

# **Carl Edward Lind**

Transcribed by Lorraine Lightcap  
Midway Village & Museum Center  
6799 Guilford Road  
Rockford, Illinois 61107

## Carl Edward Lind

World War II Veteran  
United States Navy

My name is Charles Nelson. I'm a volunteer with the Midway Village in Rockford, Illinois, which is cooperating with the statewide effort to collect oral histories from Illinois citizens that participated in the momentous events surrounding World War II. We are in the office of Midway Village in Rockford, Illinois, interviewing Carl Lind. Mr. Lind served in a branch of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. We are interviewing him about his experiences in that war.

**NELSON:** Please give us your full name and place of birth. We would also like the names of each one of your parents and did you have any brother or sisters?

**LIND:** My name is Carl Edward Lind. My parents were Charles L. Lind and my mother's was Anna O. Lind, maiden name was Lindvall.

**NELSON:** Did you have any brothers or sisters?

**LIND:** I had one sister a year and a half older named Jean my other sister died before I was born.

**NELSON:** Are there any details about your parents and/or about your family that you would like to give?

**LIND:** Well, both my parents emigrated from Sweden around the turn of the century. My father was a pattern maker and had his own business in later years. He died when I was four years old. I was brought up in Chicago and moved out here by marriage.

**NELSON:** This part here, entering into the military service. What was life like before the war and specifically during 1941?

**LIND:** Before the war, most of my memories are of depression years. We didn't have it too hard. My dad had died and my mother had a small income from insurance money. As I recall,

the war built up but I don't have too much memory of it until about the late '30s. Being in high school we started getting a feeling of the war going on in Europe. Around '39 or '40 things started tightening up as far as availability of goods. Rationing. I don't remember when that started.

**NELSON:** How did you hear of December 7th, 1941, the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese? If so, where were you and what were you doing at the time? What was your reaction to the response of those around you?

**LIND:** I was in Chicago, stayed overnight with a couple of friends. On Maxwell Street Sunday morning. Heard this blaring over the radio but I didn't pay much attention to it until I got in the car to go home. Found out what it was all about. We were I believe aware that war was imminent with us involved in it. I reported to work at 6 p. m. that evening. I worked a twelve hour shift. There was a lot of discussion going on at the time—a time to talk.

**NELSON:** Had you formed any prior opinion or developed any feeling about what had been taking place in Europe and Asia.

**LIND:** Growing up in Rockford and being dominated by conservative Republican papers, the Chicago Tribune and the Rockford papers, we were pretty much against getting in the war ... family and community as a whole. Once the war started, patriotism dominated our thinking.

**NELSON:** Do you recall reading newspaper accounts of German aggression in Europe?

**LIND:** Oh, yes, but don't ask me to remember.

**NELSON:** Did you have any knowledge of Hitler's speeches ideas or actions?

**LIND:** Yes, I did. I had one good friend that had read "Mein Kampf" and he got me to read a lit-

tle bit about it. I read part of the book I never read the whole book. I got the general gist of what he was all about.

**NELSON:** What events led your entry into the military service? Were you already in the service draft or did you volunteer?

**LIND:** After receiving one six month deferment at Ingersoll Milling Company, I volunteered ... part of it was a feeling of patriotism. I had been in ROTC in high school. Two friends of mine had enlisted. These were the factors.

**NELSON:** Had you formed any prior opinion or developed any feeling about what had been taking place in Europe or Asia?

**LIND:** Yes, I believe I had. My feelings were that we should stay out of the war until we actually got involved in it. I was really unaware of the Jewish situation over there. I knew Hitler was our enemy.

**NELSON:** When and where were you inducted?

**LIND:** I was inducted in Chicago, July of '43.

**NELSON:** Do you have any special memories of this event?

**LIND:** Well, yes. I took the train into Chicago, stayed over night and reported in the morning, early morning. After swearing in, we were put on a troop train ... three days, 2 nights ... went down to Mississippi.

**NELSON:** How old were you?

**LIND:** I was 19.

**NELSON:** What happened after you were inducted?

**LIND:** I reported down there to \_\_\_?\_\_\_Field, Mississippi for basic training.

**NELSON:** What did you think of the training?

**LIND:** The training? Well, I guess I figured the training was necessary. Living conditions were

tough coming out of civilian life. The food was terrible, it was hot and the gulf coast atmosphere in the middle of summer was not too pleasant for a northerner. Survived.

**NELSON:** Did anything special happen there?

**LIND:** No, no it was a fast six weeks as I recall.

**NELSON:** Tell us about all the training camps you attended.

**LIND:** I went from there to classification at San Antonio. Let's back up. We went from there to basic training up to Augustana College, college training detachment. Then from there went down to the Classification Center in San Antonio. Took our tests and qualified for navigation training. Went directly to Ellington Field, Houston, Texas. And went through pre-flight and advanced navigation school.

**NELSON:** Did you have any leaves or passes?

**LIND:** Not until that time, no. After graduation I got an eleven day leave I believe it was.

**NELSON:** What do you recall this period about the places that you were stationed, the friends you made, the association with civilians?

**LIND:** Well, basic training, some of our groups went on to CDT, I'd already made friendships with and at Augustana College there I spent three months. We lived in an old Fraternity House —twenty-five of us—and we formed pretty close relationships. We got together in '46 or '47 right after the war. For 25 years we had reunions ... maybe five of them in Rockford, Illinois. We were all from the mid west and still keep in touch with several of these friends.

**NELSON:** What was your military unit?

**LIND:** Is this overseas?

**NELSON:** I would say, probably you were in the Air Force, right? What were your assigned duties?

**LIND:** I was a navigator. After graduating I was assigned to crew training in Westover Field, Massachusetts. We trained on a B-24 and then spent about three months there actually. Then we were assigned a brand new plane and flew overseas in the winter of '43. Left in December. Flew the North Atlantic route over Labrador, Greenland, Iceland and down to England, Northwest Africa and over to southern Italy.

**NELSON:** You were still assigned as a navigator?

**LIND:** Yes.

**NELSON:** What did you think of the nation's war effort up to this point?

**LIND:** Having worked at Ingersoll Milling which was fully involved in wartime machinery, I was quite enthused about what we were doing. And I was enthused about my training and the efforts we were making. It seemed that the war was dragging on for an awful long time. We were, I should say gung ho about the whole thing.

**NELSON:** If you did not immediately enter the combat zone, where did you go before entering combat?

**LIND:** As I said, we went over the North Atlantic route and were immediately assigned upon arriving in Italy to the 465<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 738<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

**NELSON:** Tell us about your experience entering your first combat zone.

**LIND:** Well, we had an exciting trip over there. Our first mission we flew up into Austria actually. Our first mission we had a runway problem on the bomb run turned back. The mission was 64° below Fahrenheit. Outside of that the mission was pretty normal.

**NELSON:** Can you list for us in order of occurrence all subsequent action in which you were involved? The high lights, I would say.

**LIND:** Well, I flew 24 missions, altogether ... 23 of them with my own crew. We had a few harrowing experiences. I would say that 70% of them were up over the Alps into southern Germany and Austria, Czechoslovakia. I did not see, personally, any German aircraft in the air, being over there during the last six months of the war. We had good fighter coverage the whole time but we did suffer from flack a few times. One time we had one engine knocked out. Another one was leaking oil real bad. The pilot asked for a heading to Switzerland and I decided after a few minutes that we were going to make it back over the Alps, so we turned back. We lost very few crews out of our squadron. I believe mainly because we did not have the enemy aircraft attacking us, as was done in the early part of the war.

**NELSON:** You didn't have any casualties before?

**LIND:** No, outside of frozen feet. The radio operator was awarded the Purple Heart for this.

**NELSON:** How cold did it get while you were up there?

**LIND:** 64° below on our first mission. It was not anywhere near that as we had electrically heated suits, electrically heated gloves, and shoes or slippers we slipped inside of our boots.

**NELSON:** Did your mental attitude change as combat continued?

**LIND:** No, I think most fellows would say that they were scared as heck on bomb runs, encountering any enemy opposition but most of us had the feeling we would get back.

**NELSON:** Did you write many letters home?

**LIND:** Yes, I wrote, mostly to mother and sister at home two to three times a week. And to other friends in the service occasionally.

**NELSON:** Did you receive many letters and/or packages and if so how often? What type of things did you receive in packets?

**LIND:** Well, we did receive some literature from home ... a couple of books ... and candy a couple of times. I remember getting two boxes of Hershey bars one time, homemade cookies. I received a book on the Italian language from a friend in Rockford and some clothing articles.

**NELSON:** Did most of the other men write or receive letters?

**LIND:** Yes.

**NELSON:** Did you forge close bonds of friendship with many or some of your combat companions?

**LIND:** Definitely with our crew members.

**NELSON:** Have you remained in contact with any of your World War II companions?

**LIND:** Yes, my co-pilot especially. He lives in Waukegan, Illinois, and I see him several times a year. We have had ... been together for reunions. Our squadron has reunions now. This will be the sixth one this year, I believe.

**NELSON:** Prior to the end of the war, were you aware of any civilian concentration camps that existed? If so, please explain how you learned about them and how much you knew at that time.

**LIND:** Well, we knew they existed. I don't recall that we were told where they were. A friend of mine was in a prisoner of war camp near Vienna and found out later that he had been working on marshalling the yards that we actually bombed.

**NELSON:** What was the highlight occurrence of your combat experience or any other experience as you can remember?

**LIND:** Oh, I would say receiving my wings and graduating as a navigator, receiving my 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant rating. Probably the most exciting time was on that one mission where we had an engine knocked out—we were heading for Switzerland throwing ammunition and other things out of the plane to save weight.

**NELSON:** Tell us what the other men did to celebrate America's traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**LIND:** Well, I am sorry to say that our Christmas, when we first arrived in Italy was not something I brag about. We had just arrived a few days before Christmas. We were assigned to tents and our crew got together to have a little social blowout on Christmas Eve. It was raining steady outside and I think being over there in Italy and being away from home the second time at Christmas we kind of let loose with an unusual celebration.

**NELSON:** When did you return to the U. S.?

**LIND:** Returned in June of '45.

**NELSON:** What happened when you arrived in the U. S.?

**LIND:** We landed in Columbia, South Carolina, as I recall. Very happy to be there. We were almost immediately given leave to go home. And arriving back in Camp Grant in Rockford I was met by my mother and sister and my best friend that had been over there as a prisoner of war.

**NELSON:** Please tell us about your highest military rank and your decorations especially you campaign decorations.

**LIND:** Well, I did receive a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant rating over in Italy, campaign ribbon for several different theaters of war and also an air medal with one oak leaf cluster.

**NELSON:** This is in regard to return to civilian life. How did you get along with the men with whom you had the greatest contact in the service?

**LIND:** While in the service. I had no problems. I was probably a little bit of a loner. I didn't cause any trouble. I, for the most part, got along great.

**NELSON:** Were there things you would do differently if you could do them again?

**LIND:** That's kind of a tough question to answer. Things went so fast for me. We did not spend any time waiting around once I got in the service. It was boom, boom, boom within one year I had my wings.

**NELSON:** What was the most difficult thing you had to do during your period of military service?

**LIND:** I suppose just flying combat missions.

**NELSON:** Is there any one thing that stands out in your most successful achievement in military service?

**LIND:** I feel in general that I did a good job as a navigator that I was trained for. I received compliments from my pilot and co-pilot. We never had any serious navigation problems.

**NELSON:** How did you hear about VE Day and what was your reaction to it?

**LIND:** I was on a small train going through Alabama being transferred to Tampa, Florida, to Barksdale Field, Louisiana. We were made aware of it by a fire engine in a small town with a big banner—the war was over. We would like to have had a club car or something to go in and celebrate. That was it. The next morning arriving at Barksdale Field, we went to report. There was nobody to report to. They had been out all night—carousing, I guess. Celebrating.

**NELSON:** How did you learn about VJ Day and what was your reaction to it?

**LIND:** I got you mixed up. That was VJ Day that I learned about on the train. VE Day, we were over there in Italy and were sent to Rome for a four day rest leave in May and learned there the end of the war and the capitulation of the German army and northern Italy at that time and knew the war would soon be over. I was back on the base when the war was over but we purely expected it real soon.

**NELSON:** What was your opinion of the use of the atomic bomb when it was first used against Japanese civilians in August of 1945?

**LIND:** Well, I was surprised I guess but I felt it was a thing we had to do.

**NELSON:** Has your opinion changed in the last fifty years?

**LIND:** No. I think we had to do it to save an awful lot of American lives even though civilians were killed over in Japan.

**NELSON:** When and where were you officially discharged from the service?

**LIND:** I was discharged at Barksdale Field in Louisiana.

**NELSON:** Do you remember the date?

**LIND:** It was right at the end of August of '45. I had two weeks leave, as I recall, and started at Beloit College as soon as I got home still on my two weeks leave.

**NELSON:** Do you have any disability rating or pension?

**LIND:** No.

**NELSON:** Do you have any opinions or theories about the nation's military status or its policies?

**LIND:** No I can't say that I do. I feel that we have spent too much money on military but that may have been a necessary evil.

**NELSON:** Do you have any contact with the Veterans' Administration?

**LIND:** Well, I still have my veteran's insurance policy. Just through that. That's my only contact.

**NELSON:** You've never been in a VA hospital or anything like that.

**LIND:** No.

**NELSON:** Would you like to tell us how your family supported you during your military life.

**LIND:** My mother and sister certainly didn't want to see me go into the service but they realized the situation and kept sending me letters and packages. I had a lot of warm support from them.

**NELSON:** Over the subsequent years, what has this support meant to you?

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