

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
Interview with Charles Winick by Brandon Bies  
New York, NY  
September 16, 2010

BRANDON BIES: Today is September 16, 2010. This is an oral history interview as part of the Fort Hunt, P.O. Box 1142 oral history project. We are here interviewing Mr. Charles Winick at his home in New York City. This is Brandon Bies, historian with the National Park Service, also joined by Vincent Santucci, Chief Ranger, and this is a first in a series of recorded interviews with Mr. Winick, a veteran of the Military Intelligence Research Section [00:31]. With that, Mr. Winick, the first thing I'd like to do if you wouldn't mind is give us your most basic and important information, which is when and where were you born.

CHARLES WINICK: I was born in New York City, in 1922.

BB: Okay, and you had mentioned earlier your family was an immigrant family. Your parents weren't born in Europe?

CW: Yes.

BB: Where were they from?

CW: Russia [00:55] and Czechoslovakia.

BB: Okay. Okay. Growing up [01:00] here in New York City [01:01], did you speak English? Did they speak English in the home or did your parents speak a mix of languages?

CW: They spoke a mix of languages in the home.

BB: Okay.

CW: And when I entered elementary school my English was very poor. However, I was learning as rapidly in school.

BB: Okay. So, had they immigrated here then just before you were born?

CW: Around the time of -- just -- that's right, around from the end of World War I [01:38].

BB: Okay. Okay. And so just as a matter of curiosity, did your father have a World War I service?

CW: No. No

BB: No, okay, and you went to school here in New York [01:52]. And so, what language did you speak other than English? Did you speak German, or Slovak, or --

CW: No, we [02:00] spoke Yiddish [02:02], and -- primarily Yiddish I would say.

BB: Okay.

CW: However, I was interested in languages with friends who were similarly situated. You know, we sought out opportunities to -- when we reached our teens, to be in venues where there were persons like merchant mariners from other countries. We would hang out there, and we were willing to exchange lessons in their language for lessons from us, for one or two friends and myself in English. And then, I studied French and German in college. And I particularly [03:00] studied scientific German, which at the time was a very important consideration for people intending to go to graduate school. The American graduate schools were essentially modeled on the 19th century German graduate schools, and so by the time I was in my late teens, I knew French and German pretty well, and English. I had also -- to improve my language skills, I studied Latin and Greek, each for a number of years. So, I had -- and I was interested in the subject of languages. And -- with friends who had similar interests, we would be able to practice with each other or socialize, and [04:00] seek out kind of social situations, a meeting place where there would be people from other countries interested in meeting persons

who spoke English.

BB: [affirmative] Did you take any of these languages when you were in high school or just not -- or not until you got to college.

CW: Both.

BB: Okay.

CW: Both.

BB: Out of curiosity, when you were growing up, I'm talking before college, when you were a child and a teenager, what did you want to do when you grew up? Did you know?

CW: No.

BB: Okay.

CW: Not at all.

BB: Okay, and so you went straight from high school into college then?

CW: Yes.

BB: About what year would that have been?

CW: I left high school in 1938 and I graduated from college in 1941.

BB: Oh, okay. Okay, and where did you go to college?

CW: City College [04:51] in New York [04:52].

BB: City College.

CW: A branch of the City University of New York now.

BB: Okay, and again did you have a specific [05:00] major that you were studying at the City College or was it just general languages?

CW: It was relatively diffuse, that is that there weren't one, clear-cut major that I had, but --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- I certainly took my own language courses that were available, particularly in the Latin and Greek, which were available earlier, which was very high grade instructors, and because there were relatively few students in any of the language programs at the college [05:37] for a variety of reasons, the classes were small and it was possible to get a really high grade, detailed, practical instruction in translation, in the speech, and colloquialism, and so forth.

BB: When you were in college at City College, did you have [06:00] any military experience, ROTC [06:03] or anything like that?

CW: No.

BB: Okay.

CW: The ROTC had been the subject of a lot of student protests for a number of years there. So, it was a -- not a -- I would say it was not a highly regarded activity, however General Colin Powell [06:25] attended the college, and found it to be a productive direction for his abilities. And he is very proud of his affiliation there and how it transformed him from a street guy, which he says that he was, into what he became, a world leader.

BB: And I asked earlier about what you wanted to do; when you were in college, did you know that you wanted to go to graduate school or did you have a specific career [07:00] in mind when you were in college?

CW: Well, I had some -- it was a time when it was very difficult to get any job. I graduated in 1941, and it was not a good time. I drifted into office work and different kinds of journalism work.

BB: Okay.

CW: And writing for trade papers, and comic strips, and scripts. And odds and ends, a number

of -- a lot of small jobs, but this is what I kind of drifted into. I was a -- I'd say a low level journalist and writer.

BB: And is that what you did [08:00] immediately upon graduation from college [08:02]?

CW: That's right. Yes, I did.

BB: Okay, and is what you remember about December 7, about Pearl Harbor [08:11]? You were working in journalism at that point?

CW: Yes. I remember the day very vividly. I remember what I was wearing and I was shocked by how important it was. And I decided to look into going into the service immediately. However, my income was needed. At the time my father was a house painter, which was a poorly paying job with few options and no upward mobility possible, only other kind of mobility was probable. So, my income [09:00] was needed and I decided however to the -- left to the opposition of my parents to enlist on my own. So, I did enlist in 1942.

BB: Okay, and when you -- we touched upon this earlier, when you and I were chatting. Did you have any thoughts as to what branch of service you wanted to go into, or what field of the -- what theater of the war you wanted to fight in?

CW: No, I didn't know enough about what was happening. I followed the war very closely, but I didn't know enough to make what I would now consider a reasonable choice of option, but I didn't know what the options were. I was happy to be in uniform and participated actively. And worked as diligently as I could. And [10:00] was able to go to an Officers Candidate School [10:04]. And I was selected for it, OCS, and the military police [10:09].

BB: Okay.

CW: And I served as a military police officer, a number of posts in the United States in a productive way. However, when I was stationed up -- oh, it's quite a lovely post, Fort Sam Houston [10:32], in Texas. I had a very comfortable situation there. I felt that I might be stranded there for the rest of the war, and therefore I really wanted to see combat action, about which I knew very little. So, I asked for a transfer to the infantry school [11:00], parachute school at Fort Benning [11:03], Georgia, and my application was accepted. And so, I went to the infantry school. There's a retread course for people from other branches, and I graduated as a platoon leader and second lieutenant of infantry, and assigned to a combat battalion that was training to go overseas as a replacement battalion in the European Theater [11:34]. And trained my platoon -- and I was looking forward to it, that is to go in with my combat battalion when I was called in and told that I was going to a post office box in Alexandria [11:55]. And the commander [12:00] didn't know what it was all about or how it had come about. He asked me if I knew any -- I said, "I have no knowledge whatsoever about it," and I didn't even know how to get there and what the logistics would be, but I tried to see if it could be deferred or canceled. I was happy with the group, but I couldn't.

BB: Going back to ask a few follow-up questions before we get to P.O. Box 1142 [12:38], so you entered officer candidate school [12:42] and this would've been in 1942, you went to OCS?

CW: Forty-three.

BB: Oh, 43. Okay, and you came out as a second lieutenant?

CW: Yes.

BB: With the military police [12:56]?

CW: Right.

BB: When you were working with the military police [13:00], did you have -- you mentioned you were stationed at a number of posts?

CW: Yes.

BB: Were you basically supervising or acting as guard duty or were you working with prisoners at any capacity?

CW: Yes, sometimes yes. It varied, at Fort Custer [13:19] and Fort Sam Houston [13:22]. There were a lot of folks with a prison type situation. We enforced the military laws, and the civilian laws, and a wide range of police duties.

BB: Let me restate that. Did you work at all at any post that had enemy prisoners of war [13:50]?

CW: No.

BB: Okay.

CW: Like I saw it. I didn't -- I think I would have known. Of course I would have known about it, but I don't recall that at those [14:00] posts.

BB: Okay, and so you then after it sounds like about year of this duty --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- did you then put your name in and volunteered to go through the retread?

CW: Yes, that's right. I volunteered. I applied formally and followed an elaborate procedure. And there was a shortage of -- in fact there were -- out of a class of 1,000, I was the only volunteer. The only other officers there were -- to say that they weren't happy would be a tremendous understatement. They were very, very, very unhappy for the most part.

BB: [affirmative] And that's because these were folks who had, you know, quote,

“comfortable positions” --

CW: Well, they had been trained to do something important from their point of view, and they were -- and whatever living arrangements and so forth were appropriate, they [15:00] had made and were looking forward to continuing their military career. And here they were being plucked from quartermaster, adjutant general, or administrative folks, coast artillery, stuff like that until we become platoon leaders. Many of them were very unhappy at some -- undoubtedly many were happy, but those who were unhappy made their voices heard.

BB: You had shown me a document earlier, and it actually had a comment on their about paratrooper school [15:34].

CW: Yes.

BB: Was this specifically at Fort Benning [15:37]? Was this really --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- really a paratrooper?

CW: Well, both schools were at the same place.

BB: Oh, okay.

CW: You had to go through the infantry school. You had to be a qualified infantry officer before you could go to the parachute school [15:51], and I had applied for the infantry school, but there had been no action taken on it by the time I was [16:00] assigned to a combat unit. I don't really remember whether I was interested in pursuing paratroop. I guess I certainly was interested in it enough to take the physical exam.

BB: Right.

CW: That's the real step.



BB: Right.

CW: But you know, events transpired and well, infantry is where I want to be.

BB: Okay, and so you were in your replacement battalion as a --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- second lieutenant, but generally you were -- and you said you were almost a week from being --

CW: Yes, correct, correct.

BB: -- shipped off.

CW: Yes.

BB: Where were you? You were still at Fort Benning [16:42] at that point?

CW: No, the unit was at Camp Blanding [16:46], Florida.

BB: Oh, okay. Okay.

CW: It was a replacement center and the individuals and groups were trained to go over as replacements, to the European Theater [16:59]. That was its mission [17:00].

BB: Okay, and while you were there or prior, had you taken any tests or anyone ever ask you about your language skills?

CW: Never.

BB: That had never come up?

CW: No, it had not.

BB: Nothing related to specific interests at all to military intelligence?

CW: No, when I filled out the -- whatever forms that I was required to fill out upon entering the service, on getting a commission and certainly upon entering the service, I reported my knowledge of languages and I saw that there was a self-rating of degree of skill. And

I reported them, my language skill as fairly and -- but I forgot all about that. That was one of many things that I was asked about and many forms I filled out. And [18:00] I had totally forgotten about that whole interest of mine, since there appeared to be no way of implementing it.

BB: Okay. Vince, do you have any questions at this point? So, you're at Camp Blanding [18:15] and you get this order out of, you know, left field.

CW: Yes.

BB: Ordering you to go to P.O. Box 1142 [18:23], and you -- again, to express, you had no idea what this place was --

CW: Right.

BB: -- other than it's Alexandria [18:28], Virginia. And the orders did not say what you would be doing there?

CW: That's correct, nothing.

BB: Okay. So, could you describe for us what happened next? You arrived -- you took the train I guess up to Washington [18:40]?

CW: I took the train and I'm trying to recall. I think that I inquired at the post -- actually inquired at the post office. I inquired somewhere and I -- some authority then who had similar [19:00] experiences with soldiers who were wandering around and somehow got me in touch with the post. And a car came and picked me up. And I was really surprised that we seemed -- the car seemed to disappear into the woods. I would have not have been able to know that there was anything there.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: And I only had that impression. Subsequently, I thought it was a marvelous job of

creating a vibrant, active activity in the woods.

BB: So, it's safe to say it was a very secluded location?

CW: Very, yes.

BB: Okay. So, could you describe for us then what it is you came to realize you were going to do there? How -- did -- were you sat down on your first day and told, "Here's P.O. Box 1142 [19:58]. This is what's going on [20:00] here," or how did that go about? How did you find out what your role was going to be?

CW: Well, I got to the post and I don't recall any clear, systematic introduction, and I was told that the unit there was a place where there were prisoners [20:25] and various materials were evaluated and prepared. And that I would have some role in the second -- that was the prep for evaluation, preparation of the materials. It was pretty vague and I attempted to find out, once I was there, how did I get there --

BB: Sure.

CW: -- no one would help me, and they [21:00] -- apparently they didn't seem to know; in other words, finally, the decision to pluck me, one little guy out of an active unit had occurred in some [inaudible] way that maybe was totally depersonalized. It may have been a random check of -- I guess we'd now call an IBM type records. I had no idea. In fact, I never found out, and even though I got to know people at a high level, it isn't clear. And maybe someone I had met perhaps in OCS [21:47], but since I had pretty frequent contact with the people I had met there [22:00] during the war and after the war. And it's the 1950s. And I would ask, you know. It was not an obsession with me. I was just curious. I would ask all the people that -- you know, anything to do with this and no one could come up with any explicit rationale.

BB: When you arrived, were you under the impression that you had already been assigned to what turned out to be MIRS [22:33]? You mentioned you found out that there was -- that the prisoner [22:36] activities going on and other activities. Did you get the impression that you arrived and that somebody decided, "Oh, Lieutenant Winick, he would be a good fit for MIRS," or had that already been decided when you got there?

CW: Oh, it had clearly been decided by the time I walked in there for the first time.

BB: Okay, and so [23:00] could you then describe what you found out, what became for you MIRS [23:09] in the infrastructure -- I shouldn't say the infrastructure; the new organization? It sounds like you were one of just a hand full of officers involved in that program. Was Captain -- I guess at the time, Captain Kluge [23:27] there at the time when you arrived?

CW: Yes. He was there when I arrived and I was assigned to work with him. You mentioned that there were handling them with a handful of officers. I was struck by the seemingly efficient security there, and looking over MIRS [23:52] documents I discovered that there was one other officer who arrived at the same week that I did [24:00], who was similarly transferred to London [24:02] at the same time. And he was doing document work. And I do not recall ever having met the guy, even though he was -- according to the records, we were there. We arrived at the same time and we left at the same time for the same destination. And continued working at the new place, that is London. And I do not recall the guy at all. So, there was an -- I found the security to be exemplary, too exemplary because I would realize I knew so little about all was happening, and I realized that it was inappropriate to ask questions.

VINCENT SANTUCCI: And just in terms of timeframe, do you recall when you arrived at

1142 [25:00]?

CW: Either late December or early January.

BB: Okay, of '45?

CW: Yes.

BB: Okay, '44, '45.

CW: Yes, let me tell you the official records, they seem to be -- well, they seem to be incomplete and they have -- I see their errors since I know where I was at the particular time.

BB: Okay.

CW: All places are not mentioned, and the dates seem to be wrong, but the official record is what it is.

BB: [affirmative] And your initial briefing. Was that briefing by Captain Kluge [25:40]?

CW: That's what I recall, yes.

BB: And we'll probably get into this more, but did you go to the Pentagon [25:49] at any point?

CW: I did have an occasion to go to the Pentagon on a number of occasions [26:00], and the summer was the first because I subsequently developed a -- you know, the friendship situation, but I was the smallest functionary there in terms of experience or rank. So, I wouldn't have been involved in significant liaison at the Pentagon [26:32], but I did have occasion to go there.

VS: So, you didn't go to the Pentagon prior to coming into 1142 [26:39] for a briefing. The briefing was done at 1142?

CW: That's to my recollection.

VS: Okay.

BB: And so, you'd been there for a day, a few weeks. What sort of activities did they have you doing? Were you acting essentially as a supervisor of a group of [27:00] NCOs, or were you yourself doing quote, "original work and research," and what not?

CW: I seem to recall that a minimum of supervisory activity on my part, and I was involved in various activities with Captain Kluge [27:25], who appeared to be in charge of that activity. And the impression by that, again, having to do with materials, documents, and the impression I had is that was a relatively small activity in terms of the number of persons involved, the manpower, and space, which was on at a premium. And an auxiliary facility like [28:00] for example telephone. Captain Kluge [28:04] had the only telephone I can recall, and the rest of us, the telephone use was prohibited anyhow as was all communication actually. I realized married guys were not able to speak to their families. In fact their families didn't know where they were. So, Captain Kluge [28:37] is the person I recall most clearly and I recall, you know, interacting with him on a regular basis. In fact, I believe I said on his left.

BB: Right.

CW: I can recall I had a desk there -- and there was [29:00] minimal opportunity to interact with the people doing other work, the interrogation work, or --

BB: Right.

CW: -- even though we share a mess hall and so forth. There had been certainly a discouragement of interaction.

BB: Okay.

BB: Maybe before we go too much further, we should just get even in your own words what

would you summarize -- what would you describe as being the mission of MIRS [29:34] while you were at P.O. Box 1142 [29:36]? What did the group do?

CW: You mean my segment?

BB: Your segment, yeah.

CW: Yeah.

BB: With MIRS.

CW: My impression was that it was concerned with generating information, but it could become [30:00] intelligence that was prepared for and integrated with an ongoing series of serial publications having to do with the order of battle [30:19] of the German Army [30:21], the high command of the German Army, and with a special emphasis on personnel matters within the German Army. And a lesser emphasis on actual details of order of battle [30:43].

BB: Okay, and how were you getting that information?

CW: The information -- there was a flow of -- I learned that there was [31:00] another organization mainly in London [31:08], but I had a substantial responsibility for preparing various documents, but the function there was essentially larger than it was in Alexandria [31:23]. But various specific tasks had been given to the Alexandria activities that were sometimes supplementary, sometimes to reinforce, and sometimes to generate material for further examination. And that would build on the data and information -- well, they weren't data, information [32:00] coming from the prisoners [32:03] who were being handled at the rest of the facility.

BB: Okay. And again to say more clearly, was this information coming strictly from captured documents?

CW: The bulk of the material appeared to be done mostly from captured documents that had come from a variety of sources in Germany [32:37].

BB: Did you -- [inaudible] let it go.

VS: Okay, thanks. I'm sorry for the interruption.

CW: The information largely came from documents, and letters, orders, photographs, information on declarations, reports of troop movements [33:00]. It's just some passbooks, like a personal passport that soldiers had, and interceptions, some -- but there was also material that was being prepared, you know, which was generated of course in English to be incorporated in, or to supplant, or to supplement these various, ongoing serials that on a continuing basis updated what was known about the order of battle [33:46] and the leadership of the German Army [33:49], in particular the higher level officers because of the high repute of the German [34:00] leaders at that time, the military leaders that is. And they were taken very, very, very seriously indeed, and therefore the information about them, and what they have done, or a particular person had been transferred to a different enterprise, or set up his own sub-activity. And whether that was divorced from a division, a free standing -- there was all of these details on the leadership of the German Army [34:38]. It was all important and the high command people were of a special importance.

BB: Two follow-up questions: these documents, had they all been looked at first by the London [34:57] branch prior to you looking [35:00] at them in Washington [35:01]?

CW: Well, some had, but many had not I would say [inaudible] clear for me, notes and so forth.

BB: Did you get -- and we'll talk a little bit more about London since you were transferred



over there for a little while, but without getting too far ahead did London [35:21] retain some documents, in other words did some documents never make it to Washington [35:26], or did everything come to Washington? Was Washington the ultimate repository for all captured German [35:33] documents?

CW: I don't really know that -- the answer to that. I would assume that it would be very difficult for Washington to be the only repository, because there were several floors of documents in London [35:49], and there would simply be inadequate space in Washington [35:55], plus the staff [36:00] that actually physically produced these handbooks. A red book [36:07], green book, and various reference books were largely in London [36:11], and they have a staff of writers. In fact, they have a number of permanent professional writers who were on the staff there, quite well known writers. And I don't recall that kind of staff in Alexandria [36:28].

BB: Okay, and my other follow-up question, these doctors, were they all captured from German [36:39] soldiers or some of them picked up off of the battlefield? Were some of them -- could you give a sense or feeling of -- you mentioned what types of documents they were, but where did they come from?

CW: They ultimately came from the battlefield, but some of them, you know, may have been taken from soldiers [37:00]. They were -- for example the leaflets that the German [37:08] Air Force had dropped on the American line which had kind of fake dollar bills with photographs of Mr. Morgenthau [Treasury Secretary] and announcements in English that had been -- finding soldiers that their girlfriends would be romanced by somebody else while they were away, American soldiers. There are examples of that; there's a wide variety of stuff, personal possessions, and memberships, citation declarations, actual

copies of the declaration, intercepts, and occasionally some information from the interrogations at 1142 [38:00] itself. It was a wide range of material, and headed home.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: It all had to be, like it was sort of identified and collated.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: To be put up in use. So, obviously the use of it in the field, in the area of the European Theater [38:24], they would make whatever use of the documents that they captured what they needed for tactical decisions that would be helpful to the troops actually on the ground, and then they might be sent back to -- they might be sent back. And in fact, there were document teams, an officer and two or three men operating at all -- with every major American force, the Army Corps [38:54] Division, even regimental. And in addition to the document teams [39:00], they worked closely with the IPW [39:03] and OB [39:04] teams, which were also separate from even -- all three of these teams were operating together. Then they all shared -- they all collected documents and all, after they served their immediate purpose, they would send them back. That might be to London [39:22] or Washington [39:24], even Alexandria [39:27].

BB: You had mentioned that there had been -- some information did come from actual interrogations going on at P.O. Box 1142 [39:39].

CW: Yes.

BB: Was that a very small amount or did that represent a sizeable amount of information that you used?

CW: Well, Captain Kluge [39:48] handled much that himself.

BB: Okay.

CW: For self, but I'd say it was, you know, a considerable flow on a regular basis [40:00].

BB: Okay. Did you personally ever -- were you ever involved in any of these interrogations?

CW: In the interrogations?

BB: In the actual interrogations?

CW: No, not in that -- not at all.

BB: Did you get the impression that Captain Kluge [40:12] was?

CW: I hadn't thought about it, about this. I had the impression that the answer is likely that in fact he was.

BB: Okay, but you yourself never had any interactions at 1142 [40:35] with German prisoners [40:37]?

CW: No, I attributed that to my being new and a beginner there. Everybody almost -- it was very helpful and helping me being the new person, myself, get acclimated, and encouraging me, and Captain Kluge [41:00] was the guy I saw every day; he was consistently, you know, supportive and very kind in trying to help me, if I had a problem, and accessible. And he handled the liaison with other elements in the situation so well that it didn't have to be a concern; if we had any complaints or disagreement, he would handle the matter, and get it resolved.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: Because I saw him every day and so frequently, I -- he'd be -- his function is one that I recall very clearly [42:00].

BB: Did you have a particularly specialty yourself, a specific research area that you were assigned to? From some of our previous interviews particularly with non-commissioned officers [42:14], we had mentioned to you that we interviewed Paul Fairbrook [42:17].

CW: Yes.

BB: And Dieter Kober [42:19], and they both seem to have specific tasks, you know, for example Dieter Kober for a while was looking just at the Hitler Youth [42:31], and documents related to the organization with the Hitler Youth, just as an example. Did you have a specific focus yourself that you concentrated on?

CW: In terms of the documents?

BB: In terms of -- yeah, I terms of gathering information from documents.

CW: Well, I had not the focus in terms of the particular kind of sort of sub-activity, like the Hitler Youth [42:59] because that wasn't [43:00] a sub-activity, but it was comparatively small. But I was concerned with, you know, field grade officers and above, and particularly, I would say, the general staff officers, the high command, and the field grade officers. In other words it was by rank -- they rank in importance rather than a particular sub-group, and not that I know. I was -- that was my major.

BB: Okay.

CW: concentration there.

BB: And were you getting your information on that directly from documents or were you getting it from other people at 1142 [43:57] who were feeding you that information, and were you [44:00] physically looking at documents, or --

CW: Mostly looking at documents, yes. I would -- relative to me getting [spelled phonetically] information by talking with people.

BB: Was the red book [44:18] the first or the major publication that you participated in? Did you work directly on the red book?

CW: Yes.

BB: Okay. Were you assigned a particular, say, chapter of the red book like relating to German [44:33] high command, or were you working on the entire book itself?

CW: As I recall, I had areas that I was specializing in, but it's too difficult to recall now --

BB: Sure.

CW: -- what they were [45:00].

BB: Can you talk on, you know, we have a fairly good idea, but in your own words what was the red book [45:10]?

CW: Well, the red book was the order of battle handbook. That was the, you know, color used; there were various versions of it. It was continually updated, and that was the document used in the field that contained the most current information on the forces themselves, the units, and their leadership, and the degree of the quality of the leadership. And that's not just the current so-and-so who was in charge of this or that, but our goal is to provide optimum [46:00] information in terms of quality and quantity about what was known about the colonel: how many years had he been there, what was his training and what decorations had he received, what was known -- you know, as much information as possible. In other words it's the basic summary of the OB [46:26], and it was to a great extent because of the continuing flow of high-grade information from documents. It was a high grade document. I was impressed with its quality and I had been -- I had some experience. I was an editor. I could see it and I realized that suddenly of the people working on it were kind of really highly skilled editors, and professional [47:00] in terms of information management. At a glance they could see connections that were not immediately visible. It was the basic book used in the field by all these teams, the IPW [47:15], and the OB [47:17] team, and the documents team.

- BB: We've heard references to other books, not just the red book [47:26]. You had mentioned the grey book?
- CW: Yeah.
- BB: What was the grey book, just another verse or is that something different?
- CW: No, I tried to recall, you know, and then I had copies of all these books. And people that know had them, and they all seem -- and somehow they all vanished. There were different versions, different levels, and the material on the high command was a separate section. It could be bound by itself [48:00]. The red book [48:03] and the grey book [48:03] were informal designations. They had some other form of title, but the material on the high command I know was bound separately, although it should also be combined. Otherwise it would be a huge, unmanageable document.
- BB: You want to add anything?
- VS: Can you recall any specific examples where your personal knowledge about leadership and personnel came in handy at 1142 [48:49]?
- CW: In the German [48:50] leadership?
- VS: Yes.
- CW: See, I know there are a number of -- I don't recall any by name anymore no.
- VS: So for example, of course [49:00] that information being put into the most current versions of the red book [49:04] would be very useful in the field.
- CW: Yes.
- VS: But could you think of an example where that might aid interrogation?
- CW: Yes, of course. Sure. That was one of our goals. We understood that that was another use, and I just don't remember any specific identification that I made or a particular

comment that I made that was transmitted to an interrogator at the post, but and we do. We did it all the time, and we tried -- there was an occasion for continuing alert on our part.

VS: I mean, I would think that the most common use could be is if you have a prisoner [49:53] from a particular division or unit, that having that information as an interrogator [50:00] to know who the commander was and where they had fought battles might be useful to test the integrity of the information that they're getting --

CW: Yes, that's the kind of thing that occurred often, yes.

VS: And then can you think of any possible cases where somebody that you had found intelligence, incorporated into the red book [50:23] wound up actually being captured one of the German [50:27] leadership, and brought to 1142 [50:30]?

CW: I just can't recall.

VS: Okay. It may not have happened. It just --

CW: It may not have happened, but it may well have happened.

VS: And John Kluge [50:46] during his interview shared with us just an example that I'll share with you, and maybe you had heard this as well. He had talked about how useful Military Intelligence Research Section [50:59] information [51:00] could have been.

CW: Yes.

VS: He talked about a newspaper where General Rommel [51:07] had gone and attended his daughter's wedding.

CW: [affirmative]

VS: And there was a photograph that showed officers in the back of that photo. And he thought that that was particularly useful, particularly when they captured one of those

officers.

CW: Yes.

VS: To be able to point out that we have a lot of information, including knowledge about you at Rommel's daughter's wedding. Had you ever heard that story or do you know of stories like that?

CW: I've heard that story and I know that happened regularly. And photographs were very valuable for the -- receipts, travel stubs, that kind of thing. And we know that was being fed to the interrogators on a daily -- on a continuing, daily basis. There were many such [52:00] - I just -- I don't remember anything specific, but I know that that was a regular activity in which we were expected to engage, and we did.

VS: That was interesting. I was going to throw this out there. Just from our short time together today, I'm trying to assess why did they bring you to 1142 [52:20], and there are a couple of pieces of things that you said that may be relevant: being in journalism and how important those skills could be in developing a red book [52:30]. Having scientific German [52:33] in your education may have been very important, but they didn't have one very important clue. The work that you put into creating that dictionary shows your organization skills that -- it's equivalent to putting together the red book.

CW: Yes.

VS: And I don't know if you've ever made that association before, but that is a very meticulous kind of work that requires a certain kind of person [53:00].

CW: Well, thank you for mentioning it. I will say this, that when the -- you know, my goals were amorphous when I entered the service and I had no vocational direction. And I didn't really know what I was up to, mixed experience. This experience starting in 1142



[53:33], when I continued doing the same work three years thereafter, it was sufficiently exciting for me to stay with it, and I was involved in the significant activities there.

When I -- it gave -- I felt quite confident that I could do well with graduate school and I realize how unprepared I was at formally speaking [54:00]. But I was just went around to different Ph.D. programs, and I introduced myself out of the blue. And I said, "Look, I'm a veteran." I could get into -- I realize how absurd that was, and I felt completely confident that I could do the work, knowing very about little the work. And when Bob [54:25] [spelled phonetically], this publisher, posed this book to me, I didn't hesitate, and I said -- I accepted on the spot. And I stayed with it. It took about five years. I estimated that it would take a long summer, so I think that indicated that I -- I was too overconfident, but I had no -- this experience, identifying, classifying, integrating, collating, and reformulating for definition [55:00], those are skills. This is where I did it for a couple of years, and got recognized for it, you know, in my work. I had no -- otherwise how would I even assume such a preposterous assignment, certainly --

VS: It's a tech --

CW: -- thank you for mentioning that. I had -- I think -- I'm quite confident that you're right, because I have no previous success experience along those lines, and it was a challenge. Glad to have done it and once I got going, my momentum was there, and I did produce a lot of other systematic materials.

VS: Well, it's a testament that the book published in 1956 is still in print. [Dictionary of Anthropology]

CW: Still in print and --

VS: Half a century later.

CW: Yes [56:00].

BB: Going off of the subject of enthusiasm, if you will, or I'll try to think of a better word, but if you looked at or if you were thinking back on the folks who made up MIRS [56:17], officers and the enlisted folks --

CW: [affirmative]

BB: -- is it safe to say that folks -- that the soldiers in that outfit were enthusiastic about what they were doing?

CW: Very, very, very much so. Absolutely. The more excitement, people looked forward to the work, compared to the many other military situations that I had been to that -- really minimum grumbling and willingness to work beyond the expected time. And people would just stay with it [57:00]. I've never been in a -- such a high morale outfit, civilian or military. And then, many of the folks there of course, having had relatives or people they knew suffering as a result of German [57:21] aggression that added an extra dimension to what we were doing.

VS: That's it. That's a good point. That's a very good point.

BB: To that end where are your operations there at MIRS [57:42]? Were we talking about an around the clock operation or was it kind of a business hours, Monday through Friday sort of thing? Did you work on weekends? Were folks free to leave the post on weekends? Did it vary depending on what the demands were?

CW: It varied but I recall a lot of people just [58:00] continuing on. We kind of could-- it wasn't a clear -- well, it's -- we came, our unit, a Saturday; people just -- it was -- because of the self-contained nature of the work anyhow, we had minimal contact with the outside world, what was happening on the post was important and fascinating and

challenging. Every day was a little different and something -- an accretion of knowledge, and then it's a little satisfaction occurring. I don't recall -- there wasn't -- I certainly don't recall an organized effort to, let's plan the weekend at all. I can't even recall going to town honestly once. I don't recall going to town as for recreation even once.

VS: Did you [59:00] live on --

CW: Yes.

VS: -- the base?

CW: Yeah.

VS: In the same barracks as the men you worked with?

CW: I don't -- I think there was an officers' barracks --

VS: Okay.

CW: -- small -- only a limited number of officers there. That's my recollection, but in any event that's where we -- that was home. That was it.

VS: So, we could definitely come back to that discussion, and just curious having met Paul Fairbrook, [59:33] listening to Dieter Kober [59:35], and they may have some wonderful stories to share. And obviously both very enthusiastic people, enjoyed what they did at 1142 [59:45]. Where there was something important that was discovered, was it so secretive that they kept it to themselves, and then shared it as appropriately, or did they share it amongst the group to say, "Look what I found?" Do you recall any of that [01:00:00]?

CW: Yes. Yes, I recall people were thrilled when there's a connection that this guy was a part of a division, and now is a [unintelligible] Schmidt [spelled phonetically]. "Hey, Schmidt, why did you leave the division?" Somebody may say "Look at, this is

something,” they’d say, and that’s the sort of thing, you know.

VS: So, there would be general excitement shared within the --

CW: Yes.

VS: Just like when we find the name of Charles Winick in the headquarters of GW Parkway [01:00:41]. We ran those down the hall and said, “We have another veteran.”  
[laughter]

BB: And so, we just have a couple of minutes left on this set of tapes. So, I just wanted to wrap up and is there, you know, we’re ready to have -- we’re going to put in another tape and ask a number of additional questions, but on the subject specific to [01:01:00] MIRS at 1142 [01:01:03]. Is there anything that we’re missing? I just want to make sure that we have a good, complete understanding of what the role was of MIRS at -- in Washington [01:01:15], D.C. at 1142?

CW: Well, I would say that there was a very clear sense of the mission that we were engaged in, and enthusiasm for that mission. And a sense that this was a great group of colleagues, that if everybody there -- who knows how anyone got there, you know, but one it was clear that there were no slackers. I hate to even think of that term. I guess it’s the quasi-military term, but everybody worked hard and there was sharing. And exchange of [01:02:00] experiences to the extent that we could, but I began by saying how tight the security was. Everybody was very careful. I wouldn’t share anything except with somebody that I had total confidence in, who almost could handle it on a need to know basis, and that was extraordinary. Never felt that kind of security at -- in any other military situation. And enthusiasm, you know, a feeling you could see results. It wasn’t a situation where six months later there’d be some payoff, but at least daily

matters that were identified and connections that were made, they integrated into product. You could see the effect of your work by the very nature of this work [01:03:00], that's not the sort of thing where in the field situation you would expect to get decorations and so forth. It was not a field -- people realized that they weren't -- promotions were going to be few by the very nature of the structure of the organization. On the other hand that didn't matter as much as it might have in a situation where there was less unified spirit.

BB: Okay. Well, we're going to call it quits for right now and we're getting ready to change tapes.

CW: Okay.

(End of Tape 1A)

(Beginning of Tape 1B)

BB: Okay, today is September 16, 2010. This is the second in a series of interviews as part of the Fort Hunt oral history project with the National Park Service. We are here interviewing Charles Winick, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 and the Military Intelligence Research Section. Again, this is the second series of interviews. This is Brandon Bies, historian with the National Park Service. Also joining in this interview with Vincent Santucci, Chief Ranger, and with that Mr. Winick, we'll go right on in, back to MIRS [00:41]. You were at 1142 [00:44] with MIRS for approximately how long?

CW: Three, four months.

BB: Three or four months?

CW: Yeah.

BB: So, sometime then in the spring of '45 you received notice that you were being transferred?

CW: Yes.

BB: Do you recall if the war was over [01:00] yet or was the war still going?

CW: No, the war was over and it was the first week in April

BB: Okay.

CW: And I flew over, and --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- when I got there, you know, it was a wartime operation, and even though the end of the war was in sight, and none the less, there were very significant reports on -- from auxiliary plants that the German [01:31] high command had, the so-called southern redoubt another of the -- a new headquarters in the Austrian Alps [01:43]. There were a whole series of rumors, and reports, and information particularly from higher level prisoners [01:53] who were being picked up at that time, that even when the war would end [02:00] there would be a significant military activity. So, the machinery had been set up, the OB [02:08] and so forth. It continued even after the war ended in May.

BB: Okay, and you obviously knew that, well, the London [02:21] branch existed --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- because of your time in Washington [02:24]. What was the difference between the London branch, mission of the London branch, and the mission of the Washington branch?

CW: The difference was that the Washington branch essentially was primarily an interrogation center with a significant document presence. The MIRS [02:50] was essentially a document identification selection processing center [03:00] toward the end of the creating series of the handbooks, guide books, responsible, valid information that could be used in

the process of the war. Also, the London [03:18] enterprise was organized on a much more narrow basis in terms of the mission that each person working there had. The activities were much more specialized.

BB: Okay.

CW: And because it was spread over several floors in a London building, 40 Hyde Park Gate the interaction was much more limited among staff members, because they had a specific office to which they reported, and also the staff members-- people assigned there did not have government housing, be the government or U.S. They got a housing allowance and you're [04:00] on your own to find a place to live in the area, Kensington [04:05], which is what everybody did. So, there was much more freedom and much more participation in the outside community, which at 1142 [04:19] essentially there was no participation with the outside community, but we were living in London [04:26], reporting to work. And it carried on, a narrower task.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: And also the number of people involved in the -- that try -- handling these governments, and what was done with them, there was like 40 or 50 people at any given time. There's a large number of people compared to a relatively much smaller, very much smaller number at Alexandria [05:00].

BB: Okay.

CW: Also the leadership was joint in that there was -- in Alexandria, there was an American running things. Although I do recall a British civilian Horton Smith [05:18] and an American civilian, Judith Dickey [05:21] [spelled phonetically] visiting, participating in some way. Hort Smith was English.

BB: Okay.

CW: British officer. At London [05:30] there was a British commander and an American commander. Toward the end of the -- Colonel Jack Votion [05:40], V-O-T-I-O-N, who was the commander. The directory lists a Colonel [05:48] Cluffie [spelled phonetically] who was a commander, and the British commander was in fact an archaeologist, Eric Birley [05:55], B-I-R-L-E-Y, a very prominent archaeologist and from a [06:00] British university, I think Manchester, who had years of experience in excavations. And he also was a student of the Roman Army, which is why he published on the Roman Army. So, he had decades of experience in organizing information on the military. So, Votion [06:25] actually had his office at the Embassy, and Colonel Birley [06:29] actually ran the day to day operations. So, it was quite a -- we all knew about Birley's civilian --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- background of course. So, it was quite different; whereas at 1142 [06:43], we didn't know people's background. When we were all there in connection with our military mission. So, the tone was quite different.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: And the building had an area that had been occupied [07:00] by Winston Churchill [07:02], or the residence or an office sort of had a special, charismatic dimension. To me it was a thrill to be there, and Churchill had been there, and occasionally once or twice he came over, you know, excited. And the esprit de corps [07:22] at -- I -- it was not -- at 1142 the mission was really all we all had in common, what happened outside the office was relatively less important, but there living in London [07:46] the esprit de corps was very high too. And we had a whole group of writers who were -- some of them very well



known, professional writers who added a tone. And [08:00] you could see the end product, that on a crash basis they would undertake to write up a section, be done in two days, that sort of thing. So, it was quite different, and -- however the enthusiasm was very, very, very high. I don't know why. I would certainly go there as I mentioned. There was an officer who came and arrived the same day that I was. Let's see, oh, Washburn [spelled phonetically], Albert Washburn [08:48]. He arrived at 1142 [08:50] the same day I did. He left for London [08:53] probably the same day. I do not know him. I don't recall ever meeting him. That indicates how [09:00] tight the security was. Well -- so it was different, and because there was a -- this was relatively big, you know, it was run on a taskforce basis. People could be moved from this to that. They -- because there were a lot of these deadlines. Reports had to be done and new editions had to be prepared. Contradictions had to be resolved within a half hour. There were other -- a lot of things like that.

BB: [affirmative] And so, it's safe to say that that was a larger operation?

CW: Well yes, and it had many -- by several hundred percent larger.

BB: Okay. You had mentioned about the British and how there was a -- was it Colonel Birley [09:50]?

CW: Yes. Colonel Birley, yeah. Eric Birley.

BB: Who was there? Was he the only British officer there or the only British personnel, or --

CW: There were just a handful of other British.

BB: Okay.

CW: And maybe [10:00] two or three.

BB: Okay.

CW: Very small number. It was -- primarily it was American.

BB: Okay.

CW: However, as Lieutenant van Loon [10:13] points out in his book, it was seen by some people as a branch of the British Army, and van Loon [10:22] himself who was there, who was listed in this book, he [unintelligible]. It was 1142 [10:30], he refers to the Pentagon [10:31] as a site of duty, and he refers to the British home office, the British foreign office where he worked. Actually, he worked in both places, but that maybe they wanted to use a euphemistic designation --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- for security.

BB: Sure.

CW: I would guess that's it.

BB: Sure.

CW: Especially in a book --

BB: Sure.

CW: -- published years ago. I wondered why he mentioned the British foreign office, because he certainly knew where he was [11:00], but you know a guy like him, a ballet dancer, professional writer, favorite critic, he could do 10 different -- educated abroad. His father was a world famous writer from Holland, and there were a number of people like him -- not multi-taskers, people that -- multiple sophisticated skills go into the breach here.

BB: And speaking of the make up the folks at MIRS [11:37] in London [11:38], you know, in Washington [11:40] there were just a handful of officers --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- and then a number of enlisted men or NCOs [11:46], was it the same ratio in London or were there more officers in London?

CW: There was only a handful officers. Let's see, I'd say there were something like 10 [12:00] or a dozen officers, and maybe 40 or 50 enlisted personnel there, something like that. So, there were more -- there weren't that many officers at 1142 [12:13].

BB: [affirmative]

CW: That's my impression.

BB: Right. And you don't even remember one of them who was there at the same time?

CW: Yeah, I know, I can't believe it but there it is. I never met before, during, or after. I don't -- I would have remembered. I was, you know, really eager to learn. I made it my business to know everybody I was working with. I introduced myself and so forth, and well, in the -- because of the large number of writers there, and the ease of reproduction of material along with big city and access to the -- all the other offices, and they could turn out -- make [13:00] copies like that report on the TODT organization [13:03]. That was a tremendously impressive job at a serious -- that professional monograph would pass muster anywhere, and there were all these -- every statement were triple checked. And everything was double checked --

BB: Yeah.

CW: -- fact checked I guess we call it now.

BB: And is there a report on what organization?

CW: Todt [13:27], T-O-T-D [sic].

BB: Okay.

CW: The two-volume --

BB: [affirmative]

CW: -- report that I got from -- perhaps you had [13:34] [spelled phonetically] sent it to me, yeah, but there were monographs. There were numbers on the monographs. You mentioned some earlier.

BB: Okay.

CW: And they were produced, and they -- I know they were very widely used. I knew people at the IPW [13:53] and OB [13:54] teams. And I would talk to them. You know, they would come in and they were bibles [14:00]. You know, the red book [14:01] was the bible, the bible, and there were auxiliary bibles.

BB: Now, were the red book and the other bibles being published also were they in London [14:13] or were they purely a product of Washington [14:15]?

CW: No, no. They were in London.

BB: They were in London.

CW: Yeah.

BB: It was -- it was both?

CW: Yes.

BB: How did, you know, we're not talking the internet here; how did London and Washington communicate efficiently on information if they were working say at the same time on a new version of the red book [14:33]?

CW: They -- by mail, you know, and Captain Kluge [14:37] you know, was not on the -- was on the phone, he would sort of collect occasions to call, and he would devote say an hour just handling matters on the phone. He had a secure line. In fact he had the only line. The phones were very scarce at 1142 [14:58], but it worked out [15:00]. There was never

-- whatever the time -- planes were used regularly, and they borrowed planes if -- they would get -- schedule planes and make a delivery of something to the base. And they would -- two days later would be on the other side. I know that was widely done. I was surprised at how efficiently that worked, very little loss of time.

BB: [affirmative]

VS: So, the red book [15:29] that we've seen actually is printed by the War Department [15:33]?

CW: Yes.

VS: So, the British, did they use the same --

CW: Yes.

VS: -- red book?

CW: There was one red book, that's right.

VS: They used the --

CW: Yeah.

VS: -- what was produced by the American MIRS [15:45]?

CW: Yeah, in fact, the allies used the -- all of the allies used -- that was the most substantial effort underway, and it was the most reliable. It was updated the most frequently, and it was both reliable [16:00] and valuable.

VS: Yeah.

CW: As far as I know, it was widely used and one or two of the people involved got decorations from foreign governments.

VS: Do you know who had received the decorations?

CW: I'll mention them.

VS: Okay. I just want to jump back for a second. Dieter Kober [16:27] talked about how he was sent to the Pentagon [16:30], and he worked with a civilian by the name of Philip Tucker [16:35] [spelled phonetically].

CW: Philip Tucker, of course, yes. Sure I know --

VS: So, you knew him?

CW: I knew -- of course I knew him, yes. He was a --

VS: Should we come back to this later, because it's --

BB: If it's not related to the --

CW: I know Tucker. I know he's a professional career writer for the honest material.

BB: Okay.

CW: He's a professional writer, highly regarded, but I've not heard his name in decades--

VS: I'll make a [17:00] note to come back to this.

CW: Yeah.

VS: According to Dieter Kober [17:04], he said that there was a British officer that came through 1142 [17:11], that worked at the Pentagon [17:12] as well.

CW: Horton Smith [17:14]?

VS: Yes.

CW: That's the guy.

VS: Yes.

CW: Yes that's -- sure I --

VS: Yeah.

CW: I mentioned him.

VS: Yeah.

BB: Yes.

CW: I mentioned him on the phone -

BB: Yep, well, you just mentioned him just now as well.

CW: But I remember -- before I met him, he was like a prototypical British, you know, officer, tall, handsome, and --

BB: Yes.

CW: -- fancy uniform, always spit and polish. And Judith Dickey [17:38], who was a civilian, I've seen them both. They would come and talk with us about matters, and they had specific occasion to call.

BB: Dickey [17:47] was an American civilian?

CW: American civilian, I think. I think. She may have been British, but I -- she came with Smith [17:56], so then she may have been British. I [18:00] just can't be sure of that, but I remember him vividly. He was a charming guy, and he would have a bite at the officer's mess at 1142 [18:09].

VS: So that Dieter [18:11] indicated that the work in the United States for MIRS [18:16], the research occurred at 1142. The writing of the red book [18:21] occurred at the Pentagon [18:23]?

CW: Some of it. I wouldn't -- that may be -- I would make a more limited statement. I'd say that the final version was prepared at the Pentagon [18:36], because otherwise it would be -- you'd have to ship boxes of material to justify 10 pages in the red book [18:48].

VS: Okay. I guess the point that I'm trying to get to then --

CW: Well, let me put it another -- I wasn't involved in that phase of things. So, I just -- I remember chatting with Smith [18:58], and he would come to see me about [19:00]

specific matters. That's something that I had prepared: what about this? And same with Judith Dickey [19:06]. She was also quite tall, like six feet one or two. I can visualize her.

BB: We may actually have a photograph of her.

CW: Oh.

BB: But we'll show you some photographs we have of Paul Fairbrook [19:21].

VS: So, I guess what I'm trying to establish is that the red book [19:26] was produced in the United States --

CW: Yeah.

VS: -- by the U.S. Army [19:31].

CW: Yes.

VS: And information was then extracted from the MIRS [19:38] office in London [19:39], but came back here to the United States, to develop the red book [19:43]?

CW: Yes.

VS: Okay.

CW: No, we had the responsibility --

VS: Okay.

CW: -- for it, but it became a -- you know, it was cross-national.

VS: Okay.

CW: And subsequently [20:00] when MIRS [20:02] was disbanded to -- or rather when I was transferred, a Captain Paul Leake [20:11] [spelled phonetically], an MIRS guy and I were sent -- we set up a European Document Centre [20:23] with the Seventh U.S. Army [20:26], 12th Army Group. There was a French/American command, and that was -- we



took over the library at Heidelberg University [20:36], took all the books out, and set up a huge theater-wide document center there. That was when we left London [20:45].

VS: Okay.

CW: And then there was an offshoot of -- the whole thing was an offshoot of the MIRS [20:52]. Paul Leake [20:52] was in charge and I was his deputy. And then, about a year later we [21:00] set -- I set up a similar center across the street from Camp King [21:05].

VS: Okay.

CW: 7707 ECIC [21:10], European Command Interrogation Center, which was there for many years as a secret camp, that is a -- not secret, a highly restricted camp.

BB: And we'd like to cover that for a little bit. So, you came back to the United States first, correct, and then went to Camp King [21:30] or did you stay --

CW: No, I stayed there. I didn't come back to the states.

BB: Okay.

CW: When I left London [21:42], I went to Heidelberg [21:43], late -- this joint American/French command, 12th Army [21:49] group; I have the insignia. We set up this theater document center [21:56]. As I say, we took over this huge building, Heidelberg [22:00] you know, one of the great universities in the world. We removed all the books temporarily and we just set up the rooms to process all these documents. And then, that was the beginning of the program to document the Nuremberg [22:19] trials, and also another function that we had was to -- there are a number of questionable documents that were circulating, a diary by von Braun [22:32]. And there was a Goebbels [22:34] diary, and those documents, for me, actually -- because commercial publishing wanted to bring them out, but the United States did not officially terminate the

war with Germany [22:50] for years. So, of these Germany source documents had been published as books, and there was a profit, it would be a question of [23:00] who would get the profit, Germany, the government to be, or the U.S. government. And I know that Herbert Hoover [23:12] came over on a food mission and brought back a document. And the document was published as a book by an American publisher, Doubleday that came to our office.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: Those were auxiliary activities. Authenticating alleged documents, that's the way I would describe it, German documents emerging from military and non-military sources. So, we set up -- we went to Heidelberg [23:45] for the Seventh Army [23:46], 12th Army Group Document Center [23:50], Paul Leake [23:51] and I, and then I reverted to the [24:00] theater headquarters, the G-2 Headquarters. We began USFET [spelled phonetically], and I set up a document center across the street from Camp King [24:11], which Camp King itself is set up by -- in some ways on the basis of the 1142 [24:19]. And the highly important prisoners who had been transmitted outside the usual channels, you know, [unintelligible] semi-discreetly.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: So, and then I -- I remained as a document person until 1948 [unintelligible]. Let's continue with [25:00] -- I've got to be your [inaudible] not just -- this is -- I sort of simply photocopied the last page in my record.

BB: Okay.

CW: And you'll see some of the dates are off. You can keep that.

BB: That's great.

CW: That's yours, yes.

BB: Okay, and this will be very helpful in terms of just the chronology and all that.

CW: Yes. It's the last page; there's some sort of a purple document that -- well, I don't remember what number it is. It's the -- that last page is a summary of the postings of the person in this case. As I say, the dates are a little -- I think sort of rounded off, like rounding off numbers. They make everything July 1st --

BB: Yeah, that's right. I noticed June 30, they have you ending MIRS [25:52] London [25:53] June 30th.

CW: No, no, those numbers in it are not real but approximate.

VS: Right.

CW: They do give it chronology [26:00], or in other words I remained. So, what we were talking about earlier, when I became a document specialist and I had many different settings in which I carried out the missions. And you know, I feel I did well with them, and enjoyed them. And I -- in 1948 I decided time to change.

BB: [affirmative] And to make it clear and from glancing that document you can see, it looks like your time with MIRS [26:39] officially ended around the summer of '45, June July -- June, July.

CW: August actually.

BB: And then you went to the document officer. So to be clear, that was separate from MIRS?

CW: That is right, but the group, the MIRS [26:59] personnel [27:00], they were always considered War Department [27:04] personnel, and they were -- we were never -- see, half the people on this are list from London [27:17] are listed a TDY. TDY because the

function was considered sufficiently important. We were told this by our leaders, that “From now on you will always -- your orders will always be War Department [27:32], not the Seventh Army [27:33] or Camp King [27:35] and three -- so and so, and you’ll be transported accordingly,” that most of the people come back to the states by air for example, when that was a very rare situation, and we had various other, I guess privileges is the word. So, until we were discharged, we [28:00] had to -- although the organization ceased to exist, the MIRS [28:05], we were considered War Department [28:07] personnel, even though the expiration date on this designation is August 25th.

BB: Okay. So, when you left in August -- when you quote, “left MIRS” --

CW: Yes.

BB: Did you have -- was the MIRS office in London [28:31] shutting down at that point, or when you left to do your document work, was this still an active MIRS [28:38] --

CW: It was shutting down.

BB: It was shutting down?

CW: It was drifting to a close, I would say.

BB: Okay, and in terms of work that you were doing, I’m curious about the American Military Intelligence interest in the Russians [28:57] --

CW: Yes.

BB: -- at the end of the war.

CW: Yeah.

BB: Presumably [29:00], and I shouldn’t jump to this conclusion, but was some of the work you were doing your years after the war, ’46, ’47, ’48 dealing with Russian intelligence, intelligence on the Russians?

CW: Well, yes because, you know, we acquired General Gehlen [29:20], who was a very, very, very important person, and his whole enterprise. There were some questions -- eyebrows raised about what the United States was doing with him, as there were questions raised about the importation of German [29:37] scientists, rocket [29:39] specialists, et cetera, but that was activity all handled as a G-2 function. In fact, I can visualize the office that was in charge of shipping scientists, the office that was concerned with nuclear energy matters, et cetera. They all involved some [30:00] -- these activities involved some pointing toward the Russians.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: That's a fair way to state it.

BB: Were you doing this where you have anything or were you aware that you were involving the Russians [30:15] while you were in MIRS [30:18] or was this more post

CW: I would say all -- everything I learned about it was all post-MIRS. Yeah, the MIRS was geared toward the German [30:29] situation.

BB: Okay.

VS: And were there documents however that were pulled together by MIRS [30:29], that in any way focused on the Russians [30:41]? Did you segregate information about the Russians in any way?

CW: I don't recall that.

VS: Okay.

CW: No, it may have been before. It may have been at a higher level, but not at my level. This is a [31:00] -- mention a few of these --

BB: Sure.

CW: -- but, let's see if I have that. I have another one that I can look at. So, now I have -- let's see, excuse myself for 30 seconds?

VS: Sure.

BB: By all means, yes, just watch the mic.

[audio break]

CW: Okay, I made -- this is the original here. This is a photograph taken, I'd say, in 1949, with several of the people that [unintelligible] as a leadership group in the MIRS [31:45], now, and I marked -- I have a little legend here [inaudible] --

BB: Oh, outstanding.

CW: -- and you can tell who's where. But I'll just talk you through; the lower left hand corner, Colonel John Lovell [31:59] [spelled phonetically]. Col. Lovell [32:00] is the man. He was military attaché in Berlin, and he was a key figure in the MIRS [32:08] operation; he was the man in the Pentagon [32:10], whom we consulted with, where he made the key decisions. And parenthetically, several months after the war ended, he was assigned to Romania, the ACC Romania, Allied Control Commission [32:29]. And he requested that I serve there with -- he requested me, and I was snatched from wherever I was at the time to work with him, except it was a rare program. He was a great man.

BB: And that was in '48 you said?

CW: No, no. This was '46.

BB: '46, oh, okay.

CW: No, he's a career man [unintelligible] he was. He was a career officer. He had been in the military, back to military attaché in Berlin, and he was a key guy. And [33:00] he was a full colonel. And he -- key policy maker on the daily level [unintelligible]. Now

on the far right, on the lower left -- lower right with his eyes closed is Col. Richard Hopkins [33:19] [spelled phonetically], another high level official, not as directly concerned. Anyways Lovell [33:25] was the important -- I'd say just below Lovell. Now, above Lovell, you see a guy with a big smile, white tie, that's -- a big smile with the bow tie, and that's Tina S. [spelled phonetically] Frederic Gronich [33:40], G-R-O-N-I-C-H. Now, he is the man who helped to contribute to the whole OB [33:47] IPW [33:49] planning. He -- as a teenager, he had become interested in the German Army [33:56], as a student in America. And he wrote a treatise [34:00] on it, which somehow came to the attention of a high level military guy.

VS: Okay.

CW: And he was a geologist. He joined the army [34:11] and his work on the German Army was known to high level people. He volunteered to help set up what became the IPW [34:23] and OB [34:24] activities in North Africa [34:26], Italy [34:27], France [34:29]. And he helped to create -- he contributed to the formation of the 1142 [34:35] one at Camp Ritchie [34:36]. And he's a key figure in the whole formulation of these activities. Now, in other words, he was there at the very beginning. He lived in Germany [34:55]. He was fluent -- he had three or four languages.

BB: Okay.

CW: Tremendous worker [35:00], okay.

BB: Just real quick, is that another [unintelligible]?

VS: [affirmative]

BB: Okay, just checking.

CW: Now, that's me standing above Fred [35:09].

BB: Okay, that's what I suspected, but I --

CW: Yeah, and then in the next guy [unintelligible] Ilios Scotty [35:18] [spelled phonetically]. These names are all down here, and peeking out also bow tie is Paul Leake [35:24], L-E-A-K-E --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- who was my boss in Heidelberg [35:30], at the European Theater Document Centre [35:34], and then he left the service. He was another guy who spoke four or five languages and stayed -- his whole career was with MIRS [35:48], but Gronich [35:50] was the man who really helped to start the whole thing. And that guy, his name is Major Bundy [35:48] [spelled phonetically]. I don't really remember -- don't know his first name, and I don't remember the other guy there [36:00], who's -- Bundy has his hands on the guy's shoulder, but this is a get together we had in New York [36:10], at Fred's [36:11] apartment. You know, we used to -- several -- most of us lived in New York. We got together and when Lovell [36:18] came to New York he would -- we used to -- he got together with us. He unfortunately, he had died. He was shot down over Korea [36:32]. I remember he survived, and he was captured. And Fred Gronich [36:39] got approval for a mission to parachute into Korea and recover Lovell [36:48]. Fortunately, he didn't go. He certainly would've been killed himself. So, his initial was scratched [spelled phonetically], but he was sufficiently motivated -- sufficiently [37:00] because he actually wanted to go, and he made elaborate arrangements to go. It didn't work out. So, these two, particularly Gronich [37:13] and -- Lovell [37:15] was a key guy, if we look up his record.

BB: So is Lovell -- did he die at the hands of the Koreans [37:21] then, or did -- you said he



shot down but he survived.

CW: He had died at the hands of Koreans in a particularly horrible way. He was paraded through the streets of the city on chains. It was awful. He died a hero, but unfortunately he did die. But he provided the momentum, the money, the administrative support. Everybody knew him. You know, they knew he was a Pentagon [37:52] -- having been military attaché, he knew the whole scene. He knew the German [37:58] officers [38:00]. So, he's an exceptional -- well let me -- I'll give you, you know, any -- one of those should do, right, you can make copies?

BB: Oh, yes. That's great. Sure, yeah, I know Vince has been taking notes, but if you're sure that's okay.

VS: Yeah, that's a --

BB: Great.

VS: Thank you very much.

CW: And I'll -- you can make copies from this right here?

BB: Yes.

CW: Yeah, see this is a beat up -- I was lucky to be able to get any copies from this.

BB: [affirmative]

VS: Thank you for that. That was helpful.

BB: Real quick, on your annotation here you have Fred Gronich [38:37], and then you have parenthesis --

CW: [inaudible] study?

BB: -- Lieutenant Colonel S. Frederick.

CW: Oh, well his full is S. His official name is the one with the S. Frederick

BB: Oh, S. Frederick -- got you. Okay.

CW: Everyone called him Fred.

BB: Okay.

VS: Since we're looking at photos, I have a photo to show you. I don't know if you've ever seen that photo [39:00].

CW: Well, I see I'm not here.

VS: Do you recognize anybody?

CW: I'm looking to see. Not -- these pictures are too blurred for me to really -- anyone to register, I recognize. A few faces look familiar, but I can't -- you know, some of the names I can recognize.

BB: The gentlemen without the hat in the sun?

CW: Without the hat, that's Kluge [39:44]?

BB: Yep.

CW: Yep. Yes, of course I recognize him, yep. He looks younger than I remember even then, but I see him. He had his glasses [unintelligible] this plastic [40:00] --what's the word I want? Straight [spelled phonetically].

VS: Oh, okay.

CW: Yeah. Yes, and he has a characteristic -- yes, basically [spelled phonetically] I don't -- let's see. I should be able to recognize some of these, but see about a dozen people here.

BB: And that is a blurry photograph. We have some others that are a little bit clearer --

CW: But if you have a shot of Horton Smith [40:27] --

VS: In this time period, he wouldn't have been here.

BB: We might have been here -- you might have recalled we have a photograph taken of a

number of a personnel at P.O. Box 1142 [40:37].

CW: I think I've seen this.

BB: That would have been taken -- we may have sent that sent that to you previously. There's a number of folks sitting there and none -- we don't believe there's anyone from MIRS [40:49] in that photograph, though we're not sure. That appears to be largely folks involved in the interrogation program and MIS-X [40:58] program [41:00]. That would have been taken we think the winter of '45, at the end of the war, but when the war was over actually.

CW: But if you have a shot of Horton Smith [41:14], I think he had me -- I don't guess I could recognize him.

BB: Well, I mean Vince, since we're doing this now, if you wanted to show, there's so many images --

VS: Yeah, great.

BB: Some of these --

VS: We don't know if these are Camp Ritchie [41:26] or if they are 1142 [41:28].

BB: Yes, some of these are from the collection of Paul Fairbrook [41:35]. Did you remember a Captain Vernon Matilian [41:39] [spelled phonetically]?

CW: I don't think so.

BB: This is a --

VS: He's taking a look --

CW: Troy Bodanov [41:49] [spelled phonetically], if I remember him, yes. Oh, there's Fairbrook [41:54], yes. He's tall, yes, and there's [42:00] [unintelligible] Willy van Loon [42:01], yes. He's -- here's his book, so I know we had him.

BB: Okay, and is he identified in the [unintelligible]?

VS: Yes. Can you just give just a little bit of background on Willy van Loon [42:12]?

CW: Yes. Here's his book, and page -- the first two pages give you what you are interested in how he went -- his father, was one of the world's most famous and celebrated writers, a close friend of President Roosevelt [42:29], and they shared a Dutch heritage. He wrote - - he was enormously prolific; he wrote 15 or 20 books, "Van Loon's Geography [42:41]," "The Story of Mankind [42:42]," "Rembrandt [42:45]." All of these were enormous best sellers, and he -- at the time one of the chief radio commentators was called H.V. Kaltenborn [42:57], a Dutch guy. He was a famous -- like Walter [43:00] Cronkite, you know on radio. They were close friends. [unintelligible], Van Loon [43:09] [unintelligible] on his show [spelled phonetically]. So, Willie was a writer, ballet dancer, educated abroad, charming. Here is his story in here. You say -- anyhow this is another copy.

BB: I'm not sure. Have we gotten that book back?

CW: I've got it. I got the book because of I knew him.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: So, I got it -- remember, I mentioned I [unintelligible] --

BB: Right.

CW: -- here it is. He was an articulate, tremendously hard working, and he was the spirit of any -- the guiding -- I guess spirit is the right word I want, of any group that he was in, particularly work groups. Everyone knew him, working with him, witty. He was charming [44:00], and he was droll. He was sensitive, and he did a great job there. Everybody knew him, and he stayed on as a theater critic in Europe. He went ballet.

BB: A few words about Paul Fairbrook [44:22]?

CW: Well, I remember chatting with him, and I don't recall any interactions we had on it, but [unintelligible] specific, but I recall having talked with him on various matters. I just don't recall any project sufficiently clearly when I put his name -- when I saw it on the list, it jumped out at me. That meant that I know him, yes. I mention the people I know, Bodanov [44:58] [spelled phonetically] I think I remember [45:00] in one of our phone conversations, I'm sure I mentioned him because I remember him very clearly --

BB: Can you share that information about Bodanov.

CW: I remember he was an enormously -- he was a very, very -- how should I put it, wise guy, and he was relatively young, but he conveyed a sense of wisdom and sophistication that I think I recall 60 years later, and he was very unusual. He also had a -- he was cautious. I would say cynical, but may perhaps -- super sensitive [46:00]. But the other people, I don't know where -- I just don't know them. But I must -- I had -- I recall Fairbrook-- some conversations I must have. I could recall his name as soon as I saw him here on the list. So, I just -- I'm sorry that I don't recall --

BB: Sure.

CW: -- try to be more specific recollection. His voice was relatively high pitched. I remember. I'm sure it isn't anymore, but it --

VS: Anything else about Dieter Kober [46:35]?

CW: No, I don't think so. No, he looks -- I recognize the face. I just don't recall --

BB: By all accounts he and Paul Fairbrook [46:49] palled around a lot, because they were both young. They weren't married. They had not completed their college education. So [47:00], they kind of were the little rascals if you will. I get to hear them talk a lot.

CW: Okay.

BB: That's the way they describe themselves.

VS: Kober [47:09] had an interest in music, if you recall?

BB: He to this day is still very much involved, and he is the conductor of the Chicago Chamber Orchestra.

CW: Oh really? And what is Fairbrook [47:22] doing?

BB: Fairbrook is -- probably retired. He's so very active. He got into the culinary arts. He was the President of the Culinary Institute of America --

CW: Really?

BB: -- for some time, and has been a Professor of Culinary Arts at the University of the Pacific in California for the last couple of years.

CW: Well, their CIA [47:48], you know, one of the best in the world thus far.

BB: He was the president of that --

CW: Okay, wow, that's really impressive.

VS: That's what we were saying, that the veterans of 1142 [47:58], you know, the cross-section [48:00] was done very, very well. Did you know Herbert Snow White [48:05] [spelled phonetically]?

CW: No.

VS: And of course, John Kluge [48:08] on the end.

CW: Yes.

VS: Anybody on the front row, you don't recall?

CW: No.

VS: Okay.

CW: I've seen them; I recognize several faces.

VS: Is it worth just showing those photos to show it --

BB: Yeah, these are another batch of photographs which my feeling is that they were probably taken at Camp Ritchie [48:32] after the war.

CW: Yes, this [unintelligible].

BB: But I'm sure if you did think that at all looked like 1142 [48:39], I believe that there are probably parts of the German Military Document Section [48:43], which is basically what the Washington [48:46] branch was transferred to at the end of the war.

CW: Well, he is someone I knew, a very well, Suros [49:00] [spelled phonetically], Mike Suros [49:01].

BB: Okay.

CW: He was in London [49:06] and when we -- he was in the office in London, and when we went to a group, Leake [49:14], Suros [49:15], and I went to Heidelberg [49:17] and spent the next half year there setting up the huge national -- the documents center [49:23] there. He was a very hard working guy. He had lived in Germany [49:30] before the war. He had special knowledge. Because of that he knew the area intimately, and he just -- he visited in the late '30's. I tell you, I don't know -- I guess Suros [49:49] and I were contemporaries there.

BB: Where did Suros -- he was an officer as well?

CW: Yeah he --

[talking simultaneously]

CW: Yes [50:00].

VS: The way that the shelves are set up and papers are stacked on them, would the interior of

the MIRS [50:12] building at 1142 [50:13] look like that at all, or what would the interior look like?

CW: Yeah, well I don't get a shock of recognition.

BB: We have a layout of what that building looked like.

CW: Yeah, I've seen them --

BB: In terms of the blueprint of the building, we just found a -- in terms of the interior, we thought you could probably pick out your desk from it, because it shows I think --  
[talking simultaneously]

CW: To the left is Kluge's [50:44] desk. That's me.

BB: Okay. Well, we'll -- I'll pull that out here [unintelligible].

VS: And then we don't know if that's 1142 [50:52] or not?

BB: Hard to tell from the photo.

CW: Really hard to tell, yeah [51:00]. It's surprising because I have -- I don't recall leaving the post, so I was hanging -- I was there.

VS: Good.

CW: We were working every Saturday and Sunday, but --

VS: Did you ever go to the Officer's Club [51:15]?

CW: Yes, yes.

VS: What do you recall about the Officer's Club?

CW: It was minimal activity, but I can't really recall anything --

VS: Never a bartender there?

CW: No, no.

VS: Did they ever use any prisoners [51:36] to work in any of the facilities?



CW: I hesitate to say I just don't know.

VS: We had a prisoner --

CW: It's likely I would say.

VS: We had one of the German prisoners who stayed there for a long time. We interviewed him over the phone. He lives in Germany [51:56] and he said he had a very important job at 1142 [52:00]. That's why he stayed there for several years, and his job was the bartender at the Officer's Club [52:05]. He said that the most important secrets were shared with the priest or the bartender.

CW: Yeah, that's the real material. You have that listing of the personnel [unintelligible] --

BB: Yes, we do and you have a copy of that as well with your name on it?

CW: Yes, I do. Yeah.

BB: And we'll be giving you a copy of the full --

CW: Oh, good.

BB: -- all --

CW: Now [unintelligible] van Loon [52:38] begins with -- it's alphabetical. Yeah, my friend just -- which I realized was part of something larger. She retreated -- 15 years ago. I forgot all about it.

BB: Oh.

CW: And I was looking through these things to see what I would have [53:00]. Okay, well I've [inaudible] in terms of Horton Smith [53:08], please you I'm sure of the name, and Judith Dickey [53:11]. I'm sure of that name.

VS: Okay.

CW: In other words, they came from the Pentagon [53:14]. There was always some matter --

some specific matter. They didn't just come to hang around and have lunch. They had a query about something, and Alan [spelled phonetically] Tucker [53:28] is the key figure, a key figure anyhow.

VS: Can you tell us what you know about Tucker, Philip Tucker?

CW: No, just that he was a hot shot; he was very highly regarded, and I want to mention again. These materials were used by the -- the English material was used by other countries. I think Fred [53:57] got a decorate -- a Legion of Honor from France [54:00].

VS: Oh.

CW: Something like that. I think he had more than one. He was really a key figure in helping set up the procedures for training IPW [54:12], OB [54:12] and setting up the machinery. And he planned to stay in the service, but he decided against it; he left, you know, when the war ended. And he the major effort as you know, documentation for Nuremberg [54:34].

VS: [affirmative]

CW: I had been -- I had a use for the interrogation center. We set up a meeting at [spelled phonetically] document center [54:46], an analog to 1142 [54:48]. That I was across the street literally.

BB: Oh, okay.

CW: Literally right across the street from the post there, which you know, and as a German [54:58] prisoner of war [55:00] camp, a Stalag, but it then became -- we took it over for sensitive prisoners they call them. Hitler's [55:09] pilot was there. He had a woman pilot in the Reich [55:13]. She wouldn't be quite on that level. They were held, you know, without -- their presence wasn't reported elsewhere. It was sort of like free

Guantanamo [55:26].

VS: [affirmative]

CW: And they were just -- we held on to them as long as seemed productive and then they -- I guess that's the way it was done at 1142 [55:37]. There was a bypassing of the traditional procedures.

BB: You know, essentially they were -- typically they were brought there first -- not always --

CW: Yeah.

BB: -- typically they were brought there, and then after they were processed, i.e. interrogated, they were then formally reported to as prisoners of war [56:00], to the, you know, according to Geneva Convention [56:02] and whatnot. They went on to a permanent prison camp.

CW: Here, just, I marked the only other reference where this mark -- you read the first two pages and all that he has to say about -- and then he mentions where I put the marker there. He begins the book, which is important enough to begin the book with his -- and he spent years writing a biography of his father, American officer on special assignment with the British war office. "It is my turn to spend the night on fire watch, and it's -- and I [unintelligible] the documents taken from mainly soldiers, dead, contained a larger [unintelligible] piled high with the mud and blood encrusted documents of war." That's so important, and he -- that's how he learned his [57:00] father had died, and Holbrooke [57:03] [spelled phonetically], his father was exceptional. Anyhow, I was thrilled that I -- he had me here. I had no idea what I would find, but I mentioned it I guess whenever we spoke. Anyhow, one of the few occasions when the enterprise is discussed anywhere, you know, by significant participants, because you notice how cautiously he described

them --even he refers later on [unintelligible] the Pentagon [57:41] would. He was at 1142 [57:43].

VS: [affirmative] Interesting.

BB: He brings up -- this is slightly off topic, but it's -- but the way you just read that paragraph there without the mud and blood-encrusted documents of war, is that an exaggeration or were there actually -- were there documents [58:00] that appeared to have been taken off of dead bodies or from --

CW: It's not an exaggeration, not an exaggeration. I can recall everything he was talking about [inaudible]. He was a very keen observer, just too bad he didn't -- he couldn't say more.

BB: Couldn't -- right.

CW: He couldn't even mention the place.

BB: Right. So, these are not necessarily documents that were nice, neat, crisp, clean things like, these were the --

CW: Certainly not. No, no, no. They were messy.

BB: [affirmative]

CW: They were carried in pockets, too wet to read --

BB: Okay.

CW: -- and stuff like that. Okay, I guess, you have one of these, right, and I gave you the list?

BB: Thank you for that.

VS: So here's some in depth questions [59:00] and--

CW: I have an extra. Do you have two --

BB: I have one here.

CW: This is one for me and --

VS: This is good for us.

CW: Okay.

VS: Thank you. Okay, so thinking about what's the same or what's different about 1142 [59:17] versus Pentagon [59:19], versus the London [59:21] office, and then perhaps versus Camp King [59:24]? If you look at those operations that were doing essentially the same kinds of things, at any point along the way would you say that finding evidence to support Nuremberg [59:38] kinds of investigations occur at any or all of these?

CW: All of them.

VS: So, even at 1142?

CW: 1142, the Pentagon, [inaudible].

VS: The London branch.

CW: London.

VS: And then, of course obviously Camp King [01:00:00].

CW: Oh, yes, yes.

VS: Very much so at Camp King. So, do you think it was [inaudible] --  
[talking simultaneously]

VS: -- importance or did -

CW: It was a matter of great consequence, great consequence because even by 1945 there was -- there had been talk of some sort of trial, and then I remember this clear. People, when we talked about it, there was some speculation what's going to happen. Is there going to be a trial to determine guilt? You know, it was sort of an active barracks conversation topic I would say. Now, we were all -- and our friend across the street, I know he moved

to Nuremberg [01:00:49] and Turkey. He was then a chief translator there.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: Yeah. I remember his name there.

VS: Rudy Pins [01:00:55].

BB: Rudy.

CW: Rudy, yeah Rudy. Yeah.

VS: So, even as early as your time at 1142 [01:01:01], that there was already discussion of finding documents that can contribute towards war crime investigations?

CW: It was certainly something we were already talking about.

VS: Since you were so intimately knowledgeable about leaders, personnel, do you ever recall being requested for specific evidence or information in the MIRS [01:01:25] documents related to an individual?

CW: You mean for the war crime -- well, the war crime activity hadn't begun officially.

VS: Right.

CW: There was no entity to -- we were put -- I seen what we -- my sense is that we put items inside that appeared to be extraordinary or -- yes, I guess that is the word, in terms of different from the run of the mill.

VS: Yes.

CW: I mean, exceptional malfeasance.

VS: So, if you captured a diary that talks about some atrocity [01:02:00] towards a Jewish --

CW: It would have been put aside.

VS: Was there one person who coordinated that information?

CW: I don't think so. I mean at -- 1142 [01:02:19] would have been Captain Kluge

[01:02:20], and he would've been -- he was the [unintelligible] funnel, he was a vehicle.

He dealt with the folks in the Pentagon [01:02:30] on a daily basis, you know. They would come to say, "Hello," to him and come, like, chat with me and somebody else.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: But he was the key -- he was the -- I didn't realize the -- his activity was so large. It involves so many people.

VS: [affirmative]

CW: I may -- I don't know how that [01:03:00] -- I was concentrating on what I was supposed to be doing, and even though, you know, four months is a long time when you're living with people in barracks, but I don't -- and any would have been brought to him. And even a matter of all the decisions of sending exceptional, for whatever reason it's atypical, I would've brought it to him.

VS: Was there anything that stood out to you in terms of something that pointed towards potential war crime?

CW: And I recall -- sure, I recall a number of things. I said, "This is unbelievable. This is [unintelligible]," that sort of thing. Yes, and I would've brought it to him. You know, I was that low level person, level like, what I could do is bring it up --

VS: [affirmative]

CW: And similarly in London [01:04:01], where --

(End of Tape 1B)

(Beginning of Tape 2A)

BB: It is September 16th, 2010. This is the third in a series of recorded interviews as part of the Fort Hunt oral history project with the National Park Service. We are here

interviewing Mr. Charles Winick at his home in New York City. This is Brandon Bies, historian at the Park Service; joined by Vincent Santucci, chief ranger. And with that, we'll jump right on in to our discussion. Vince, do you want to bring up that question?

VS: Sure. During the break, we were talking a little bit, and you brought up Phillip Tucker [00:36] again. And did you want to follow up on that?

CW: Well, the association that I have has to do with his also being a person knowledgeable the Soviet Union [00:52]. And in connection with [01:00] -- there must have been some specific connotation that I had, but I don't recall what it was, but it was quite specific. I don't know whether he -- whether he in fact was known for his Soviet interest. In any event, that's an affiliation or connotation that comes to mind when I hear his name.

VS: Okay. At any point in your military career, do you -- do you sense that there was a change in emphasis in terms of concerns about the Germans [01:42] and a beginning of greater concern about the Russians [01:46]? Did that affect your career at all?

CW: No, it didn't affect what I was doing.

VS: Okay. And because you were involved in military documents [01:57], at some point did the military intelligence come back to you [02:00] and say, hey, what can you tell us about anything relative to the Russians based on the work that you had done?

CW: No, no one came to me with that kind of request.

VS: Okay. Kind of a big-picture thinking, interviewing some of the other MIRS [02:24] veterans, what is the difference between the London [02:29] branch versus the 1142 [02:31] branch? We've talked about it before. I'm going to give you some leading questions that may or may not be something you would agree or disagree with. The idea that I've heard from some of the previous discussions is the difference between London



and 1142 was that London tended to deal a lot more with immediate [03:00] issues, whereas information that was transferred to 1142 [03:05] was more designed to put into the order of battle [03:08] and development of those kinds of documents. Things that were more urgent, more time-sensitive were dealt with in London [03:19], versus things that had more long-term value went to 1142. Would you agree or disagree --

[phone rings]

CW: Phone will -- machine will pick it up. I would say that because of the nearness of the London [03:38] office to the front, that there was a -- perhaps a greater concentration on - - there's more interest in organizational and unit matters in contrast to personnel matters. That's the general [04:00] -- I have more confidence in that generalization than in the one that you said.

VS: Okay. Sure. In terms of perhaps trying to assist strategic bombing that was going to go on in Europe, do you think that that information came equally from 1142 [04:20] in London or more from London versus 1142, or any thoughts about that?

CW: No, I don't have any basis for making a decision on either -- on what is more correct.

VS: Okay. A different subject. You brought the name up of Gehlen [04:41]. What can you tell us about Gehlen? Because you were at Camp King [04:48]. You were at 1142 [04:50]. Is there a connection to Gehlen to either of those sites?

CW: Well, there's a connection of -- with [05:00] -- of Gehlen [05:03] with Camp King [05:06], and there was a -- there was a significant discussion about the propriety and ethics of our taking over this whole huge activity of his at that time. And many people felt it was inappropriate, to say the least, for the United States to do so. I guess they were more concerned about it becoming known. If it had not become known, then there'd be

no -- it wouldn't have mattered. But it became known, and I know there's a lot of questioning of the wisdom of that activity and recognizing that he provided an enormous reservoir of information otherwise not available.

VS: Did you have anything to do with Gehlen [06:00]?

CW: No.

VS: Did you have anything to do with the records that Gehlen had?

CW: No, I didn't, no. It was a whole -- handled separately.

VS: Okay. But you were aware of them at the time?

CW: I -- yes, in fact, that's what -- it was the records that were more important than anything else, because it was understood that the quality of the material he had was recent and of high quality and consistent.

VS: And were they held at Camp King [06:39]?

CW: I don't know about that. If they were, I was -- I had a document center [06:47] there. I assume they would have been held -- the document center that I was in charge of, it was literally across the street. So that's what we were responsible [07:00] for. And no one -- I'm absolutely confident that no one had said to me, we have these documents; can you handle them?

VS: Okay. Was Gehlen [07:14] at King [07:15] at all, do you know?

CW: My impression was that he had -- he was at King.

VS: Was Gehlen ever at 1142 [07:23]?

CW: I'm not sure about that.

VS: I mean, you would have been long gone from there, so you may not have been aware of it.

CW: Yes. Yes, I didn't know.

VS: You know, there is some links between Camp King [07:34] and 1142. If -- would you agree with that? Was there any --

CW: That there were links? Yes, there were links.

VS: What would they be?

CW: Well, the -- 1142 [07:46] was in effect a penal institution that was set up clandestinely, and the [08:00] Camp King -- the interrogation center was set up as a closed camp. And there were signs in effect saying: danger, do not approach. You know, it was not -- it was a secret facility where interrogations were conducted. There were [unintelligible] but there were actually more civilians on the staff at Camp King as the time went by, whereas 1142 [08:37] was essentially a military center. But people were recruited out of -- were recruited from the States to work there, work at King [08:51], although the commandant was a military officer, Colonel William Phillip [08:56], as I remember. It was very well-run [09:00]. Everyone -- it was a large place. It could hardly be concealed and in a suburb of Frankfurt [09:08]. That's why it was convenient to go back -- it was just a short run away from Frankfurt. And very well -- there were career -- actually it remained -- there were career interrogators there. I knew quite a number of them. You know, and then they -- my impression is that they -- it's certainly possible that some of the people there -- how should I put it -- turning their attention to matters Russian [09:47]. I guess that's a fair statement.

VS: And did you -- were you aware of the -- at that time about Operation Paperclip [10:01]?

CW: Yes, the scientists and --

VS: You knew about that?

CW: Sure, I knew. It was quite an open activity. And Colonel Gleszer [10:10], G-L-E-S-Z-E-R, a name like that -- he had a -- he was right next to our -- the G2 document control office. That was me in the IG Farben building.

VS: So let's back up. Did you know about Paperclip [10:25] at 1142 [10:27]?

CW: I don't know. Perhaps not. If I did, it wasn't -- I wasn't thinking about it. It wasn't important to me. But I certainly learned about it. Two officers ran it, you know, and I could see people coming in and out there.

VS: At 1142.

CW: No, no, at the office from which it was run, people were -- to which they were brought to make arrangements to transport [11:00] them ultimately to the United States. It was quite -- it was an open office. They didn't -- it had some -- I knew their name, but I knew two officers. Everyone knew who they were, and the activity was --

BB: And this is at the location across from Camp King [11:18]?

CW: No, they were in the Pentagon [11:20].

BB: Oh, this is the Pentagon.

CW: In the Pentagon, yes. I'm sorry. They were in the IG Farben Building, the USFET building, United States Forces, European Theater. That's the old IG Farben Building.

VS: At Camp King.

CW: No, the IG Farben former headquarters, pre-war, were taken over by SHAEF [11:42], Supreme Headquarters. And that's where the Allied forces were and the French and the English, et cetera, and all the big officers. Now, Camp King [11:56] was a few miles away and in the suburb, Oberusel [12:00]. But so army the detainees, if we can call them that -- they would be kept at Camp King. But the operation was run from the IG Farben

building, USFET. It was quite open.

VS: So just chronologically, did you know anything about Paperclip [12:21] when you were in London [12:23]? Or when did you first hear about it?

CW: Yeah, we were -- people were talking about it and about the Alsace [12:28] mission, which was then -- we were alerted to the distance -- one of our activities was we were alerted to various locations where the German [12:47] findings collected, search data, were concealed in Germany. Now, we made [13:00] -- we got tips from somebody here and there, and we made -- we would go, and usually it didn't work out. If it did, you know, we would transport the material. There's one, I guess, unfortunate episode, and material was said to be in Czechoslovakia. And the United States sent people, soldiers, and engaged in midnight activity, you know, digging up boxes, and went back towards Germany, and the Russians, who were running Czechoslovakia, complained. And we denied it. And [unintelligible] was taken to Nuremberg [13:58]. And there was [14:00] this episode got -- it came to the attention of the authorities. I think the Russians [14:08] complained, and the ambassador to Czechoslovakia was ordered to leave, the U.S. ambassador. This is a publicized episode. But that was, you know, one of our G2 document -- in other words, we were seeking relevant -- even though there was a separate nuclear data mission, the Alsace [14:33] mission -- I mean, everybody knew how important this was. So we'd follow up leads, you know, if we had such a lead. What I told you all -- it's public -- more or less -- it's public information. But we sought documents.

VS: Yes. That's what I wanted to get at. That's exactly what I wanted to get at. Did MIRS [14:58] at some point -- and whatever it was called by the [15:00] time that you were set

up at Camp King [15:02] -- did they go out and actively try to pursue documents that they had intelligence that said that they were out there at installations or universities or buried?

CW: We pursued every lead. That was -- you know, that's our business. You know, we were generating -- otherwise there would be no document office.

VS: So did you go out and have folks go out and specifically go to a location to find documents to retrieve them, or was it a matter that the regular army [15:36] that was out there stumbled upon things, found it, and send it to you?

CW: No, no, we followed any documents -- there was one office, the G2 document office [15:50]. And our job was to find documents. You know, it's described -- I think -- so we were proactive. We didn't sit [16:00] around. We'd be fired if we just sat around, waiting for someone to bring stuff in.

VS: Okay.

CW: We heard there was an Eva Braun [16:10] diary in -- that a boyfriend, Luis Trenker, a famous German films -- had a type of film -- you know, you have your ski films, you know, of great skiers. Luis Trenker, who was said to be -- he was a famous actor like Clark Gable. And we heard that he was Eva Braun's boyfriend and he had her diary. And so we went to find him to Bolzano, in fact. In fact, I went, and he wasn't there. But we were -- like I say, I would have been fired if something important had come up -- I guess I would have been court martialed if someone said, you heard about this and you did nothing [17:00] about it?

VS: This is very interesting because it's very different from what you did at 1142 [17:05], obviously, and at London [17:07]. But now you were actively going out --

CW: No, I mean, this is -- Luis Trenker -- this is a real -- this really happened. I went myself

and with an assistant because we heard he was there. He was clever obviously. And then the Goebbels [17:24] diary -- that was a little trickier because Herbert Hoover [17:27] himself, the ex-president, was the agent. He said that he was walking in Berlin and some guy dove out of a doorway and gave him this document. And he said to him, you'll know what to do with this, in English. Hoover was with his interpreter, a famous AP correspondent, Louis Lochner [17:50], and said, let me look at that. So he -- I think the hardly -- the president could [18:00] hardly -- ex-president could hardly, in spite of who he was, make off with a document obtained under these circumstances. So we told General McNarney [18:12], the theater commander, that we had to see him. We really -- we really tried. We -- and everyone -- there was some caution about challenging Mr. Hoover [18:28]. If I had challenged him, I don't know what would have happened to me. Nothing good. But you know, so -- but in other words, we were proactive.

VS: This was a very interesting phase in terms of your career, but where Americans were and the Allies were. Of course there were things that were disappearing just by general looting. Even American soldiers would grab things that might have intelligence and importance. But then there was also this -- sort of the race between the Russians [18:58] and the Allies to capture [19:00] information.

CW: Let me mention one other thing. Colonel Lovell [19:05], you know, was the man who started all of this. Now, I mentioned that in fact the war ended and he was posted to the country that's -- the last country of the West and the first country of the East, Romania. And he asked for me, and I was -- I was [unintelligible] it was not listed in my military vita perhaps nothing covert about it. But the fact that this man who had specialized in the German army [19:37] his whole life, literally, he was sent to this godforsaken outpost, as

it was at the time, you know, a career intelligence officer -- you know, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary -- they each had an Allied control commission, all four powers. But in fact in those [20:00] three countries the only power that counted was the Russian [20:03], because their army was there. So any duty there was treacherous for an American. In fact, on the -- one officer traveling on the Orient Express to Bucharest, a high-ranking Navy officer called Karp -- no pun intended -- K-A-R-P [20:24], not "C" -- he fell off the train and died. Well, perhaps he did and -- but coincidentally, so -- in other words, it would imply there was some shifting of interest toward the East while -- you know, forgetting where we were --

VS: And I guess I was wondering in your mind where that -- where you first began to realize that. Was it as early as 1142 [20:56], was it in London [20:57], or wasn't until you got into Germany [21:00]?

CW: I -- it's hard to say. Probably certainly by the time I got to London, perhaps earlier. But I'm not so sure about that. I think we were so gung-ho in terms of doing what we had to do --

VS: Sure.

CW: -- you know, the -- had been the Battle of Bulge [21:25]. We almost -- you know, we just won that by a fluke really. That's an exaggeration. We could have lost that. I guess that's the way to put it. And faulty intelligence about that -- from our side, so there was a lot of criticism.

VS: Well, I'll finish up with just some easy questions, because I know Brandon has some important questions to ask. Do you recall any presence or knowledge about either FBI interest in the documents that you had at 1142 [22:00] or OSS [22:01] interest in the



documents at 1142? Were they even aware of --

CW: No, but I know that there were some OSS teams that worked in the front lines with our document teams. I know that for a fact. They were -- you know, they were officially -- but I was surprised. I was going, OSS [22:27] -- what are they doing here? But they were there. I think I made a note of that to myself when I was thinking about this.

VS: And when you say the term "document team," what do you mean?

CW: Well, they were official document teams, U.S. Their job was retrieving documents.

VS: These are field document teams.

CW: Field, yes.

VS: So they were out.

CW: Yeah, there's one officer and there's one -- all the way down to division. And they had a lot of power and clout, and they all -- they -- the [23:00] War Department, people like that -- they had a War Department ID, which meant a great deal. It may not sound like anything, but we would say "War Department," and doors would open for us. We could get whatever we want. So these -- particularly -- and these line people, they had -- their job was to scoop up everything in sight, take a quick look at it and figure out how to first retrieve it, look at it, and make a quick decision, and see how it could be put to the best use.

VS: Were they part of MIRS [23:39]? Were they considered a branch --

CW: Yes. They -- yes, they were -- well, the three teams, the IPW [23:47] and OB [23:48] teams, they were essentially working for us. And most -- they were Ritchie [23:53] trained. They were -- all -- you know, and they learned there. They learned about MIRS [24:00]; they had instructional material on documents and how to handle them and

priorities and what they could do and what they shouldn't spend time doing, all of that sort of thing. So they had -- they were given instruction on how to handle -- and there were specific teams. That's all they did. They would -- along with these other -- the IPW [24:24] and OB [24:26] teams. And Ritchie [24:27] -- there was sort of a hierarchy. The IPW was sort of the entry-level. Then they would move to OB. And document was sort of the -- that was the progression in terms of -- and that's -- the better people moved all the way up, moved more rapidly, so they had more responsible duties. Not that -- IPW [24:52] of course was the basis for that. IPW -- nothing but the -- and the OB [24:58] -- they [25:00] -- this was pre-computer. You know, everything was done the old-fashioned way. And the document people had to -- you know, had additional criteria to bring to focus.

BB: And you never went to Ritchie [25:16].

CW: No, not at all. I only visited there.

BB: Did you -- yeah, but you obviously -- you know a bit about Ritchie.

CW: Oh, I know a lot. I know --

BB: Is that largely because you worked with a lot of people who went through Ritchie?

CW: Exactly. You know, many of my friends went there. And another friend of mine was the -- he was the coach of the -- they had a course there on how to -- how to behave when you're captured. He was a professional actor, and he would put on these little skits. You know, I knew a lot of people who went there, and the reason I guess I didn't go was that it was felt the war was moving on and I could be used without spending three or four months, and I could be used, looking back on it [26:00], you know, at 1142 [26:01], where -- again, I do not know to this day, although I know some -- all these people

involved, that kind of decision just -- I have no idea. Just luck? Could have been [unintelligible] leading my platoon perhaps for a relatively short time. But in any event, I tried [laughs]. I'm laughing about it now, but looking back it certainly doesn't seem like the best choice I could have made, to volunteer to be a commando, an infantry person, a fighter, you know.

BB: But it's just interesting. You know, somebody somewhere just made a decision. And that one decision, whether it took them 30 seconds to make that decision or they had all sorts of other information, they decided to send you to 1142 [27:00].

CW: Right, they transformed my life.

BB: And that -- if you look at your life as heading in one direction, I mean, think of how differently -- you know, I'm sure you do think of it all the time -- you know, going into the infantry, you know, as a replacement lieutenant versus what ended up as, you know, four or five years of work in intelligence.

CW: Right, it gave me a whole -- like I said, it gave my -- I guess my self-concept certainly, it profited, and I'm eternally grateful. And I walked into these schools, as I said, confident, self-assured. And without this experience, I wouldn't make the decisions, lining things up in manner that, you know, was satisfactory. One officer who -- unfortunately he was an anti-Semite [27:55]. I hate to say this even now, but I -- he didn't like me [28:00], and he gave me a poor recommendation. And you know, in the military, you have to apply by endorsement. So I got this -- the guy said I wasn't qualified to wear the uniform of a U.S. Army [28:19] officer. So I -- the guy's father was a West Point general, so I just know that I've been in the service for quite a few years, and I have an unbroken record of successful activity, and I would point to that. And I would just point to that. That's all I

could say. But anyway unfortunately -- at least it didn't seem to happen often then, but remember, when I was at Fort Benning [28:58], I had a black buddy [29:00] whom I used to meet at night. We didn't meet in the field because we couldn't go to -- there were two officers' clubs [29:07], one for black and one for white officers. You know, and that was taken for granted. Actually it's a social science study that, you know, proved that the integration of the armed forces was effective, and that gave President Truman [29:26] ammunition to issue the executive order [sic] that integrated the armed forces. That study was done by a friend of mine that the mixed units did at least as well as the segregated units. And you know -- what's the name of that -- a famous group of black pilots were trained --

BB: Tuskegee Airmen [29:51]?

CW: Yes, of course, right. Some of them become politicians and college presidents on the basis of that, and they never flew a -- no one [30:00] -- not one flew a combat mission. But when I was in the service, there was one brigadier general, Benjamin O. Davis [30:13]. And we all knew him. And his son -- and he went -- I think -- when he went to West Point, you know, he had dinner every meal by himself. I think I have the right guy.

VS: Yeah, I think he won the medal -- he received the Medal of Honor. Yes.

CW: Yes. And his son became a four-star general, a four-star general in the U.S. Air Force [30:43]. So a guy like Colin Powell [30:48], who grew up a few blocks from me in the Bronx -- you know, look at what the man achieved. In World War II, even if he had been an officer, he [31:00] would've been commissioned in the quartermaster corps; he would be running a warehouse.

VS: Yes.

CW: Well -- but -- so -- but you know, looking -- taking the big picture, the fact that when the war occurred, so many people like myself from difficult and poor backgrounds were able to implement what they could do, and then with the benefit of the GI Bill and going to school and all of that stuff, that's tremendous, just tremendous, while people like the guy that gave me the bum recommendation -- well, there are people like him, and nothing happened. Whoever my little -- replied -- what I said -- all I could say, and it had no effect [32:00]. People figure there's something odd here. This guy's been around for years and years, and all of a sudden he's unfit to wear the -- that phrase particularly. I remember it now 55 years later, whatever, 65 years later -- well -- anyhow, I think --

BB: That probably --

(End of Tape 2A)

(Beginning of Tape 2B)

VS: Well, it was certainly worth the wait. And you know, it's kind of a fine line that because these are sensitive matters, because some of the people involved signed secrecy agreements, and because the veterans are elderly individuals, we want to be very careful not to intrude on your lives. We recognized a long time ago that you were a very important veteran to interview. And so we're so grateful that we finally have been able to interview. In fact, our superintendent, who's very much responsible for trying to manage our budget -- and we're under a travel ceiling -- said with no question that she wanted this to be a priority and support Brandon and myself to come and interview you.

CW: Well, when I heard that, you know -- I had various problems, but [01:00] when I heard that, I said, let's pick the date and I'll be there, you know. And this area -- in the summer, my daughter had an operation, so I couldn't make it. But I vowed that I would -

- this is it.

VS: Well, appreciate it. And with your permission, we'd like to give a copy of this to John Kluge [01:23], Jr.

CW: Oh, sure.

VS: I think that he's very interested in this.

CW: Sure.

BB: I have just a few follow-up, wrapping-up questions.

CW: Sure.

BB: And then we'll wrap up and finish things off. I want to just go over again one final time your military chronology just to make sure we have it right. And I think that the sheet you gave us will probably be a good -- a good cheat sheet.

CW: I think I have it -- I have a copy here.

BB: I think the one question I have was in terms of your promotions, because when you left the service in 1948, you [02:00] were a lieutenant-colonel?

CW: No, no, no. I was a captain.

BB: You were a captain.

CW: Yes.

BB: Okay.

CW: I became a lieutenant-colonel in the Reserves [02:09].

BB: Okay, so you -- so you left active-duty in '48.

CW: That's right.

BB: Okay. But you remained in the Reserves.

CW: And I remained in the Reserves.

BB: For approximately how long?

CW: Let's see, '48 to -- oh, I guess 12 more years.

BB: Oh, okay.

CW: And I reached lieutenant-colonel. But on active-duty, I was a captain for several years -- here it is, yeah.

BB: And during the Korean [02:44] crisis, you were not called to active-duty?

CW: No, but it appeared to be random. You know, we had -- those of us who were in the Reserve [02:57], we met every week. And I would say about [03:00] -- most of them had been in intelligence work. I would say at least a third were called to active-duty, at least a third, somewhere between a third and a half. And at that time they had a system, what they called mobilization designation assignments. So everybody had been given one of these assignments. And I had one, a document specialist. And so these people -- no one wanted to go, you know, for the most part. And you have this spec number, mobilization assignment; some don't. You know you had this. And you didn't object. So that's it. So it was -- I just mention that in passing, because that was sort of an unexpected development. A lot of people were called for two years, and most of them just sat out the Korean [03:58] War in the States [04:00]. And there [unintelligible] intelligence units, so none of them -- practically nobody served --

BB: Through the front line.

CW: Yeah.

BB: Okay. So you -- again, you were a second lieutenant when you were at 1142 [04:14].

CW: I guess so, yes.

BB: And do you recall when you were promoted to first lieutenant and then to captain?

CW: Well, let's see -- I was -- let's see -- well, we know that I was a first lieutenant -- no, we don't know that -- in July of '45. I'm sure -- I would say I was a first lieutenant -- probably I was -- that's probably while I was in London [04:49], probably is my guess.

BB: Okay.

CW: And then -- let's see -- in '45 -- and then about a year later, I was a captain. I think I was a [05:00] -- the last two years I was on duty, I was a captain. That's my recollection.

BB: Okay. To switch gears completely, one thing that we like to ask some questions about is the actual physical description, what you recall, of P.O. Box 1142 [05:19]. Now, you already made a very good point about it being so secluded and whatnot.

CW: Yes.

BB: In terms of the facility that you were in, I have here -- and I apologize for the poor quality of this photocopy, but this is actually a layout of the MIRS [05:39] building there at 1142. Unfortunately you'll see the one side is very dark, almost black, and we can't really read what's over there. In other places you notice the entrances, the desks -- think there's a few offices and whatnot. I'm just curious if that looks familiar to you at all, if that rings any bells in terms of the layout of the building.

CW: I don't [06:00] -- I can't really tell from this, I'm sorry to say.

BB: Okay.

CW: I don't remember it.

BB: Okay, but -- so suffice to say, you were at 1142 [06:11], and all of MIRS [06:12] was in one building? Or were you in separate building?

CW: No, I recall being in one -- in the same building, one building.

BB: Okay.



CW: I had the same -- I was to the left of Captain Kluge [06:28]. And I don't recall anybody else on the right of -- I -- that's -- it's a blurred recollection, but I can see him at the desk. And he had a nice sort of smile and -- that tilted to one side. And the post was pleasant, but [07:00] it's good in a way that the work was so challenging and interesting, because if it hadn't been, it would have been -- I think it would have been uncomfortable, you know, because of the restrictions. Now, I don't know why I didn't -- I don't recall going to town, but -- I assume if I didn't recall it at all, then it didn't happen. But if I went into town, it may have been so -- for recreation, it might have been so non-salient that I -- it made no impression on me. But I don't recall. And I recall, you know, being on post, you know, communicating minimally. I don't recall communicating with anybody on the outside.

BB: Was the post fairly segregated in terms of officers versus enlisted men? I mean, did you [08:00] congregate -- did you go to the mess hall with officers and enlisted men?

CW: I seem to recall, you know, mixing. That's my recollection.

VS: I'm going to run down two blocks. There's a store there. I want to get a mini camera. So I'll do that right now and come back.

BB: Okay. Are you sure?

VS: Yeah, thanks.

BB: Okay. The one thing I also want to ask about is security. You said you got the impression that there was a lot of security. Was there a lot of physical security in terms of you had to go past guards and barbed-wire fences? Do you recall anything to that extent?

CW: Well, I don't -- I seem to recall fences, yes. And it was clear that -- it was -- it would be

very [09:00] difficult for anybody who didn't have business there to just sort of wander in. I felt -- I guess that's the feeling I have.

BB: Got you.

CW: The gestalt of the place was one of a closed -- it was, like, a closed institution. I guess -- to use jargon, that's what it was, very closed.

BB: Okay. And did you -- I know you said you never interacted with or saw any prisoners. Did you even know where the prisoner [09:31] compounds were, or did you just know that somewhere on the post there were these prisoner compounds?

CW: I seem to recall seeing some -- I knew -- I knew there were prisoners. And then I knew that they were segregated from the -- us. And I recall -- I'm sure -- it's [10:00] -- I realized that it was improper for me to inquire about the prisoners [10:06] or -- it would probably be better if I just ignored the -- I don't know whether I would have been interested in talking to them, you know, but I realized that was a prohibited activity.

BB: Okay. I want to just grab and show you -- we actually have a map of the layout of the post. And there has been some discussion and confusion of where exactly the MIRS [10:45] facility was located in reference to the rest of the place. So I'm just going to lay this out [11:00]. And just see if this at all looks familiar to you or not. And if it doesn't, just say so. But this is a map of the post. The main entrance, we think, would have been over here. The Potomac River was over here, and there was a parkway. The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway would have been right in here. This is the parade ground. There was some old gun batteries that were there from it being a fort. The two prisoner compounds are these facilities, here and here. These are obviously barracks buildings. And then there were a [12:00] number of administrative buildings in here. And just

curious if any of that at all brings back any recollections or memories. There was a swimming pool right here. That's actually a swimming pool. But if you have any sense of where on the post your facility may have been located and, for that matter, your officers' quarters where you lived. We ask this now because, of course, the entire post was bulldozed, and there's basically nothing standing any longer.

CW: Honestly I can't really -- I don't have a vibration of this. I'm sorry.

BB: Okay. That's okay. I would rather you be honest with me.

CW: I can't -- I see it -- I see -- I can see myself on the ground there. But looking at it from above, I don't have an ability to think spatially.

BB: Sure. Sure [13:00]. One of my only other questions is -- well, first let me back up. Is there anything else at all you remember about the actual -- the actual facility itself, the physical -- you know, the actual descriptions of the buildings or anything?

CW: No.

BB: Okay, that's fine. Different question. The Pacific theater -- are you familiar with or do you know of the equivalent to MIRS [13:32] for -- you know, for the European theater [13:33] but for the Pacific theater?

CW: Well, I read the book MIS-X [13:37] by that guy who was at 1142 [13:40] and then went -- set up the whole enterprise in the Pacific. As I understand it, however, that was essentially a recovery-and-rescue -- I don't know of any comparable activity for documents or an interrogation center [14:00].

BB: Right, because I have seen a -- I have seen the term PAC MIRS [14:04].

CW: That's the term this woman used.

BB: Oh, she --

CW: Yes --

BB: And I'm assuming that means, like, you know, Pacific Area Command MIRS.

CW: PAC MIRS [14:19], yes. This woman was very -- she's very particular. So she'll have the right designation here. Let's see -- she refers, I think, to PAC MIRS. [15:00] Yeah, here it is. Yeah, why don't you look at the second -- you can read the first couple of paragraphs.

BB: Okay. We know that there was a MIS, Military Intelligence Service, language school --

CW: Monterey.

BB: Yes, there was -- there's Monterey. There was also one up in, I want to say, Minnesota.

CW: In Minnesota. Yeah, that's where --

BB: Yeah, in Minnesota, because we have actually done oral history interviews with one or two veterans who were interrogators at P.O. Box 1142 [15:55], who originally were trained as interrogators of Japanese prisoners of war [16:00].

CW: Oh, really? Yeah.

BB: And believe it or not, at the very, very end of the war, they brought in Japanese prisoners to P.O. Box 1142.

CW: Yeah.

BB: And so we know some folks who went up to Minnesota for their training.

CW: Yeah, that's the famous -- a lot of well-known people -- people who became well-known -- she -- I'm sure she has the terminology correct.

BB: Yeah, she does mention Military Intelligence Research Unit [16:33] related to the Pacific theater.

CW: But apparently from what that guy -- that artilleryman from Kansas says there was no

interrogation center comparable to 1142 [16:50].

BB: Well, there was an interrogation center in California, a place -- it was called P.O. [17:00] 651, Camp Tracy [17:03], California.

CW: Really? No kidding.

BB: Camp Tracy, California, about two hours from San Francisco inland. And that was supposed to be the Pacific theater [17:15], the Japanese equivalent to P.O. Box 1142 [17:18] in terms of the interrogation of prisoners. And there were several hundred, if not 1,000 Japanese prisoners who passed through P.O. Box 651 for interrogation by Americans --

CW: Really?

BB: -- same general staff, rooms were bugged with microphones and everything. When that closed right around the end of the war -- May, June, July of 1945 -- that entire operation was closed up and sent to P.O. Box 1142 [17:53]. So there actually was a Pacific [17:57] interrogation center in California, but we don't [18:00] know -- we know nothing about anything in terms of MIRS [18:04] related to the Pacific theater. I've just seen the acronym before, and that's it.

CW: Oh. Well, we had the unique opportunity to link with the British --

BB: Right.

CW: -- which is in Europe. So that -- well, it was an extraordinary place, really extraordinary people -- both places there [unintelligible] people we -- like van Loon [18:34] and people who'd gone, like the ambassador. That's extraordinary. And there's a guy who was a professor at Princeton, I remember. And --

BB: Yeah, Arno Mayer [18:48] was a professor.

CW: Really?

BB: Yeah, Arno Mayer was very much a professor of modern European and Jewish history, very, very accomplished. I mean, doctors [19:00], lawyers, attorneys -- very, very successful folks. And then there were a group of people who remained in the intelligence field. Some people who went to work -- there's a half-dozen or more who had careers in the CIA [19:16].

CW: Yeah, one or two of my enlisted men joined the CIA in 1945.

BB: Although he didn't like to talk about it, Rudy Pins [19:27], your neighbor across the street -- he ended up with a career in the CIA.

CW: Oh, really?

BB: He's not very -- he's not very open about that, but he's -- but everyone else knows that about him, is he -- in fact, when we interviewed him, we asked what he did, because his whole apartment was decorated with mementos from all over the world. And he said that he had had a career with travel publishing.

CW: I see.

BB: But it turned out he actually was a CIA [19:54] agent traveling the whole world.

CW: Oh, I see.

BB: So, no -- phenomenal careers [20:00]. Last question I can think of, with MIRS [20:06] -- you had alluded to this earlier -- it sounds like there was no real equivalent to MIRS that the British military had or that the -- you know, that the French -- obviously the French Underground [20:19] or whatever. They all depended on American MIRS with some British support. I mean, was there a British equivalent to MIRS [20:29] that had American liaisons?

CW: No. No, not at all. I'm sure of that because I knew, you know, through Jack Lovell [20:36] and Fred [20:37], who -- you know, who knew all -- he knew General Strong [20:45] very well. No, they relied -- they relied on us. And the fact that this is -- and Fred Gronich [20:56] -- he entered the war as a second lieutenant [21:00], fully informed about the German army [21:02]. You know, he spent a year as a hobby, literally. He stepped in. And he was the brave guy. I said Lovell [21:13] was brave, but Gronich was brave too. He -- in fact, I'll tell you something about Gronich [21:25]. It would be not fair not to tell you. In 1948 -- you know, we were buddies. He was essentially my boss when he -- you know, he represented Colonel Lovell [21:41]. He came to see me and said, you know, an American officer, Colonel Mickey Marcus had been an adviser to Ben-Gurion in the nascent state of Israel, and [22:00] Marcus had been killed. Marcus was a West Point guy. And they asked Fred [22:07] if he would go over and serve as an adviser, replacing the man who had been killed, a man who had been killed -- had been killed because he didn't know Hebrew. And he went out to urinate, and an Israeli sentry said "halt." He said, "I'm an American." The Israeli sentry didn't know English and killed him. So Fred [22:30] -- he wasn't really -- he wasn't a Zionist. He couldn't -- he's a guy that would accept challenges. So he volunteered. He wanted -- he asked me to go with him. And I said, well, you know, I just got out of the Army [22:48] and he had gotten out the year before. Thank you, that's a wonderful opportunity. However, he went there, and he -- he went there [23:00] on the condition that he would serve for a year, no pay, no uniform, and he would be an adviser. And he -- that's what he did. They gave him an assimilated rank, as they called it, of major-general. And he adopted a name "Fred Harris." And he served a year. And you know, 55 million people were

attacking -- there's 2 million people there, and -- but the Israelis won. Ben-Gurion, the founder, attributed much of that to Fred's [23:53] advice. And I'm looking at it. Now, when Fred died about five years ago [24:00], his wife asked me to write his military obituary, which I did, you know, sadly, but you know, he was my -- so his -- an obituary - - anyhow, 1986 book [unintelligible] by Tom Sigmund [spelled phonetically] , wrote: "the man who, according to Ben-Gurion, was superior to all the military the experts he had ever met was never known by any name other than Fred [24:27] Harris, which is what the heads of the army called him. His real name was Fred Gronich. Gronich is survived by so-and-so. So that's the sort of guy he was. Now, the fact is that for one year when he came back, he was blacklisted in this country, because even though he didn't take an oath to serve the Israeli; he wore no uniform and he received no pay and all those conditions were set forth, nonetheless somehow the word got out [25:00]. So he had to -- took him a year to -- you know, he then entered the -- became a motion picture executive. And essentially he was the director of all overseas activities of the motion picture industry, an organization called the Motion Picture [25:20] -- the movie industry is like a state, and there's little trees with each country regulating the number of films they can absorb, the number of films we'll take from Argentina, that will be paid for, and so forth. And he did a great job representing the industry, although they were working out of Paris and London [25:39]. So -- but you know, that was -- he returned to his civilian career, and that one year was just -- who knows. He just felt it was something he wanted to do. So I should tell you that about him. I don't know how relevant -- perhaps it is relevant [26:00].

BB: Sure.



CW: But he was -- that's the sort of guy he was, a wonderful guy. And he really was -- it's hard to say one person was the -- he was certainly a key figure in planning these various activities in the IPW [26:19] and OB [26:20] [unintelligible] liaison with the British and French, was a decorated [unintelligible] country. He was seriously wounded, and he worked -- he was always on the -- another thing, he had a deputy, Mark Spiegel [26:41] [spelled phonetically], who had been a professor at Harvard, who also joined the movie industry with him and became a -- became a major motion picture executive. And -- however, the man who arranged that, for these guys to get [27:00] a shot -- you know, they were young men -- to get a shot at becoming executives; they entered as beginners. They both became -- Jack Votion [27:10], who was the American head of MIRS London [27:16], and he was a high executive at the RKO movie studio, about 10 years ago, Bob Thomas, who's a famous Associated Press correspondent covering Hollywood, written many biographies of celebrities -- he was riding a cab one day in Los Angeles, and he -- you know, they have -- you know, in Los Angeles, the cabs have a photo and the name of the driver and so forth. So Thomas reported in his column that he was driving in a cab one day and he noticed the driver's name, "Votion [27:58]." That's an unfamiliar name [28:00]. "Are you related to Jack Votion, the movie picture executive?" So the driver turned around and said, "Bob, don't you know me?" Can you believe that story?

BB: Wow.

CW: It's true. So he always imagined he was -- the military attaché in London -- Belgium.

BB: Right.

CW: He put this whole thing together. And as the legend says here says, he -- Votion [28:31] [unintelligible] chief of the London [28:38] branch from its establishment in May '43 to

its inactivation, handled most of the liaison in matters of policy, commanding officer, U.S. detachment. Then he got right back to his big job in the industry, and 40 years later, broke, driving a cab [29:00].

BB: Jeez, wow.

CW: It's a terrible story. But -- and these other two guys became real [unintelligible]. Mark became a famed producer. Fred [29:10] was a number-two man in the industry. He was the president of the Cannes Film Festival and --

BB: Wow.

CW: -- all that kind of thing. So these were -- these guys were supervisors. They were already majors when I was a second lieutenant. So they were just a few years older than me. And Fred was the -- I guess the head guy, and Mark. But they would periodically visit us. And by "us" I mean the guys in London [29:44] and Alexandria [29:46]. And Votion [29:48] selected -- he selected them both as potential executives, and he offered them -- they took [30:00] the spot training till they got to the very top. I -- you know, I think actually Mark as still alive and probably [unintelligible] few years ago when he died. But what happened to him and to Votion [30:20], is -- I guess there's a lesson here, again, many lessons. Well, okay --

BB: All right. Well, this is great, because we're a minute from running out of tape. Is there anything at all that you think that we haven't -- we haven't covered?

CW: No, I just want to say how much I enjoyed chatting with you and I'm sorry we didn't do it earlier, but I'm glad we're doing it now.

BB: This is great. No, we still -- this has been extremely beneficial to talk to somebody who was at your level in the organization and worked closely with Kluge [30:55] and then

went on to do what you did with documents in the European theater [31:00] for several years.

CW: Yeah, I'm -- we -- as I say -- I wouldn't have mentioned our proactive activity if you hadn't asked about it. But I realized, you know, it wasn't part of my job description, but we took the opportunities, and I mentioned these missions, the Czech mission. And you can look -- it's -- I don't remember the name of the ambassador, but he was kicked out. It would have been, I guess, 1946. And I won't say whether -- I guess I can't say whether or not documents were removed, but the Russians [31:43] believed that they had been and lodged a very vigorous complaint. And we, the United States, said we don't -- that we don't know what this is about. But that's actually a little [32:00] more amusing. One of the drivers -- there were a couple of trucks -- went to a -- you know, he liked the idea of being in Prague, a sophisticated city -- decided to -- he said, oh, I'll make it on my own, go back. So he went to a club, a nightclub --

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