the reunions.

McIntosh: None of these guys ever show up?

Krenz: No.

McIntosh: They knew they were doing —

Krenz: Yea. Yea, they knew they were doing probably be getting in lots of trouble.

McIntosh: Yea.

Krenz: Of course, some of them are died, now. I've never seen any of these at the — no, I've never seen any of these at any of our reunions, of all these guys here.

McIntosh: Now, you're the only one from your regiment that was with you in the prisoner of war camp?

Krenz: No, the fact is, one of the guys that I was captured with —

McIntosh: He went right through with you?

Krenz: He went through right with us.

McIntosh: Survived, also?

Krenz: He's in North Carolina now.

McIntosh: And you two were the only survivors of the 34th Regiment?

Krenz: No, no. We met some more as we were gathering. In fact, I met my platoon leader and one other guy that was in our platoon.

McIntosh: Did you ask him where the hell were you when I needed you?

Krenz: The one fellow that I met later on as a POW I knew him in Japan. And his brother was with me when we got captured. He was one of them that got killed, his brother. And I've been in touch with him a lot.

McIntosh: Oh? You kept in touch with him?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Where does he live?

Krenz: He lives in Williamstown, Kentucky. I just talked to him the other day, in fact. Wanted to know if he is going to go to our reunion. We are going to our reunion, in Spokane, at the end of this month.

McIntosh: Your reunion is of the regiment or of —

Krenz: All the Korean POWs.

McIntosh: All. The group is the Korean War POW survivors, right?

Krenz: Yea. Yea.

McIntosh: That's the group.

Krenz: Yea. But our group, we're called the Tiger Survivors, and we —

McIntosh: A sub-group of the whole?

Krenz: Yea. And we get together when we go to this reunion. We get together. We have

our own little chop-chop, we call it. All gab session, and all that, and laugh about things.

McIntosh: You didn't see the Tiger after you went with the Chinese? Is that right?

Krenz: No.

McIntosh: So you were just with him —

Krenz: I have no idea where he went.

McIntosh: So it was over that winter, then, of '50 —

Krenz: Yea. He took us on the march, and I think he must have got some place, relieved, or something, went someplace else.

McIntosh: Did you ever hear of him or whatever happened to that guy?

Krenz: No. Never herd anything.

McIntosh: Never read anything? Of course, you probably wouldn't. I'm sure they wouldn't publicize it.

Krenz: Ah, oooh!

McIntosh: Pulled a muscle there?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Got a spasm there. I can read something, if you want me to read something.

Krenz: I think I can get it here. I made a sketch, I think it is in one of these papers. Sketch of the Tiger.

McIntosh: Is it in here?

Krenz: No.

McIntosh: Oh.

Krenz: That was our program. There is a story that I wrote in there, on the flag, what I think of the flag. You can read that later, if you want.

McIntosh: I have this.

Krenz: You have that one?

McIntosh: Yea. I have it right here, matter of fact.

Krenz: It might not be that one. Well, here is the number.

McIntosh: Yea, I have got a picture of that. I mean I have that copy. I've kept that for the museum.

Krenz: One of these papers, I think, has a composite of the Tiger because — it was in one of them, because —

McIntosh: This article had a drawing you made of him.

Krenz: Yea, that is the one I was looking for.

McIntosh: Okay, that's in here.

Krenz: That's in there now.

McIntosh: Yea.

Krenz: Okay.

McIntosh: Okay. All right. Here we go.

Krenz: This is a program we had last week.

McIntosh: I saw that. Yea. Pretty nice.

Krenz: I don't know if you've seen this. That was the, a little story that one of the girls at our post was putting up flags, and she asked me if I could say something about the flag. So, one night I got up and started writing, and that is what I came up with. Now they are putting it all over the country.

McIntosh: Yea. Can I copy this.?

Krenz: Sure.

McIntosh: I'd like to, if I could, but I won't do it right now. After we are done, I'll copy it, if that's okay with you. Now, what do you plan to do with this stuff?

Krenz: I'll just throw it back in a drawer, something like that.

McIntosh: It's going to disappear, you know. In time.

Krenz: Oh, I know it will.

- McIntosh: If you want the museum to take care of it, they'll put it under glass and keep it, so it doesn't deteriorate. If you wish.
- Krenz: I have copies of all this, too. This was with the FBI when I first got back. They took it. And I gave them the codes, and all those numbers. And they've had it for maybe a year. And all of a sudden, I got it back one day.
- McIntosh: You got what back?
- Krenz: This here. They sent it back to me, and photostatic copies of it.
- McIntosh: That would probably be better than this, because this is hard to understand.
- Krenz: Yea.
- McIntosh: Unless you, are there any explanations of that photostatic copy? Well, these have value in themselves, because they were done by you.
- Krenz: These are the originals.
- McIntosh: And they are the originals, right. So, if, sometime, if you'd like, we'd, the museum would appreciate, and they'll take care of it for you. And, you know, they preserve things. Because, you can see, just a matter of a couple of years, and this thing would just be, disappear, and they would fall apart.
- Krenz: Maybe the names, we don't want the names looked at on these, I don't think.
- McIntosh: Well, they are significant.
- Krenz: Well, what you think.
- McIntosh: I'd like it all, if you could. And I'll explain to people, and they'll take care of it for you.
- Krenz: That's what I brought out.
- McIntosh: And everyone else. That's what I tell everybody. This is the sort of thing that everyone can learn from. That's really unusual. This is really unusual.
- Krenz: There was another guy that I knew. He kept names and dates of all the guys that were killed, or died, over there.
- McIntosh: Sure.

- Krenz: I don't know if you've seen it. Readers Digest? Johnson's list?
- McIntosh: I have not seen that.
- Krenz: If you get on the Internet, *tigersurvivors.com*, I believe it is. Or *koreanwar.com*. And look for Johnson's list. You'll see it.
- McIntosh: I'll do that.
- Krenz: So. It's fantastic. We have our own web page.
- McIntosh: Oh, really?
- Krenz: We just started out about a year ago. Johnson's list. He got the Silver Star for bringing this stuff out like that. With names and numbers, and stuff on it.
- McIntosh: You know, with these fellows on your list, and your bad ones, were they ever disciplined, at a later date?
- Krenz: I don't know. One of the guys on there, he stayed there. Remember, some of them stayed in Korea. Twenty-three, I think.
- McIntosh: He went to their class, and he liked it so much, he stayed.
- Krenz: You're absolutely right. Yea.
- McIntosh: Was that a surprise to you, Darrell?
- Krenz: Yea. I couldn't —
- McIntosh: I mean, he seemed like the rest of you.
- Krenz: Well, you got to look at it in a little bit different way, too. If you get someone to tell you everyday that your name is George, you know, every day someone tells you that, eventually, you are going to believe it, right?
- McIntosh: Perhaps, maybe not.
- Krenz: Well, that is just an example, but they went on, and on, and on, every day. You know. For hours. Hours.
- McIntosh: These classes, they'd have them every day?
- Krenz: Every day.

McIntosh: How long would the class last?

Krenz: They were about five hours.

McIntosh: You'd sit there for five hours?

Krenz: Every day. Yea.

McIntosh: Were there movies, or would they just talk to you?

Krenz: One time they showed us a movie. Called White - something.

McIntosh: Otherwise, they just lectured you?

Krenz: Lectured, and they read the book of *Grapes of Wrath*.

McIntosh: John Steinbeck.

Krenz: And that was about our country, here.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: Many, many years ago, you know? And that was what they thought it was, that way, you know. I guess. But outside of that, no, you sat there on your butt and you listened to them. And, eventually, some of these guys would break, I guess.

McIntosh: How did they invite you to stay in Korea, or come to China? How did they go about that?

Krenz: That was up to the individual to do that.

McIntosh: I mean, did they approach you and say, "Would you like to stay?" Or, how did they do this?

Krenz: They asked if you wanted to continue on studying about Communism. And Capitalism.

McIntosh: And, then if you said yes?

Krenz: And if you said yes, you stayed. And as I say, there was twenty-three of them that stayed there, then.

McIntosh: Oh, you mean, at the time when the war was coming to an end, and you were getting ready to come home, that is when they offered you asylum to these guys?

Krenz: Yea.

- McIntosh: And up to that moment, you didn't know who was going to accept?
- Krenz: No. No. We kind of knew, because they never went on a work detail, you know. For weeks, months, they never went to work. They had a special quarters. They'd go to town and get saki. They could go downtown, what they called that little village. The guards would take them down there and they'd have a little party, or something, and get —
- McIntosh: Oh, then you knew they were being swayed?
- Krenz: Oh, sure. We knew, but we didn't expect them to stay there.
- McIntosh: Permanently.
- Krenz: Yea.
- McIntosh: You just thought they were turncoats who were just doing this to get extra favors? Right?
- Krenz: Right. Yea.
- McIntosh: And did they separate you in your barracks?

[End of Side A of Tape 1.]

- Krenz: Yea, we were separated. By barracks, not by camps. We'd go over to their barracks once in a while, and kind of rough them up a little bit, you know. Beat them up, you know.
- McIntosh: They did that?
- Krenz: Yea.
- McIntosh: That was your only opportunity to retaliate against these guys? How did they take that?
- Krenz: Well, they reported you. Then we'd have different guys come and beat them up. So, they eventually didn't do it no more. Didn't report us. For kicking them, or smacking them, or something.
- McIntosh: But you must have great hostility toward these guys.
- Krenz: Oh, yea. That was bad. But you couldn't do a lot. Because, you know, the guards were there all the time.

- McIntosh: And they were protecting them.
- Krenz: That's true.
- McIntosh: So they got extra favors. They didn't have to work. They didn't have to, well, of course, they went to class. That's really all they had to do, then?
- Krenz: Had little parties for them.
- McIntosh: At night.
- Krenz: Yea. They'd take them, like I say, down to the village and get some cake.
- McIntosh: Wine them, dine them. Boy, they were really rushing them like a fraternity. So, tell me about, in addition to class, you had to work. Tell me about that.
- Krenz: Well, that is when we had go get the wood across the river, and stuff.
- McIntosh: Okay. What else? That was your major work?
- Krenz: That was the major. Either that or a boat would come in down in the valley. There was a little village down there and a boat would come in with rice bags on it, or something. And they'd take us down there once in a while.
- McIntosh: To haul them back?
- Krenz: Unload the boat, and stuff, for them.
- McIntosh: Do you recall how many people were in this camp that you were on the Yalu River. Like how many prisoners there were?
- Krenz: In our particular, I was in Camp 3--Chinese Camp 3. But they kept us separate from the rest of the camps. Our Camp 3. Like there was a company over there, and a company over here. Well, they kept us separate because we were captured by the Koreans. I don't know why they kept us separate from these guys over here. These guys were all captured by the Chinese, over here. But that was still Camp 3, the whole thing.
- McIntosh: You never figured that one out?
- Krenz: Only, I guess, because they didn't want us to talk to these guys, because these guys were captured quite late in the war, or something, let's say. And they didn't want us to know what went on, or something. I don't know. And we had one guy that had to go see this doctor downtown, or something, and somehow they got him

mixed up and they made this guy come over to us, and this guy went to them. So, but by the time they found out, everybody knew what was going on. You know, we didn't even know that Panmujon was coming. What was Panmujon? That is the place they were having meetings, right? To get the war over with. We didn't even know that. They wouldn't tell us. We didn't get no newspapers, or noting like that. The only thing we knew was what they told us.

McIntosh: No Red Cross packages?

Krenz: No. never.

McIntosh: Nothing like that?

Krenz: Hunh-uh. Never.

McIntosh: And did you see any of these civilian folks around there?

Krenz: Not after that. Never saw them.

McIntosh: You don't know if they came to Camp 3, or not?

Krenz: I don't know.

McIntosh: Did you hear about them at any of your reunions?

Krenz: Oh, yea. We have them come to our reunions, a couple of them.

McIntosh: Some civilians?

Krenz: Yea. In fact, one girl, she was like twelve years old, then. And she still —

McIntosh: She survived all that?

Krenz: She still comes to our reunions.

McIntosh: How about that?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Where does she live?

Krenz: I have her address in here. In Florida, in Clearwater, Florida.

McIntosh: And she was a daughter of a missionary?

Krenz: Right.

- McIntosh: Was she English, or American?
- Krenz: She spoke English. I don't know where she was from, originally.
- McIntosh: You don't know whether she was from the United States or not?
- Krenz: No, I don't remember, now. Where she was from. I'd say most of them —
- McIntosh: Boy, that would be a story to tell, too. They must have had a different life.
- Krenz: I have her address, and everything, at home. And I'll be seeing her next month, or at the end of this month. She must be Turkish, because of her name. Shish— something.
- McIntosh: Could very well be.
- Krenz: I think that she is Turkish. And she has a son, and he comes to the reunion with her. But most of them have passed on now. Because they were older, too.
- McIntosh: That's right. They were our age, and when you are — older than we are now. Yea. Well, that's, and then, so one day, they'd say we're going to put you in a truck and take you south? Was that the way you found out that something was going on?
- Krenz: Well, basically. They took us, they were going to do that one time, and we got on a truck. We were all happy we were going. But they took us north for a little bit, to another camp, for another week or so, or something. So then the next time they came by, in August of '53, they came by and said, well, "We're going to take you by truck, now. You are going home."
- McIntosh: Oh, they said that?
- Krenz: Well, we retaliated, because they aren't going to send us home. You know, we didn't know.
- McIntosh: Oh, you didn't believe them?
- Krenz: Oh, hell, no. We had no inkling that we were going to go home. We were ever going to go home. You know, we didn't know. Because, as I say, there was no newspapers, or nothing, only what they said. And we could tell a little bit by the war, because we were in a place called Mig Alley. That is where the fighters would go up and all of a sudden, some days, you would see no airplanes at all. Then it got to be less and less and less. And, no airplanes. So we thought there was something going on. But then they finally got us on a truck, and they took us south. Part of it is in this little flag story right here. You can read that later on.

McIntosh: Sure. But you knew something, that you probably were going home. But this time you suddenly realized your chances were —

Krenz: Pretty good.

McIntosh: You were really excited, I bet.

Krenz: They had us on a truck, with a cover on it. And, well, they took us to another little spot first. And they kind of took some of the people that were still really sick, and stuff. This was called Big Switch. They had Little Switch, too, but this was when all of us were going home. But they had us in this little camp, and they took the sick guys first. Which was fine. Of course, they all were pretty sick. So, finally, it was my turn. On the 26th of August, to get on the truck, and we were going down this old road. It seemed like, for days. But it wasn't that much, I guess. But we started seeing clothes laying on the side of the road. Chinese clothes. So pretty soon, we realized the GIs had thrown all their clothes away. They didn't want those Chinese clothes no more. And we got to this bridge, and there was all kinds of flags, Chinese flags, and Korean flags, and stuff. And when we get on the other side of the bridge, there was American flags. Then we knew we were home.

McIntosh: Across the bridge and —

Krenz: Across the bridge.

McIntosh: Right. And then everybody really got excited?

Krenz: Oh, yea.

McIntosh: Tell me, before we get to that point, how about the disease level there? Did everyone have the trots, most of the time?

Krenz: Most of the time, yea.

McIntosh: Did anyone get malaria?

Krenz: We had no idea. You know, we didn't know.

McIntosh: Well, shakes and chills? Did the guys end up in the hospital with this?

Krenz: I went immediately to a hospital, myself. I was a litter case, considered, yea.

McIntosh: Because?

Krenz: With dysentery, and we were so infected with worms. That was just terrible, to have the worms come out of you at night, you know.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: And lice. With lice, we were super-bad.

McIntosh: Couldn't do anything about those?

Krenz: No. We had no powders, or no nothing.

McIntosh: Was that your main medical annoyance?

Krenz: I had a real bad ear infection. I was pretty well deaf at the time.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Krenz: In fact, when they flew me home, I had to wait for a plane that had a pressurized cabin.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: Otherwise, they said, my ear drums might have blown out.

McIntosh: They sure would have.

Krenz: But, I waited like a week and a half, or so, before I got out to Japan.

McIntosh: How long did you stay in Korea? Did you cross that river?

Krenz: Ah, about four days, I think. They took us by chopper to a hospital.

McIntosh: And what did they do for you in the hospital?

Krenz: They, we could have anything we wanted. They didn't really want us to eat too much.

McIntosh: Right. Too much, right away.

Krenz: They gave us all the eggnog we wanted, I remember that. I mean, that was super.

McIntosh: Boy, I bet that tasted good.

Krenz: Oh, yea. I had nurse asked if anybody was from Wisconsin. Was in the group. And I raised my hand, and she came over. And I got pretty well nauseated by her perfume. It made me sick. I don't know why. And my wife has to be very, very careful right now what perfume she wears. I just can't stand it.

McIntosh: Makes you nauseated?

Krenz: Yea. I got sick as a dog.

McIntosh: You mean, even today?

Krenz: Yep. It doesn't make me sick. It just makes me feel like my lips are a magnet. I just go ssssp. It just comes right and it stays on my lips.

McIntosh: In my thirty-five years of medical practice, I never, and I've talked to POWs, and all the time I've never heard that before. This is interesting.

Krenz: You know, I go to a grocery store, I cannot walk through the soap department.

McIntosh: Same problem?

Krenz: I can smell that soap and it just, bang! It comes right on me. It feels like, you know, I can taste it. Weird.

McIntosh: That is really bizarre. And your rear-end wound was no problem, I'm sure?

Krenz: No, I had got gangrene there. And also My buddy that got hit in the arm. He had, his was all messed up. But we had, what we could do, we tried to keep each other as clean as we could.

McIntosh: Right. Keep the air in there so it doesn't —

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: So it healed up?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: And what about the worms? What did the army do about the worms?

Krenz: They de-wormed us, of course. They de-loused us, de-wormed us immediately. De-loused. Went through tents.

McIntosh: Right. They gave you some medications for the worms?

Krenz: The worms. Yea.

McIntosh: How long did it take to get rid of those, do you suppose?

Krenz: I hope we got rid of them very soon. I can't remember. We just started getting better, this and that. And then you forget about it.

McIntosh: Right. How much weight did you lose in this experience?

Krenz: I lost eighty-two pounds. I weighed a hundred and two pounds when I got out.

McIntosh: A hundred and two?

Krenz: Right. And I was in pretty good shape, compared to a lot of those guys.

McIntosh: A lot of those guys were in worse shape than you, right?

Krenz: Oh, yea, they were.

McIntosh: How come some of them were worse off than you? Did you ever figure that out?

Krenz: Oh, I don't know. When I was a kid, I used to take care of myself. Just, not as far as eating, but take care of myself, as going out in the wilderness and do lot of camping, when I was eight, ten, twelve years old, because my folks divorced many years ago, and I was kind of on my own. My dad had to work, of course, and so I'd go camping by myself, or something. I'd eat buds off trees when I was ten, twelve years old, you know?

McIntosh: I can't think of a better preparation for living in a prison camp.

Krenz: Yea. And I feel that that really helped me.

McIntosh: Gave you attitude. Don't you think that was important?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: A lot of POWs, a lot of guys just gave up. And they shouldn't have died, particularly, but they just wouldn't do anything.

Krenz: I remember this one guy told me, "Krenz, I'm not going to eat that crap they're giving us." Well, he didn't get nothing else, and he died.

McIntosh: He just let himself go?

Krenz: He just let go.

McIntosh: He just gave it up.

Krenz: You get to that point.

- McIntosh: Feeling hopeless.
- Krenz: Yea. I've had it. My friend had it. You know, I'm talking about the one I was captured with. He'd give up, and I'd get him going. 'Come on, let's go. Let's exercise a little bit, here.'
- McIntosh: Right.
- Krenz: He's have to crawl over to the wall, to get up. I helped him get up, he was so weak. But, "Come on, let's go." And then, I'd get down. Then he'd come after me. You know, "Come on, let's go." You know.
- McIntosh: Pushing yourself as best you could. Did you ever feel that you were never going to get out?
- Krenz: Definitely.
- McIntosh: That was it?
- Krenz: Yep.
- McIntosh: Was that a common feeling? Everyone sort of felt that, sooner or later, we're going to get out.
- Krenz: Especially when we were with the Chinese, or with the Koreans. Especially with them.
- McIntosh: You assumed that they would starve you to death? Is that, was the standard way of dying? Just, didn't have enough —
- Krenz: Yea. We didn't care, almost. We weren't going home, anyway. I told, I can remember, when I was a kid, going down State Street, here, but, did I really remember that? Was that just a dream? Did I dream that?
- McIntosh: You had trouble remembering?
- Krenz: Well, it was so long. And then I used to dream I was walking down State Street, looking in store windows. And I'd ask, was I really there? Nah, I couldn't have been there. But, then, when I come home, when I'd dream I was over there, was I really over there? You know.
- McIntosh: The flip-side.
- Krenz: I know. That is a weird thing.

McIntosh: All right.

Krenz: That's what happened.

McIntosh: Right. Now, after four days there, you say, they flew you to Japan?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: What did they do differently to you then? Anything else?

Krenz: Well, they gave us a lot of going over, then, you know. Medically. I was on penicillin. I had so much infection in my body. Like every four hours, I'd get a shot of penicillin. In the butt. So, I was in Japan, probably, for a week, or ten days. Then they flew us to Hawaii, and we stayed a couple of days in the Big Pink Palace.

McIntosh: By this time, your weight was starting to come back pretty good?

Krenz: Oh, yea. By the time I got home, I weighed a hundred and thirty pounds, already. Yea.

McIntosh: Tell me about eating that first meal. Wasn't it kind of tough? Everybody says it is.

Krenz: Well, I think it was very light, myself. But, I just did what the doctors said, you know.

McIntosh: Right. Well, you probably did it the right way. A lot of guys I know sort of picked up a lot to eat and they threw it up within a half hour. They couldn't, their stomachs couldn't tolerate anything that rich.

Krenz: Well, I got a little bit sick on the milk stuff. Eggnog.

McIntosh: Right. That is pretty rich, too.

Krenz: They gave us all we wanted, said it was good for us, just keep on drinking it.

McIntosh: How about beer?

Krenz: I never had any beer until I got back to the States.

McIntosh: They had it available for you?

Krenz: Not over there, as I remember. Of course, in Japan, in the hospital there, you could, they gave us a pass. You could go out and walk around downtown, or

something.

McIntosh: Where in Japan did you go?

Krenz: Tokyo.

McIntosh: Tokyo.

Krenz: We weren't in that Tokyo General, though. That is a big hospital, but this was a smaller hospital. I can't remember the name. I was told, anyway. I thought it was Tokyo General all these years. But that is where I was in that picture.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: That was in Tokyo General, or in Tokyo.

McIntosh: By this time, how about your folks? You were single?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: When did your folks find out that you were not dead? Or a prisoner? Or what did they find out?

Krenz: Oh, when we got turned over to the Chinese, the Chinese released our names.

McIntosh: Before that, they didn't know?

Krenz: No. All the months and years we were with the Koreans, they didn't know. I was just reported missing in action.

McIntosh: That's all? You were just missing?

Krenz: Well, my first, my dad got a telegram. The first one was missing in action. Then he got one killed in action.

McIntosh: Wonderful.

Krenz: And, because someone reported me as being killed in Taejon, evidently. But I don't know who, or how. Because I kind of accounted for all the guys that were with me. No, they didn't know, until they turned us over to the Chinese.

McIntosh: So, how long did he go thinking you were dead?

Krenz: Oh, the Chinese must have turned our names over in '52, sometime in '52.

McIntosh: About a year, then.

Krenz: Oh, yea.

McIntosh: So for a year, he assumed you were dead?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: That's terrible.

Krenz: All the time during that Korean thing. And then we got turned over to the Chinese, in October, '51.

McIntosh: Boy, he must have been upset.

Krenz: Well, my mother was in contact with a kid that lived in Edgerton, down by the Milton area, down the river. And he was one of the kids that I helped carry when the Tiger was shooting the guy. I had to put him down and the Tiger shot him. His mother and my mother conversed back and forth all the time, wanting to know if she had heard anything, or if she's heard anything else, back and forth. And when I got home, my mother asked me if I ever knew a guy named Bill SIRRUS. Boy, I break out, now.

McIntosh: Right. He was the guy you were carrying?

Krenz: Right. He was the guy the Tiger shot, one of them.

McIntosh: He couldn't walk? Is that why you were —

Krenz: Yea. He was pretty sick. Couldn't walk.

McIntosh: The Tiger said, "Put him down or I'll shoot you both." Right?

Krenz: Yea. And one of the guards took his rifle and hit me on the knee, and I went down, too. And the other kid, when I let go, he immediately went down. I got right back up, myself. And the Tiger shot him, just a little ways away from him. Then he took his pistol and pointed it at me, and I said goodbye to my family. For some reason, I looked him in the eye, and for some reason, he looked at me, and he must have thought that I was still strong enough to go, and he just took his pistol and —

McIntosh: Immediately changed his mind?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Wow.

Krenz: Of course, I went up the road as fast as I could to catch up. Pretty close.

McIntosh: Very close. So, when you got back home, were you discharged?

Krenz: I went from Travis Air Force Base, when they flew me home, to the Navy station down here, Great Lakes, and I was in the hospital there until November 11.

McIntosh: For what purpose?

Krenz: Just to get well.

McIntosh: Oh. You hadn't completely got rid of all your worms?

Krenz: No. No. I still had medication to take when I went home.

McIntosh: I see.

Krenz: We had a three day pass to come home, in late October, '53, then. We were due to get discharged on the 11th, which was Veterans Day.

McIntosh: In '53?

Krenz: Yea. And so, the officer in charge, it was a holiday, so he wasn't there to sign our discharges. But a master sergeant, which was in charge then, said, "I'll sign his name." So he signed his name, we were discharged, and we were gone. And that was it.

McIntosh: So you went back to Columbus?

Krenz: Madison.

McIntosh: Madison? Your folks had moved to Madison.

Krenz: McFarland, Madison, actually McFarland.

McIntosh: And so, when you came back, did you use your GI Bill?

Krenz: No, I didn't. I applied for a house loan.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: But I wasn't making any money.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: And then, later on, when I got a job, I applied again, and I was making too much. So I never did get any benefit out of the GI Bill, which I could have went to school, or something, probably.

McIntosh: Yea. Right.

Krenz: I went to school when I was in Japan to get my high school diploma, and I was about ready to graduate with that, and then the Korean War broke out. It was kind of funny, because USAFI [United States Armed Forces Institute] used to be right over here a few blocks.

McIntosh: Right. I knew the guy who ran it.

Krenz: And all my records, when I had to send them, was Madison, Wisconsin. I said, "I'm from Madison, Wisconsin." That was kind of nice, to keep in touch with Madison, a little bit.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: But I never got it.

McIntosh: I was going to ask you, there was no mail in the prison camp? In or out?

Krenz: The Chinese, yes.

McIntosh: You could write a card?

Krenz: We could write a letter, like, in fact, I still have some of my old letters that I wrote home. They had a little peace dove on it, Chinese Republic, and that. Yea, about maybe once every other month, you could write a letter, or something. But you could receive letters.

McIntosh: Oh, you could?

Krenz: In fact, I received some pictures from my family.

McIntosh: But still, no Red Cross packages?

Krenz: Oh, no. Nothing like that. It would have been nice, but —

McIntosh: Everybody's experience is different. Okay. And, so did you, tell me what happened to the 34th Regiment. Did they, are they still, did they re-form after you left it?

- Krenz: Yea. I guess they re-formed, and went back in the big push, you know. They got more replacements. We didn't lose our colors.
- McIntosh: Right. So the regiment wasn't destroyed then, at all?
- Krenz: No. The 24th Division was almost completely destroyed, because that is when General Dean got captured, too. You know.
- McIntosh: Right.
- Krenz: He got captured.
- McIntosh: I took care of a lot of guys from the 24th Division, on the hospital ship.
- Krenz: Every name that I punch into a computer, like when I went out to Washington, for the monument, Korean War Memorial, I punched in our platoon, wondering whatever happened to them. They all came back "deceased, killed in action."
- McIntosh: Yea, it was pretty well decimated. And, did you join veterans groups?
- Krenz: Yea. I had a free year with the American Legion in McFarland. They gave me a free year. And I stayed maybe three or four years in that. Then I got married, and we had children, and were working, and doing this and doing that. We were young, you know And I said, well. But then, about twenty-five years ago now I rejoined. I don't know why I never stayed in. Because it is great. My home.
- McIntosh: Sure.
- Krenz: They do a lot of things for other veterans now.
- McIntosh: How about the VFW?
- Krenz: Yea. I'm a life member of the VFW. Which is in McFarland. It's not as strong as the American Legion in McFarland. Now, you go to some other towns, the VFW is the stronger.
- McIntosh: Yea, just the opposite. Yea, I am with the VFW, but I never was with the American Legion.
- Krenz: I'm going to a state convention, American Legion, next week in Wausau. But I am more involved in the American Legion.
- McIntosh: And then you are involved with your reunion with your group, though?

Krenz: Yea. Yea. I was very involved [unintelligible] to a week ago Sunday. You know, organized that.

McIntosh: How was that? Were you pleased with the turn-out?

Krenz: Yea. We had a couple of hundred people there.

McIntosh: Hey, that is wonderful.

Krenz: Big parade. Biggest parade in McFarland.

McIntosh: I saw the pictures in the paper.

Krenz: They had it on TV, too. Some of it. I was on Channel 3. I didn't get to see it yet, but everybody says it is okay. The interview. See, everyday I wake up, I'm going to call Channel 3 and see if I can get a copy of it, and then I forget and get busy doing something. I don't know if I can still get it or not.

McIntosh: Well, yea. It wouldn't hurt any, and I know people like that stuff.

Krenz: Yea. I remember the reporter's name. Ask for her, I guess.

McIntosh: Susan Lampert Smith?

Krenz: No, this one was Stephanie. I can't remember her last name, but it was Stephanie.

McIntosh: Oh. Which paper?

Krenz: Times.

McIntosh: Oh. Well, that is the one that interviewed you for the article?

Krenz: This was Channel 3.

McIntosh: Oh.

Krenz: Channel 3 took the tape.

McIntosh: Okay. Tell me the decorations you got, beside the Purple Heart.

Krenz: Oh, of course, the regular Japanese Occupation one.

McIntosh: Yea.

Krenz: The regular ones.

McIntosh: The area medals. Everyone got those. Yea.

Krenz: I got two Bronze Stars.

McIntosh: Were they specifically for some, for certain actions?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: Did every prisoner of war get a Bronze Star?

Krenz: I guess it's available now for prisoners of war.

McIntosh: That's what I understand. You got the medal?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: The bronze medal? It's about this big.

Krenz: Yea. It's a star.

McIntosh: Yea. It's a big one.

Krenz: Yea. It's big. And your name is engraved on the back of it.

McIntosh: Yes. I think the prisoner or war —

Krenz: I haven't gotten mine yet.

McIntosh: Does a citation come with that?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: What does your citation mention? You didn't bring a copy of that?

Krenz: No, I didn't. I could have, very easily. I know exactly where all that stuff is. It just says, for meritorious, whatever, during the face of the enemy. What I had done, there was, we were getting overrun and this outpost was getting overrun, I should say. And I knew someone had left a 60 millimeter mortar setting in one of the huts back there, with a lot of ammo around it. I don't know where the GIs went. I have no idea. They just run off and left it. So I told my company commander, I says, "I know where there is a mortar. Maybe it will help." And he said, "Krenz, grab two guys and go get it." So we went, and all I did was grab the tube, itself, with part of the base on it, but it's not, it comes up, the whole thing.

McIntosh: It's pretty heavy.

Krenz: So I told the other guys to grab what ammo they could, and so we went back up on the line, up there by the railroad tracks, and we started, I was holding the tube and I was kind of aiming it over these buildings.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: And, then, later on, we found out that there was a platoon out there that was getting overrun. And they said, "Whoever was firing those white phosphorus rounds, saved our butts," you know. But I never got that award then, of course. But my captain was also captured. Later on, he wrote up the thing, when we got out, and I got it.

McIntosh: Oh. That's great.

Krenz: Outside of that, the Purple Heart for, like I said, the general ones that you get when you are there, you know. The Purple Heart medal, and a POW medal. They just gave us a brand new one, now. Just came out.

McIntosh: Oh.

Krenz: Now, the South Korean government issued it in 1951, or something.

McIntosh: That's right.

Krenz: But the United States says you can't give foreign medals to our people. And, so they didn't want to do that. But now they just let them loose now.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: And I've got my --

McIntosh: Oh, how nice.

Krenz: It was in the VFW magazine. Otherwise, I would never have seen it. That you could send in \$5 to get this new medal that was awarded to us. So, I did, and I got it. Already.

McIntosh: How nice.

Krenz: Yea. Two weeks ago. And the Infantry Combat Badge.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: And unit citations, and stuff like that.

McIntosh: Yes.

Krenz: That we were awarded, with a cluster in it.

McIntosh: Well, that's a lot, for the short period of time that you were in action. I think that is a hell of a lot.

Krenz: It is. Yea.

McIntosh: Twenty days?

Krenz: Twenty days.

McIntosh: Well, yea. You got a lot done in twenty days.

Krenz: Yea. I seen a lot of this country, I guess.

McIntosh: Very good. Now, tell me again, about these numbers. How will they translate into people's names?

Krenz: Okay.

McIntosh: That was the purpose, wasn't it? To write these guys, in numbers?

Krenz: Yea. So, if somebody got it, they would know who it would be.

McIntosh: Right.

Krenz: First of all, I took their initials. I took the alphabet. And, instead of going, like, if their name was, let's say —

McIntosh: Go ahead.

Krenz: French Kennedy, let's say. Okay, I took the alphabet down. I numbered half of the alphabet backwards. And the other half, from there on, forward. And I took like the letter F, which would be, if you had it backwards, you'd count one-two-three-four, and the letter F would be a certain number. Well, that went here. Then let's say it was backwards. I don't remember. I'd have to put it down and write numbers down. But, say it was number 21, backwards. And then K, we'd start in the front, here, and number that one to K, whatever number that would be. That was like, 22. Well, there is two numbers, 21 and 22. And then I'd just put these fake numbers, like 16, and I think I got like eight, six numbers in a row there. And I put like two numbers over this fake one. But the two middle ones meant the

initials of the guy, backwards, that I would know, see. And I've got more papers of this at home that it is already wrote out, that I did for the government at the time. So, but like I say, I was —

McIntosh: You've got papers explaining what —

Krenz: What the code it, yea.

McIntosh: Can we have copies of that, to go with this?

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: That, and a copy of your Bronze Star citation. That would really be nice. That would be a nice package for the museum, so they could show people. That would really be nice.

Krenz: Yea, I can get you that.

McIntosh: Yea. That would be terrific. Just mail it to the museum. I'll give you my card. Then it will end up in the right spot.

Krenz: Okay. Code.

McIntosh: Now, the government was interested in that list because, did they say why?

Krenz: Well, if they knew that someone caused death over there, of some other GI during the POW camps, he might be prosecuted.

McIntosh: If he did—

Krenz: Or dishonorably discharged, or something, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Krenz: No, I don't know. This became declassified after a year, so —

McIntosh: Yea, I'm sure it's declassified by now.

Krenz: Yea. See, that is why they sent them back to me. Of course, they kept copies of it and it is probably someplace —

McIntosh: Certainly.

Krenz: I would have no idea where to start a memorial.

McIntosh: You couldn't remember all that now.

Krenz: No. It's been years.

McIntosh: Because all you had was these boys' initials.

Krenz: Yea.

McIntosh: And you didn't have any other way of keeping track of those names?

Krenz: That's all. Yea. But, I could still pick out quite a few of them.

McIntosh: Oh, could you?

Krenz: Oh, I think so, yea. There are some dates of some guys who died, too, on there, and where. So, the cornfield. I'd say they froze to death in the cornfield, in the winter. When we slept out in the cornfield. They are on there. I've got some pictures that my family sent of my nieces and nephews, and stuff, and I wrote on the back of them, some dates of certain people that I knew, who died. Especially of the guys from Wisconsin, some addresses and stuff.

McIntosh: Sure.

Krenz: I am the only one that come out of that group, from our Tiger Survivors, who, you know, was from Wisconsin.

McIntosh: How many Tiger Survivors do we have left?

Krenz: Ah, right around a hundred, I think.

McIntosh: That's pretty good.

Krenz: We'll be doing a re-count again, when we go out to Spokane, at the end of this month, now. We're getting a lot of descendants of people who died there. You know. Their sisters, or their nieces and nephews are getting interested and they want to find out what happened to their uncle, and all that. I get stuff a lot on e-mail, wondering if I knew this person, that person.

McIntosh: So you sort of turned into the secretary of the Tiger group?

Krenz: No. No. It just happened to be on e-mail, which a lot of them are, so. There is one of my friend, in California, we e-mail back and forth a lot. He's actually the head of the Tiger group.

McIntosh: Well, that is a hell of a story.

- Krenz: Well, there is a lot that happened. These missionaries, the nuns, when we were on the march, the North Koreans were going to, they had us up by a big wall, like a wall, but if you fell, you were going to go over the cliff. And they had us all lined up, they were going to shoot us all. And these nuns all got in line, and they started singing in front of us. And somehow, the North Koreans changed their minds. They didn't shoot us.
- McIntosh: How heroic. They could have been shot.
- Krenz: Oh, sure. For some reason, they let us go, all go, and we went on. I've got an article on that, too. It's been in the papers, years and years ago. Life magazine, May of '53, we were in there. I should have brought that with me. It shows us all marching north, all these guys.
- McIntosh: Oh my goodness.
- Krenz: Yea. May, of '53. Probably seven pictures of us. In fact, there is a picture I told you about, when the airplane come over?
- McIntosh: Yes.
- Krenz: There is a picture of that, in Life magazine. I never knew about that for many years and then someone told me about it. So, I have a friend of mine that loves to get into antique stuff, and all that. Some years ago, now. And I told her, if she ever runs into that magazine, let me know. The one birthday I had, she gave it to me as a birthday present.
- McIntosh: Where did she find the magazine?
- Krenz: Out looking for stuff, you know. Garage sales, and things. But she never did really tell me where she found it, but I presume that is what she does all the time. You know, I go to garage sales or flea markets, and you see stacks of old books and stuff.
- McIntosh: Sure.
- Krenz: She found one for me. Yea. I still have it. I don't know, I have a couple of pictures, I don't know if it was in this paper or not.
- McIntosh: Of what?
- Krenz: Of us marching, when we were POWs.
- McIntosh: There is one picture.

Krenz: Yea. There are several of them.

McIntosh: Well, all right. That should do her. Let me make some copies of that.

Krenz: My flag?

McIntosh: Yea. that is what I really would like to do that. So, if I may.

Krenz: I was going to bring a regular copy. I have copies of it myself, but I said, well, it is in that book, if you want it.

McIntosh: Yea. I'll be right back. I'll just put it on the machine right outside here.

Krenz: Okay. [Long pause on the tape.]

McIntosh: There you go, sir.

Krenz: Thanks.

McIntosh: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I learned a lot today. And now I will turn this over to the people who know about these things. And will preserve that.
Yea.

[End of Interview.]