

Describing His WWII Ephemera

RN: Well I have a whole lot of things, including Nazi flags. Remember, I was a ranger. Well, we spent most of our missions behind German lines. So it wasn't difficult to pick up anything, what was difficult was getting it home.

SA: What do you mean, why?

RN: The answer is, I couldn't take a knife from some German and then send it home - they wouldn't mail it. So it was very, very difficult. But, this is an original version of Mein Kampf, which is very rare. We captured lots of prisoners. And, one German officer was a general. And so, the first thing you do when you capture a prisoner: first of all, when you get to a German you can shoot him, but if you take a prisoner you have to treat him civilly. And the first thing you do is disarm him. You take everything away that could be dangerous. So we captured a German division headquarters, and this was the commanding General's sword. I took it and kept it, and was able to get it home. But this is a clicker. When I was a kid like you, every child in the United States had a clicker. You got 'em in Cracker Jammer -

SA: Cracker Jack.

RN: Yeah, Cracker Jack! And there was one in the box. And then they disappeared, no one else worried about it. So on D-Day, things were a big mess. But on D-Day night, identifying friends was very difficult. [Click] "Who are you?" [Click, click] "I'm an American." [Click, click, click] "Advance to be recognized." That saved lots and lots of lives. But, the Germans captured them, and it only worked for D-Day night.