

Fort Hunt Oral History
P.O. Box 1142
Interview with Werner Moritz by Brandon Bies
Charlotte, North Carolina
July 23 and 24, 2007

INTERVIEWER: --starts balancing. There you go. Okay.

WERNER MORITZ: I'll sit up more businesslike.

INT: Great. Make sure we've got you. And if you want to [inaudible] in 20 minutes just to make sure.

WM: I'm not trying to be conscious of your camera here.

INT: Oh, well that's good. No, I'm just -- we're going to put it up here and then we're going to forget about it, and that's going to be it.

WM: I'm going to talk as it comes out of my mouth.

INT: There you go. That's the point. All right, great. All righty. Outstanding. Well, we'll go ahead and get started.

WM: And when I go like this, you know what that means.

INT: If -- whenever you need it, that's no problem at all. We'll hit pause and move on. And the great thing is the camera can't even see that because it's just looking at your face.

WM: Right.

INT: Today is July 23rd, 2007 [01:00]. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. We are here in Charlotte, North Carolina [01:06] at the home of Mr. Werner Moritz interviewing him about his experiences at 1142 [01:13]. This is National Park Service Historian Brandon Bies and -- as well as team member Vince Santucci. And we're going to go ahead and get started. So as we discussed a little bit earlier, what I'd like to start off with is just a little bit about your own personal background --

WM: Thank you.

INT: -- because, obviously, that's important to you being selected for what you were doing.

WM: Please do.

INT: So if you wouldn't mind telling us a little bit about when and where you were born and a little bit about your family and where you were --

WM: Okay, as though we're on camera?

INT: Yeah, yeah.

WM: Now?

INT: Yeah, go right ahead. Yeah, go right ahead.

WM: Oh, okay.

INT: And take as much time as you want.

WM: Well, I was born on the -- on June 29th, 1920 in a little [02:00] town called Selbold [02:05], S-E-L-B-O-L-D. Actually, it was called Langenselbold [02:11] before, L-A-N-G-E-N, which is near Hanau [02:17], H-A-N-A-U. And Hanau in turn is the city near West Frankfurt [02:26].

INT: Okay.

WM: A mile. My father was in the men's furnishing business. And my mother was a house wife. This was from 1920 till about 1930. Things were very, very good in this time.

INT: And had your -- had your father been in the First World War [02:53]?

WM: Yes, yes. [unintelligible] come to that at some point anyway --

INT: Great.

WM: -- because he was wounded [03:00].

INT: Oh, really? Okay.

WM: Yeah. And so this was when they all find that kids were well integrated, who had no idea

of the things to come, of course.

INT: Did you have any siblings?

WM: Yeah, a sister and a little brother. And, as I said, Jew and un-Jew got along fine. 1930, it began to boil, so to speak, in that SA [03:39] -- the SA was created in every little town in Germany [03:46]. The SS [03:48] came later, but the SA was the original gang that ran through cities and towns, day and night, railing against Jews [04:00], railing against whatever they felt like railing against. And, of course, there came in 1933 the big surprise that Hitler [04:12] had won the elections. Actually, not the elections per se, but he had the majority and felt emboldened at the time, which this of course is not -- no great news, and bold enough to go to Hindenburg [04:31] who was the president of Germany [04:35] then and then say, "I want to be the next president," and he gave in. He caved in, probably threatened. He was probably threatened. So that's where I came from. And from there, I -- we -- the family moved to Frankfurt [04:53] because it was decided that we couldn't live there anymore. Things were getting too [05:00] -- people would -- they were harassing us. And the people who were for us didn't speak up because they were afraid. So then in Frankfurt [05:12] I got a job and went to school, both. There's not much to be said there because we had already decided that I would immigrate and that after, the rest of the family come along.

INT: I guess that would be to the United States [05:32]?

WM: Well, England [05:33] in the first place --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- because my mother had a brother who lived in England who was an English citizen.

INT: Oh, really? Okay.

WM: And that's how I got out. They called me Lucky Moritz because I had many weird things happen to me. So because of him, I got out. And I ended up in England [05:54], couldn't speak English barely. A little bit, enough to get by [06:00]. And I suppose you want all these things, correct?

INT: This is great.

WM: I'm going to skip over some of this.

INT: No, this is -- this is --

WM: The details?

INT: Go into as much detail as you'd like to because this --

WM: Oh, okay.

INT: -- because we have, again, the majority of the veterans were of Jewish decent fleeing Germany [06:15], and we've been capturing this aspect of their stories as well. In fact, we've actually been working and have some contacts with the Holocaust Museum [06:24]. So they're aware of what we're doing. They're actually going to have some representatives at the reunion. So anything related to your coming to the United States [06:33] and surviving the Holocaust [06:36], feel free. We're certainly very interested in that.

WM: To continue this, I am now in England [06:43].

INT: What year -- I'm sorry -- about?

WM: Now you're testing me. I went twice.

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: Yeah, I went with my -- once to just find out [07:00] if I'd even like it, you know. And so I think I ended up in England [07:05], though -- well, let me go through the first part.

INT: Sure.

WM: I ended up in England, yes, and I -- my uncle got me this job in a fur factory making fur coats, making the skins of fur coats, because he was in the fur business himself. He was in many businesses. He was a man that was very hard to get along with. He was my mother's brother, and she had a sister, also, but the brother -- the little brother was the family's darling. And he was very educated. He was in the war, the First World War [07:49]. He was an officer. To be an officer as a Jew in the German Army [07:55] was tough. And [08:00] I didn't like it there because my uncle was a very strict disciplinarian that he wanted me primarily, as it turned out, because he had two daughters. He wanted a son in the family to take over his business or learn his business. To make this very short, we did not get along. So I very -- tried very hard to get out of the situation, but I was sort of locked in because England [08:31] is not like America. Do this today and the next thing tomorrow. Am I going too fast?

INT: No, this is -- this is fine.

WM: So I looked around and, low and behold, again, I was very lucky and I met this young girl who lived -- whose parents lived next to the American Embassy [08:53]. I told them my story and we hit it off pretty well, that girl and I, that young lady [09:00]. And she introduced me to the -- one of the consulate officials who helped me in different ways, though I had to get some kind of -- what did they call it? Some kind of support in America, a declaration of support in America. But once I had that, he could help me.

INT: Right, like a sponsorship or affidavit?

WM: Yeah, a sponsorship. What did you say?

INT: Affidavit?

WM: Affidavit, yeah, an affidavit, exactly. Once I had that, I did see -- a young consulate official helped me to get to the states. In fact, I was on the last ship to leave England [09:44] to America.

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah. So now I'm in America.

INT: So did you have, at this -- up to this point, any relatives in the United States or were you the first --

WM: I did.

INT: Okay.

WM: Very distant relatives, but I forgot to tell you something.

INT: Sure [10:00].

WM: This was my first stint in England [10:03], and now my folks were still in Germany [10:07] and things were getting worse by the day, by the week, by the month. So they wouldn't listen to me to get out. I was accumulating papers for them. And I went back to Germany [10:20] to convince them on the worst possible day I could have gone back, and that was the day this German [10:31] diplomat was murdered in Paris [10:33] by a Jew [10:35]. The world always thought the whole thing was fabricated. And so all the Jews [10:42] were put into concentration camps, including me.

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah. I had English travel papers. I didn't have citizenship, but the English travel papers, I was assured by the German Embassy [10:55] and by the British it would not be a problem to go and come [11:00]. But they collected me and it was terrible. I -- but after four weeks, they let me out. So I went back to Frankfurt [11:09] to say goodbye to

my family. A terrible scene, I mean, you can't imagine. And now they couldn't come out. I couldn't get them out now, for whatever reason. And I went back to England [11:23] and then I began to rebuild my life. And this I already told -- my uncle, I couldn't get along with him. And I now had the papers to go to America. I arrived at -- the ship I was on, I forget the name of the ship. And I arrived in -- actually in Halifax, Nova Scotia [11:47]. I didn't go to the United States. And in Halifax, [11:52] I had to pay my way on the train to Buffalo, New York [11:56]. When I got to Buffalo, I had 50 cents in my pocket [12:00]. That was my entire fortune. And I contacted a Jewish organization. They boarded me a ticket to New York [12:14]. In the meantime, I had alerted these distant relatives in New York, one of -- one of the -- one of the families was actually -- goes way back -- went way back because they were born -- they were second or third generation Americans. The other one were newly bred Americans. But, together, they got me out of my misery. They gave me quarters. They gave me food. They let me live with them till I had a job. And it wasn't very hard -- it was not very hard for me to get a job while I had the quality knowledge in the fur business. And the fur -- this particular fur business that I had a lot of knowledge of was not very well known in America [13:00]. So, believe it or not, people were actually gesticulating to get me. They would hire me. They offered me \$50. \$50 --

INT: Which is quite a rarity, given the fact that, number one, you were an immigrant and --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- number two, at the time you were still in the depression.

WM: Exactly. And this guy was giving me \$50 to come to work for him, the next guy \$70, which in 1940 -- when did I come over? I think it must have been -- oh, yeah, in 1940.

INT: So that's when you came from England [13:38] to the United States?

WM: Yeah, that is -- yeah, in 1940. Yeah. Now, I could be wrong by a year.

INT: Sure.

INT: You were 20 years old?

WM: Yeah. And, so anyway -- so I had no problems getting a job and eventually got my own little condo, what I would call a condo now [14:00], a little room with a little kitchen and a sofa. I was -- I was very happy. And I did this work. Now, as I said, they were fighting over me, so to speak. And I finally ended up with another guy. He was a PhD and he was doing -- actually, he was actually in the leather business. And I don't know if -- how -- do you know my voice is coming through okay?

INT: It is, yeah. In fact, because Vince has a meter there on his machine.

WM: Okay.

INT: And I tested this earlier, so we should be good.

WM: Right. So this guy was a PhD, and he was also a -- he was in the leather business basically, but because of this one fur, which was not really a fur, it was -- it was not really a fur, it was an artificial fur. It's made from lamb skin and it was called mouton. The mouton coat was very hard to do and they had no knowledge here [15:00]. There were no machinery here and had machines built here by rote. We went up to Pennsylvania, to the Pennsylvania Dutch [15:09], and they listened to me and they started to build machinery to do this. They had not the chemistry, I knew, but the machinery was not here. But eventually we ended up with both. We started to make them slowly. But then came along December 7th, 1941. And I was on Second Avenue [15:40] in New York City [15:41], going to my place of work, checking on a project that started on a Friday

previous, on this -- on this particular project I was on which was making bomber jackets for fliers. I was involved [16:00] in the research and development of that.

INT: Terrific.

WM: Because they were very good. A lot of them were imported and we wanted to make them here. And I was working on that bunch fairly successfully when that happened, December 7th, 1941. So I was on Second Avenue, New York [16:18], and somebody -- a young lady passed me, said to me, "Have you heard yet?" I said, "Heard what?" She says, "The Japanese [16:28] bombarded --" what was it?

INT: Pearl Harbor [16:35].

WM: Pearl Harbor. I said, "No idea." Well, I went to work Monday morning, told my boss, "I'm quitting," Monday morning quitting. And I had a letter from the Army [16:48] that I was going to be drafted anyway, my draft number. I went over there and I told them I wanted to go in. They were amazed, but that's what I wanted to do. I was motivated. And so on [17:00] -- they gave me till separate -- January 23rd of '42 to report to Camp Upton [17:12] in New York [17:13], which I did. In fact, I came in the same day Jerry Lewis [17:18] came in and Andy Rooney.

INT: Oh, really?

WM: Andy Rooney --

INT: Yeah.

WM: Not the one that's on television.

INT: On TV, [affirmative].

WM: No, no, not --

INT: Oh, not that Andy Rooney [17:28]?

WM: No, the other Rooney.

INT: Oh, Art Rooney from Pittsburgh?

WM: No, the actor.

INT: Mickey?

WM: Mickey Rooney [17:36].

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: Mikey Rooney -- we all came in the same day and that was fun, okay?

INT: He was in the Young Frankenstein, wasn't he? Didn't he play --

WM: I don't know.

INT: Or Young Thomas Edison, he played -- he had just been [unintelligible].

WM: Could be, yeah. That's really much later, isn't it?

INT: I actually think it was 1940.

WM: Really?

INT: At least I think it was.

WM: Really?

INT: The reason I know this is because we just played Trivial Pursuit [18:00] this weekend and that was the answer to one of the questions.

WM: Oh, okay.

INT: Rooney [18:04] was a child star.

INT: Right, yeah.

WM: Yeah, he was a child star, is that what you said? Oh, yeah, big time.

INT: And, at this point, were you still considered an enemy alien? Were you a citizen of the United States yet?

WM: I'll come to that.

INT: Great.

WM: It's also interesting. But it might be --

INT: Are you absolutely --

WM: -- a long time. So I went home and cleared up my -- put my act together and said goodbye to everybody I knew and reported to Camp Upton [18:42] on January 23rd, I believe it was, or the 24th. And I was told -- I was told the next day that I was going south, not east, not to Alaska [18:57], and I was happy about that [19:00]. And I think it was in February -- sometime in February that I was put on a train and sent to Spartanburg [19:11]. It was wonderful. The temperatures were terrific. I mean, here we are January, February, and we had to pitch tents. There was no room for us in the barracks. We pitched tents, and the next morning we woke up to two inches of snow. That was the irony of my desire to go south. But, I went through basic training, fierce, fierce basic training, very good basic training in Camp --

INT: Camp Croft [19:54]?

WM: Camp Croft, South Carolina.

INT: And had you [20:00] -- were you assigned to a regiment or --

WM: Yeah, I've got that. Is that important to you?

INT: It's not critical. It would be --

WM: I would be happy to read it to you.

INT: It's not critical for right now.

WM: Okay.

INT: We can get it later.

WM: Yeah, I was. And so we finished basic training and, of course, now our regimen was pulled up and sent to every corner of the United States for further training, specializing, sent overseas, et cetera, et cetera. I was to go to join the 45th Division [20:40] which had been located by then I believe at Delaware Water Gap [20:45], this camp, the name of which escapes me right now. And the following day, I -- my master sergeant called me [21:00] and he said, "You know, the company commander wants to see you tomorrow, so you better get your ODs [phonetic] done. What -- I don't know what it's about." And I went in there and the company commander -- saluted him. He asked me to sit down. And he asked me about my schooling, et cetera. And he said, "You don't want to go to the 45th Division [21:26]." He said, "That's infantry. You're much too smart for that." He said, "I just got a request to find people -- German [21:35] speaking people." And with the knowledge of Nazism [21:39] and Germany [21:40] as a whole, to be interviewed -- and eventually if they fit the bill, to be sent to Washington, D.C. [21:48]. No idea what it's all about. I said that's fine. That's okay. So I landed -- I landed in Washington [22:00] on July 4th, 1942.

INT: Do they -- do they --

WM: -- on a Sunday.

INT: -- do they fly you there or do they --

WM: No.

INT: -- or do they take the train?

WM: By train.

INT: Okay.

WM: By train with papers in hand, sealed papers in hand, top secret. I arrived in Washington,

D.C. [22:18]. At the time, the big edifice was still under construction. What is it the -- that's in Washington [22:28] now, the Army [22:29]?

INT: The Pentagon [22:30]?

WM: The Pentagon was still under construction. That's where I was supposed to report. And I asked -- the first Army [22:41] post I came to, I asked for directions. And he said, "No, you can't go there because it's not finished." They made a couple of telephone calls and I found out I had to report to the Army [22:53] -- to the Navy Department on Pennsylvania Avenue [22:56]. So I went there the following day [23:00], and they said, "Yes, you are supposed to report here." They took me in. They -- into a room which was set up with two bunks and a table. They said, "This is going to be your quarters for now." Fine. It was a lot better than where I came from. I settled down. That evening, I was visited by a captain. The name is not important. And he told me that I had someone else in the room with me that turned out to be Haden [23:43] [phonetic].

INT: Oh, really?

WM: Yeah. And that we would be trained beginning the following day. We were the only two there. We didn't understand what that meant. But the following day, we were introduced to a British guy. He explained to us that the British Army [24:00] would be -- would train us in army intelligence, a great experience, a great experience. They were wonderful. They were experts. So we were actually told that we were the re-initiation of American intelligence for the Second World War [24:21]. Unbelievable, a nobody.

INT: And were you still a private at this point?

WM: No, no. At that point, I was -- I think I was a corporal.

INT: Okay.

WM: Yeah, what do you think?

INT: Yeah.

WM: I was a corporal.

[laughter]

INT: So this was all still at the naval facility?

WM: Still at the naval facility. We were there quite a while. We couldn't go anywhere else and, eventually, they moved us for a spell to this camp on the Potomac River [24:54]. Fort Myers [24:57]? Is there a Fort Myers [25:00]?

INT: There's Fort Myers, Fort Belvoir [25:01].

WM: No, that's not -- I've been there, too.

INT: Okay, Fort -- there's Fort Meade [25:06] which is north of the city.

WM: No, no, it's right in the --

INT: Well, Fort Myers [25:10] is in Arlington [25:11].

WM: Arlington, that's where we went.

INT: Right -- just right above the river.

WM: That's where we went for a spell.

INT: Okay.

WM: And then -- of course, in the meantime, we had swollen to some more numbers, more people. And then as we were over there to more and more and more and more people. Eventually, one morning, we were told that we -- well, we would get a little training from this British -- it was interesting training, though -- was good intelligence basic training, I'll tell you that.

INT: And would you mind getting in to the details about what sort of stuff was covered? Was

it about interrogation or --

WM: There were probably a number of things. To learn interrogation was one of them. How to interrogate, how to get most -- the most out of interrogations [26:00]. And that -- in this first was some lighter stuff, how they fool people, Germans [26:07], et cetera, et cetera, but it was of great value to me. Then they came one day and said that we were going to be moved to a secret work camp. I have no idea where it was. Later, I was on the bus and it took us to what turned out to be Post Office Box 1142 [26:34]. We were actually addressed that same afternoon by a colonel. The name escapes me also. And we were told that this was a highly secret camp, that we are not to talk about what was going on, what we were about to do, what we were about -- what we were about [27:00] to be asked to do, not to our wives, not to anybody. And we were actually elated about it. I was, in particular, because I could make a real effort, I felt. And it turned out that's what it turned out to be. Well, they gave us a couple of days of rest, just to look around. And we were mostly in shabby barracks, really. I remember there were still some tents there, also, but I wasn't in a tent personally. But no air conditioning. It was hot as hell.

INT: Because this would have still been around July?

WM: Yeah, July. And there were days where I wish I had gone to Alaska [28:00], [laughs] it was so hot inside. You literally fell asleep from the heat. So -- and then we met more and more people as they were brought to 1142 [28:14]. And our training began with -- we were told they were going to bring in captured prisoners from North Africa [28:25], our first military activity with the Germans [28:31], which they did. They brought in high profile people, a general, a couple of colonels --

INT: Really?

WM: -- captains. And what they did and trained us to do -- they brought in in pairs per room with the idea that they would discuss military history, military presence, military future, as to what the Germans [28:58] intended -- German intentions [29:00]. And that happened. In fact, it was not only very successful because one of the captains that we had in the room with a lieutenant said, "I'm getting a funny echo here. I think we're being recorded." So they took the lights apart. There was a microphone. It was a very, very, very embarrassing situation for the engineers of 1142 [29:30], okay?

INT: Sure.

WM: But that never happened again after that. They found new ways of putting the listening devices in the places where they couldn't be reached.

INT: These soldiers, though, from North Africa [29:45] -- was this still considered kind of hands-on training or were you -- were they actually really interrogating them?

WM: Well, they were -- they -- we -- they were not interrogated. We were listening to them.

INT: Okay.

WM: Interrogation came later.

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: In other words [30:00], we would listen to them, get the subject matter that they were discussing. And, later, in a sort of a sly way, we would interrogate them, using what we had learned.

INT: And just one quick question. Were the British [30:15] instructors still with you at this point?

WM: Yes, the British were very much involved in the effort.

INT: At Fort Hunt [30:19]?

WM: At Fort Hunt.

INT: Okay.

INT: Good.

WM: Yes. There were several. Not as many, but, I mean, not as intense as -- they were spread out so -- well, we spread them out because of the numbers.

INT: Were they intelligence officers?

WM: They were intelligence officers --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- with experience, great, great experience.

INT: About how many British [30:41] intelligence officers were trained?

WM: Six to eight.

INT: Six or eight? Okay.

WM: Yeah.

INT: Any chance of remembering any names?

WM: Not a chance. It's too long ago, 65 years.

INT: Sure.

WM: Not a chance. I have trouble remembering American names. I do.

INT: And about --

WM: I hope you live [31:00] long enough to find out.

INT: Thank you.

INT: About how large of a group of Americans were being trained by the British [31:08]?

How many were with you while you were being trained?

WM: Well, we would have told the outfit at the time.

INT: And so -- okay.

WM: And you're testing me here. I would say we started out with probably 14, 16, 18 people, and we grew in pairs, 20, 22, 24. And as the numbers grew, I didn't know the people --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- because we got very involved in our own work.

INT: Sure.

WM: We trained some of them or we had some of them sit in to be trained. But remembering their names is --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- nearly impossible because I had to use wide pictures. And I was fortunate enough to put [32:00] -- to have names on my pictures, to put names and faces together.

INT: Sure. Were they -- were the British [32:07] training both American enlisted men and officers?

WM: And officers.

INT: Okay.

INT: And then one other question, you hadn't gone to Ritchie [32:14] yet?

WM: Oh, no, this was way before Ritchie.

INT: This was all before? Interesting.

WM: Way before Ritchie. Way before Ritchie. We were listening to the point where it was -- I was losing my hearing. I mean, we were not only listening to them, actually. Thereafter, we were listening to their records. We did recordings. And in this -- and the recording industry was fairly poor, not like today --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- with disks and whatever have you.

INT: All the discussions you were listening were in German [32:53]?

WM: Yes.

INT: Were there any in English?

WM: All in German.

INT: All in German, okay.

WM: Well, I mean [33:00] that was the point.

INT: Right. I just wonder if you ever came across an American-speaking German [33:05] officer that may have done an interview in England [33:09].

WM: An American officer?

INT: A German officer that may have spoke English.

WM: There was one or two that had some English, yeah. They both said to one another that they could speak some English.

INT: Okay.

WM: But real intercourse in English, no. They spoke German [33:30] and sometimes German -- in Germany [33:33], they have different dialects just like we have the southern dialect here. We come here south, hard to understand in the beginning. You go down to Alabama --

[End of Tape 1A]

[Beginning of Tape 1B]

INT: -- because I'm jotting down and thinking of dozens of additional questions. I -- you may think you've told all there is. I'm going to try to pretend like I'm an interrogator and squeeze even more information out of you.

WM: That's fine. That's fine.

INT: But this is outstanding. You can --

WM: Are we going? Are we --

INT: Yeah, we're all set.

WM: All right, where was I?

INT: We were talking a little bit about the German [00:27] versus English language interrogation. I think you answered the question and we --

WM: Yeah, well I said that we actually recorded people because sometimes we could not understand them because of their dialect or they talked too fast or the listening devices were really not the best in the world. They improved. The engineers learned at 1142 [00:51]. But this went on for quite a while, and we had these sessions where all of us were together [01:00], discussing what we had heard and discussing it with officers. And the officers were really supposed to pass all that along to higher quarters, all the way up, really. And I think I can really pass a lot of -- a lot of time now by telling you that the activities sort of settled down into a sometimes lonely and boring situations. But we did our job. That was our job. We also were called upon some instances to talk to some people who were at 42 [01:51] who were teaching our bombers to teach them [02:00] code so they could write home in case they were taken prisoner -- prisoners to the German [02:08] during the activity. And they were taught code, how to write home to their loved ones, and throw some code words in there, how they were treated, where they were, et cetera, et cetera.

INT: And so you were assisting with that?

WM: Well, I was assisting with that in the sense that they would ask us, for example, what

would be a good word to throw into -- in German [02:43] backwards, for example. We -- our -- that was my -- that was my contribution. I said to take a German word backwards. They would never recognize it. You might recall that the -- that we -- our code -- Navy [03:00] code was all in Indian [03:04], the Indian language. You know about that, don't you?

INT: Well, I know in the Pacific [03:09] you had the code talkers [03:10] who were using it.

WM: Okay, that's it.

INT: And the Marines [03:13] were using it.

WM: Well, that's it. And one of our big jobs was to listen especially to German Navy [03:25] conversations, ships. That became a big deal. And it was terrific. I think we made terrific contributions in identifying German U-boats [03:37]. And then eventually we found -- they developed a grid so we could determine where they were. And we listened to them. We reported all that stuff to one agency above us which is supposedly -- was of course directly under Roosevelt [04:00] and et cetera, et cetera.

INT: You did the listening at Fort Hunt [04:05]?

WM: We did the listening at Fort Hunt, yeah.

INT: And so these -- I want to talk a little bit more about the codes. So do you remember who within 1142 [04:17] was organizing this? Was it part of your program or was it another or was it a group --

WM: It was a different program, but we would be -- I would be consulted for example. I guess the best words to use -- I was made aware of what they were doing and how I could contribute.

INT: And so your idea was to have -- if an American was taken prisoner and they were to write

a letter home, to take a German [04:49] word and write it in reverse?

WM: A German word, some other stuff, too. I don't remember that exactly, but that was -- I don't know if it was ever used. But that's what I [05:00] contributed.

INT: Well, we do know that the program that you're referring to was used extensively, extremely successfully. And it is one of the only aspects of 1142 [05:14], and some little bits of it may still actually be classified because it was this escape and evasion program. You mentioned the coded letters or whatnot. Well, did you hear anything when you were there about Americans at 1142 [05:32] writing messages to American prisoners or were they just receiving these --

WM: I lost you. Say that again.

INT: I'm sorry. At 1142 [05:44] you had mentioned how you were -- you were training folks how to write these --

WM: I wasn't training them.

INT: You were giving --

WM: We solved it.

INT: Okay. Well, first of all, let me ask, "Who were you -- who was asking you these questions?" Were these American fliers [06:00]?

WM: Some -- yeah, some were officers from the Air Force [06:04].

INT: Okay, okay.

WM: One in particular I remember and some of them were enlisted men, staff sergeants, master sergeants. I don't know if they had the same classification, but different names I think. And it was not a major thing with me.

INT: Oh, sure, sure.

WM: But it was something you want to mention.

INT: Oh, no, it's good that you did because there -- what -- it sounds like what you're mentioning is part of another program that went on at 1142 [06:36] where coded messages were being exchanged back and forth with American prisoners and the Americans would receive a coded message and then they would write back a coded message. And sometimes they would say --

WM: Yeah, I'm sure that was done.

INT: Okay.

WM: But I was -- sometimes I was -- a couple of times I was even -- they came over [07:00] to my quarters and showed me letters the prisoner has written home.

INT: Really? Okay.

WM: Yeah, and they wanted to know if any of my -- I don't know if they asked me if any of my suggested words were in there, but they wanted to know if I could identify --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- some of the letters. And I don't remember what my response to it was.

INT: Sure, that's --

WM: I don't remember.

INT: -- that's very neat.

WM: But that was not a major thing.

INT: Sure, sure.

WM: Our major effort there was to get information. And we got tons and tons of information. Let me skip over a lot of days or weeks I was at 1142 [07:42]. And I also want to talk a little bit about the hardships at being at 1142 --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- because we were allowed to live -- is that appropriate to talk about?

INT: Oh, that's great. And just to let you know [08:00], we may come back after we've gone through this and ask some more specific questions.

WM: So you want me to continue with that?

INT: Oh, if you want to keep going, that's fine. We may just go ahead and back up in the next tape or even maybe even tomorrow afternoon and ask some more specific questions.

WM: That's okay.

INT: But this format's fine. If you just want to go with what you remember --

WM: Yeah, so where was I again?

INT: You were starting to talk about a little about living conditions or --

WM: Well, not living conditions. The living conditions were not -- the conditions were not the best, but we were in the service, and they were much better than we had, let's say, if we had been -- if I had been sent with the 45th Division [08:41]. And, as you know, the 45th Division took a big shellacking at Salerno [08:46].

INT: Okay.

WM: I don't know if you're familiar with the Battle of Salerno [08:51].

INT: Not so much with the -- I am familiar with Salerno.

WM: Oh, they were totally wiped out. Salerno was a big mistake, bad intelligence, et cetera [09:00]. I don't want to set myself up as a know-it-all, but I -- but the world knows that we did -- made a big mistake at Salerno [09:09]. Now -- so the whole idea was to find out where German [09:17] divisions were, where they were located, what their plans were or at least convey or derive from these different officers that we listened to in the

different rooms enough information to pass on to our officers to disseminate, find out what they have in mind, where they -- what they may want to do. But the biggest part became naval. Naval. I mean, we followed U-boats [09:52] day by day. I would follow U-boats, where they were. And [10:00] our intelligence and our -- what's the word I'm trying to seek here -- our knowledge of how they operated became better every day. And so we were fed back what they knew. We used it in order to derive what we could from naval officers. We -- the most important thing that we discovered -- I think there's no sense in talking about naval activity anymore because it's a general -- it's a general subject. And to go into details from day to day, U-boat by U-boat [11:00] wouldn't make sense.

INT: Sure, but if you have any very specific recollections about particular U-boats [11:09], about particular prisoners, or even particular technologies from U-boats [11:14], if you'd like to share some of that, that would be outstanding because we've actually been doing a lot of research just this summer specifically on the U-boats [11:25]. We've actually just started working with some folks with the Navy who are very interested in what was being found out there regarding U-boats [11:35]. In fact, a few of the guest speakers at the reunion and symposium in October are going to be speaking specifically about the naval aspect and the U-boats [11:45]. So anything that you have to add to that would be outstanding.

WM: When I hear those -- when I will hear those speakers, my mind will probably be jogged and I could probably [12:00] tell you more than than I can now.

INT: Do you know how you were picking up those communications? Do you know anything about that technology, how they were tracking them?

WM: I did know that, but I don't know now off hand. It may come back.

INT: And did any of the communications that you pick up -- were you actually listening to them --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- live or taped?

WM: Both.

INT: Both?

WM: I would say, "Both." I'm not sure. They may have been all taped. I think -- yeah, they may have been all taped.

INT: And then the kinds of information that you were picking up, it would be interesting to hear about things that you might recall. But was there any communications that you picked up that you provided intelligence back --

WM: Oh, sure.

INT: -- that may have led to the capture or sinking of a U-boat [12:46]?

WM: Oh, I'm sure. Oh, I'm sure. I can't prove it, but I'm sure that's what happened --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- because we were actually getting to the point in listening to these U-boats [13:00] where we could tell by the sound of their motors or the sound of the officers that spoke to one another what U-boat [13:10] it was. We had programmed a certain German [13:16] code also. And we were not involved in that and I'm not claiming to be at all, but I think because of breaking that code, we were sometimes told to listen to specific U-boat [13:34] numbers. I'm not sure about that. I say that in a qualified manner. But I will tell you this. The most important service that we performed, at least I did, and two or three

others also -- I think Frengal [13:55] [phonetic] and maybe Krueger [13:57] might have been involved in that, too [14:00]. We discovered by listening to two naval officers -- we discovered Peenemünde [14:08]. Mean anything to you?

INT: It does a little bit with the V1 and the V2 [14:14] program.

WM: We discovered where the V1 and the V2 were developed and located before they were even fired. We knew of some test firings into the North Sea [14:32], but we -- but none had landed in England [14:35] yet. It was very hard to understand. There was some really, real hushed talk between officers, very quiet, hushed talk like he was almost -- he was trying to assure his roommate that, "Don't you worry. We're going to win this war because we have this Peenemünde [14:59] situation [15:00]. We have these V1s and V2s [15:03]. That's going to change the war completely." But they were such hushed words that both Frengal [15:09] and I labored over the words and sometimes we even argued with one another what the words were. But we listened and listened and listened till we had it right. The most important thing I want to convey to you here is this information was of course forwarded to the officers-to-be. I used the wrong words here -- officers that were involved and were supposed to get our information and then disseminate it. It turned out weeks later, when the V1s and the V2s [15:50] finally fell on England [15:53] that the top echelon did not know anything about it. It was not disseminated [16:00]. So the top echelon got so pissed off. Can I say that? They said, "Clean out 1142 [16:09]," and we were all sent overseas on short notice. This was the greatest sin that the Army [16:23] ever was involved in, to send us all overseas because we were not at fault. We were -- we did our job. We predicted the V1s and the V2s [16:36]. We knew where they were. We forwarded it to the proper authorities within our compact unit but they, in turn,

did not disseminate it. And so we were sent overseas including all the officers. And if I remember, the general [17:00] in charge -- I don't remember. I don't remember. The general in charge was -- it might have been Short, General Short [17:10]. I think he was relieved of his duties. I wouldn't want this to be taken for viable. It's -- I'm not sure that it was General Short [17:26] but everybody was relieved of their duties and we all met overseas again. Not all, but we bumped in to one another. And, you know, I want to tell you something, and I'm not being -- I'm not afraid to say that. Our officers above us, they held their jobs because of who they were, not through what they knew or not of what they knew. They were not qualified to be in their positions above us [18:00], not all of them, but most of them. This is a strong statement, isn't it?

INT: But you're not the first person who has said -- made comments like that about some of the officers.

WM: They were not qualified. They were nice guys. They got their captain's and colonel's badge and lieutenant colonel's badge maybe because they were bank presidents or whatever or -- is this too strong for you?

INT: Oh, no, we're just --

INT: No, no. We want to make sure the tape doesn't run out.

WM: I thought you were leaving.

INT: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. No, this is fine.

INT: So it's 48 minutes.

INT: Which means there is 12 minutes left.

INT: Okay.

WM: So we didn't know that at the time. We only found that out after we all got canned. For

example, I was told that -- to be ready for overseas -- let's say on a Friday for Monday morning I had a wife here and we had nice quarters but the Army [19:00] built some nice small apartments for soldiers off base in Arlington [19:11]. And we got in one of them because I was a senior in my particular work. I got one of them. And, here, my wife had to pick up a mattress and clothing and everything else and move herself back to New Jersey.

INT: And I am just -- I have to ask because we've spoken to other people who lived in these apartments, do you remember the name of the apartments you lived in at all?

WM: If I heard it.

INT: Was it -- it wasn't the Jubal Early Homes [19:39] was it?

WM: The what?

INT: The Jubal Early Homes.

WM: Sounds familiar.

INT: Because that's -- Wayne Spivey [19:47] lived there --

WM: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

INT: Arthur Whelchel [19:50] lived there.

WM: It had to be that.

INT: And I'm trying to think who else -- Norman Graber [19:54] may have even lived up there.

WM: Could be.

INT: I'm trying to think.

WM: Could be.

INT: But a few people have mentioned living with a few other 1142 [20:00] folks there in Arlington [20:04].

WM: Yeah, yeah. I don't remember where we left off because I want to get back to something. I made an earlier statement that there was some hardships with 1142 [20:16] or some such words. When you left off of the camp, to get back to camp was terrible. They did not provide anything for us. We had to catch busses in the morning. We had to get -- pay people to help us get to -- you update -- what is that parkway?

INT: The George Washington Parkway [20:43]?

WM: The George Washington Parkway up to 1142 [20:46], and I always found that to be a little bit ridiculous because why let us live off -- we didn't have cars, that's for sure.

INT: And so when you were living off post, you kind of had to hitch a ride to work every day?

WM: Sure, hitch a ride or take [21:00] or get a bus. So I had to get up at 5:00 in the morning, 4:00 in the morning just to get ready and to get over there because, if you came late, you know what that meant. I just wanted to --

INT: The date when they cleaned house -- the date when they sent you overseas approximately?

WM: I wouldn't even know where to look in my files to find such a thing. But I'll certainly jog my mind to see if I can remember that. Well, it would have to be very close to when the V1s and V2s [21:41] fell on England [21:42]. That's when they actually faulted us for not having that information. We had it but the guys above us didn't disseminate it. They didn't believe us in other words.

INT: Do you --

WM: They did not believe us [22:00]. We were nobodies.

INT: Do you think that that was a problem from within the officers within 1142 [22:09] or do you think that was above the officers at 1142?

WM: No, I think it was in the officers of 1142. I don't know. I -- frankly, I don't know, but I think it was the officers within 1142 [22:21] or else they wouldn't have been cleaned out with us, in my opinion.

INT: Do you remember an officer name -- now officer [unintelligible] named Kubala [22:33]?

WM: Oh, sure, I knew him personally, Kubala. He was --

INT: Because he's the one --

WM: -- an old Army [22:39] soldier. He's the guy who grabbed Goering [22:43] [phonetic].
What about Kubala [22:46]?

INT: Right, well his name has come up as one of these officers. Everyone that we've spoken to about him seems to have a strong opinion either one way or the other.

WM: Yeah, well I have a strong opinion one way and the other [23:00]. [laughs] He was not a bad guy. He was just an old German [23:09] dummy who came to America and couldn't find a job, went into the Army [23:15]. And I think when he became a master sergeant -- you couldn't help but become a master sergeant during those years. The old guys -- old Army [23:31] sort of taught us and took care of us, but he was -- really jumped into the officer corps much too soon. He didn't have it, but he made the best of it. I gave him a lot of credit. I bumped into him in Europe.

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah, and I said to him -- I forget his first name.

INT: Paul [23:50]?

WM: Paul. I said, "Paul." I went like this. I remember that to this day. He said, "Come on, Moritz [24:00]." He said to me -- I said -- that was before he got a hold of Goering [24:05]. He -- but he was very happy and he says, "I deserve it." I was going to argue

with him. Yeah, I -- oh, I was going to come to Kubala [24:16] anyway.

INT: Well, that's why -- and at some point, maybe even tomorrow, we might go down a list of some of the names of officers and enlisted men and see who all you remember and what you remember about some of them.

WM: Yeah. And now this guy -- this colonel you mentioned earlier --

INT: Van Cleve [24:32]?

WM: Van Cleve, yeah, I remember him very well, but I remember him in a nice way.

INT: Everyone seems to have a very high memory of him.

WM: Yeah, I remember him in a nice way. He also had me come up to him one time to his headquarters office. I forget the reason why. It was nothing terribly important. But he had me come up [25:00] in some connection. Maybe it was that the 11 -- maybe it was that V1, V2 [25:04] thing. I don't remember. And I don't even know if he was cleaned out. I don't remember.

INT: So, yeah, that's what I was getting at is, do you remember if any of them were associated with the V1, V2 [25:14] issue or if they were -- did you ever --

WM: They all were.

INT: But do you remember which officers you reported up to --

WM: I wish I would. There was -- there were -- I want to tell you -- now, I want to restate that again.

INT: Sure.

WM: We had two or three above us, immediately above us, captains and even a lieutenant colonel I believe. They should have been scrubbing floors. They should have been scrubbing floors. They did not belong where they were. But we had to report to them?

What they did with our information we don't know. We found out later that it was not properly done [26:00]. The V1 and V2 [26:02] was -- should have been totally anticipated, totally. Okay, so now we're cleaned out. And of course we can go back if something is missing.

INT: Sure.

INT: I just don't want to leave -- lose this. So it was in 1942 that -- was it '42 that you picked up U-boat [26:28] conversation about --

WM: '43.

INT: '43? Discussion about V1 --

WM: Well, let me see. Let me see. I got to Fort Hunt [26:37] on 1142 [26:38] on July 4th of '42. It was close. Either it was the end of '42 or the beginning of '43.

INT: Communication you were picking up from U-boats [26:54], were you getting U-boat to U-boat communication or was it in the U-boat [27:00] that you were picking it up?

WM: Both.

INT: Both?

WM: Well, mostly U-boat [27:04] to U-boat, but then it would only be noises that we're tracking so we would know what U-boat it was. Some of those U-boats [27:16] were feared more than others. They had -- they were veterans and we had convoys out there. And we picked up a lot of naval information.

INT: And so were these -- again, you think these were recordings that were made -- like underwater recordings that were made of these U-boats [27:42]?

WM: It's hard for me to answer. Not that I didn't - - I'm sure I knew then.

INT: Sure.

WM: I'm not sure I know now. Some -- the only thing I can say is that some of the recordings that we had [28:00] were much worse than others. In other words, they might have been underwater. I don't know.

INT: But these were not just prisoner room conversations?

WM: Oh, no.

INT: These were recordings before they were prisoners?

WM: These were in-action conversations. And not only that, these were also -- these were also communication between U-boats [28:27] and their headquarters in Germany [28:30].

INT: And do you remember --

WM: That was very important.

INT: And these were actual audible recordings or --

WM: Oh, absolutely.

INT: And possibly some of them were live?

WM: They were live.

INT: Okay, so you had both live and taped?

WM: They might have been taken the day before.

INT: Okay, okay.

WM: And we had to listen to them.

INT: So like radio transmissions, that sort of thing?

WM: They weren't that --

INT: Like intercepted radio transmissions?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay. Did -- do you -- and on that vein, do you remember [29:00] at 1142 [29:03] there

being any sort of radio interception equipment or radio towers or anything?

WM: There was.

INT: Okay.

WM: But we had very little to do with that.

INT: Okay, do you know if that was related to these U-boat [29:18] coms, if that could have been a way of -- okay.

INT: And were those already in place by the time you got to 42 [29:25]?

WM: No.

INT: They were put up while you were there?

WM: Yeah, later. And also these recordings that we got, they may not have been via any towers at 1142 [29:42]. They might have come from somewhere else. They were just sent to us for interpretation.

INT: And Brandon can probably explain to you when we're off tape here about some of the other listening activities that went on at Fort Hunt [29:54] that may interest you because it may be related to what you're talking about.

WM: Okay.

INT: In fact [30:00], I may just do it right now while we're recording in case you wanted to chime in. I mean, we've got literally just a couple of minutes left on this tape --

WM: All right.

INT: -- and then we'll have to take a little break. But essentially our understanding, as Vince just mentioned is, actually dating back before the war started there was a signal intelligence service listening post at 1142 [30:26]. In fact, it wasn't even -- it was before it was noticed by [unintelligible] --

WM: Yeah, I think I was -- I think I was aware of that.

INT: And it would have been some sort of -- we don't have pictures of it. It's some sort of a radio mast, radio tower --

WM: Yeah.

INT: And they were -- and, again, this was before the war started, they were intercepting radio transmissions from our perceived enemies which, at that time, were Japan [30:51], Germany [30:51], Italy [30:53], and can you guess the fourth one, who our perceived enemies would have been in 1940, '41 [31:00]?

WM: Might have been Russia [31:02].

INT: Mexico [31:03].

WM: Mexico, really?

INT: Yes, because they were sympathetic to the Germans [31:08] at the time. And so we were intercepting conversations, radio transmissions. Our -- we have very little knowledge of that.

WM: I should have guessed that.

INT: But --

WM: You know why? Because I took some trips -- I took some train trips with officers and other enlisted men -- took trips to Texas [31:28], to the Mexican border because we were trying to find listening posts and we found some by triangulation.

INT: And now when was this?

WM: This was while I was in 1142 [31:43].

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Well, I'm going to stop it at that because that raises all sorts of new questions.

WM: Yeah.

INT: So why don't we just hold that thought, and we'll go --

WM: Are you still going? Before I forget, that [32:00] there's always the possibility that I'm a little mixed up timewise, but I want to get that in there.

INT: Oh, absolutely.

WM: But I know I went on a terrific trip. Days and days we were on trains and I shouldn't tell you -- I'll tell you this story. Off -- we're off, right?

INT: Can we pick this up on the next tape?

WM: Yeah, sure.

INT: We'll turn this off right now and --

[End of Tape 1B]

[Beginning of Tape 2A]

INT: I'll tell you that in a second. I'm just -- because this is a new tape, I'm just going to give another quick introduction. You'll -- I'll do this at the beginning of each tape so that we'll be all set. Today is July 23rd, 2007. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project, the second in a series of interview recordings with Mr. Werner Moritz, here in his home in Charlotte, North Carolina [00:30]. This is Brandon Bies of the National Park Service as well as Vince Santucci, Chief Ranger at the George Washington Memorial Parkway. And, with that, we're going to pick right back up where we left off. I'd like to talk a little bit more --

WM: Are we on tape?

INT: We're recording now, yep. We're on tape. A little bit -- you had mentioned --

WM: Because I wanted to tell you that my name is -- I would prefer it be pronounced Moritz.

INT: Oh, Moritz?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Lucky Moritz.

INT: Thank you.

WM: Lucky Moritz [01:00].

INT: Lucky Moritz, okay. Thank you very much and I will see if I remember that
[unintelligible].

WM: You can cut that out of the tape.

INT: Right, right, thank you. In fact, what we should do is have the veteran just say -- state --
"Please state your name for the record," but we don't want you to feel like you're at a war
hearing.

WM: No, no, no, I'm not in front of a judge.

INT: So we had left off at the end of the last discussion a little bit --

WM: About trains.

INT: -- talking about some of these -- the trains. And you had said that you'd made some trips
down the train?

WM: We made some trips to -- especially to -- well, exclusively, I would say, to Texas [01:38]
because there was a strong suspicious -- well, a little more than a suspicion that there was
some German sympathizers [01:49] in Texas [01:50] who sent information to the Nazis
[01:55]. So we were sent there to find them. Man, have you ever taken a train [02:00]
trip through Texas [02:03]? There's no end to it. There's no end to it. And we eventually
found one nest [02:12]. We called them nests. Reported back and turned it over to the

FBI [02:19]. That's all I know.

INT: And so why were you selected to do that? Why from --

WM: Probably randomly. I don't know. Me and a couple of others --

INT: But it was for people from 1142 [02:33]?

WM: Oh, absolutely.

INT: Do you think it was because of your --

WM: German [02:38] language.

INT: -- ability to speak German?

WM: Yeah.

INT: You said the word, "nest," [02:43] like N-E-S-T?

WM: Yeah. Well, that's what we called them, just nests.

INT: Well, what -- can you define, "nest"?

WM: Well, define nest in terms of military term -- it is a military term. But you can call it anything you want.

INT: So like a listening post sort of thing or [03:00] --

WM: Just, yeah, a listening post, gathering point --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- relay place to the Germans [03:09]. And we discovered one.

INT: Do you know what --

WM: That was my team.

INT: -- area, what location [unintelligible]?

WM: Oh, god, we -- it was really out in the boondocks, but near a town but in the boondocks. I seem to remember it was near -- not Dallas [03:39] -- Houston [03:41], the Houston area.

I would say 50, 60, 70 miles from Houston, because I remember getting off of a mainline train and taking another little choo-choo train to another little town in Texas [03:55].

INT: And how did you know it was German [03:58] nest [03:58]?

WM: Well, they spoke German [04:00].

INT: Okay, so they were --

WM: They were -- they were probably non-Jewish German immigrants. I don't think they were placed there by the Nazis [04:14] but they were -- we had them all over the country, sympathizers [04:18] for the Nazis.

INT: So, essentially, these were people that were presumed to be spying?

WM: They were spying, not presumably. They were spying. And they were contacted by the Germans [04:30]. In some cases, they were threatened that their family would be damaged or hurt or disadvantaged in Germany [04:40]. But they had good reason but there were a lot of German sympathizers [04:46] in America.

INT: Yeah, especially Texas [04:49] has a very large German [04:51] --

WM: Large German community. I don't remember the exact little town. It might come to me.

INT: And so there were [05:00] -- and actually, in this -- at this position, this nest [05:02] they were a group of German-Americans [05:06] that were there and you turned it over to the FBI [05:09]?

WM: Yes.

INT: Okay.

WM: We turned the location over to the FBI --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- because we had nothing to do with arresting, et cetera, intervening.

INT: And how many times did you [unintelligible]?

WM: We -- I took two trips.

INT: Two? Okay. Were there other trips from people from 1142 [05:30] --

WM: Yes.

INT: -- where -- that you did not go on?

WM: Yes.

INT: So this happened somewhat regularly?

WM: I would assume so, yeah.

INT: Okay. Do you remember about when this was, if it was early on in the war or later on in -- when you were at '42 [05:46]?

WM: Well, it would have happened later on --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- after maybe it being at 42 [05:54]. Let's see, how long was I at 42 [06:00]? From about -- I got to 42 [06:13] -- oh, it was that July 4th. That was the beginning of '42.

INT: Right.

WM: And then I probably left there when we got all kicked out, so that was about -- when was the invasion of Europe?

INT: June 6th of '44.

WM: So it was a little bit after June 6th.

INT: And that's exactly in line with -- and one of the documents -- if I haven't already sent this to you, I've got a copy for you today is the full roster that has your name, the date you entered, and the date you left. Now, I believe it gives the date you left as sometime in July of '44.

WM: That would be right because I think -- I was in -- I think I was in D-plus-something, 26 days, whatever that [07:00] -- whatever it ends up, as being --

INT: Right.

WM: -- being right. But that's when I ended up in Europe and then I was attached immediately to George Patton's [07:09] headquarters which I was very happy about. Happier, some days not so happy when we got into trouble. But there was a great experience. That's an experience all by itself.

INT: Something that's still a little unclear about -- when you went to this nest [07:26], how did you --

WM: Let's call it something else.

INT: Okay.

WM: Let's call it a -- let's -- I'll think of -- we'll combine maybe two together but --

INT: Or like a German [07:42] safe house or something?

WM: It was a sort of a safe haven, yeah.

INT: So how did you find it? When you found it, what did you do? Did you actually talk to these people or did you listen --

WM: No, we listened. We listened --

INT: Telephone calls?

WM: -- and we had like -- we had like two teams going. And by triangulation [08:00], we'd locate it.

INT: Really? So you'd pick up the transmission signal, wherever it was being sent, short wave radio or something like that, and you've pick up communication --

WM: Turn it over to the -- turn it over to what we believed to be the FBI [08:15]. They would

pick it up from there.

INT: Would this be a matter of days or weeks or --

WM: Oh, no, quickly.

INT: Quickly? Did you triangulate --

WM: Well, I mean, you get -- you -- it takes you three days to get in to Texas [08:27], by train.

INT: So there would be a team that would be working to try to triangulate where this communication is coming from? You would --

WM: We would also interview people --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- in the area who might be suspicious of what's going on. That helped quite a bit.

INT: So did you travel as a team?

WM: Yeah, we traveled as -- we were three at the time, or four. I think we were three. One officer and two noncommissioned officers.

INT: Did you have somebody who was a technician that could help with the radio [09:00] or were you --

WM: No, I don't remember that.

INT: Okay.

WM: No. I don't remember that. I think when we got to certain spots where these radio triangulates, whatever you call them, were located, these technicians were located, and we would listen to the German [09:22] -- they were speaking German, that's why we were sent there.

INT: Got you. Were these listening -- these American listening posts -- they were static, they were --

WM: Yeah, they were in a building.

INT: Okay.

WM: We would just -- I don't know, take a train there.

INT: Got you.

WM: Take a bus maybe from there to -- bus ride, and then there wasn't much of an introduction of who they were, these people, who would just generally sit down and listen.

INT: And you have to forgive us for asking so many questions --

WM: That's fine [10:00].

INT: -- but this is an aspect of something that went on at least peripherally through 1142 [10:07] that we've never heard about before, so this is --

WM: I'm the first one?

INT: You're the first one.

INT: Yes.

WM: Oh, yeah.

INT: We've conducted probably about 20 interviews, and the -- you're the first person to have mentioned this. So that's why we're -- that's why we're having a hard time understanding. We've never -- we've never heard this before.

WM: Oh, yeah, I remember -- I don't remember his name, but I remember the captain's name who went with me twice.

INT: Do you think if you saw his name you might recognize it?

WM: Maybe.

INT: Okay.

INT: Now, here's what's interesting. You didn't say this on tape, but when we were talking

earlier, you talked about how 1142 [10:41] changed from when you first got there until when you left. And so what you provide us is a perspective of the beginning of 1142 [10:53] up through '44, a very important period where we really haven't talked to many vets that were there during that time [11:00].

WM: Yeah, Haden [11:01] was there.

INT: And some of the things that you were involved in are not things that some of the other vets were involved in.

WM: Such as what?

INT: Such as the travel by train --

WM: Oh, yeah.

INT: -- to these listening houses. And just by an odd chance, do you recall any of the nature of the conversation that you were listening to when you went to Texas [11:25]?

WM: No, I think the primary -- the -- of course the objective was to get as much information as possible.

INT: Sure.

WM: But it turned out that the primary objective turned out to be just to see if these people were speaking German [11:40] and communicating with somebody, not necessarily someone we could identify. But to provide some evidence that this was going on.

INT: And was in the course of the conversation something to tip you off that they were Nazi sympathizers [12:00]?

WM: Oh, yeah.

INT: Can you think about what that might be or what that --

WM: Well, they were happy in their voice -- tone of voice that they could provide this

information to whoever. You could tell they were happy that they could provide this information. "Oh, and I have something else. Oh, something else I want to tell you," you know, that sort of thing. It's not something that you can convey on -- in black and white but -- so this was a service we provide and I think it was important. I like to think that it was important because we heard that they had arrested some people out in Texas [12:43]. They did this. They did this spying for Germany [12:49]. And who knows. They might have helped these people come ashore in New York [12:54] that came ashore. There were seven, remember? You don't remember?

INT: Yes [13:00]. I certainly don't remember --

WM: No, you don't remember it -- not being alive.

INT: Right, but I've heard of --

WM: Yeah, I'm assuming now that you're more deeply into this -- into this stuff that I'm about to reveal. Yeah, well, I mean, that's -- that was a minor part of it. It was a fun part because it got me away from 1142 [13:21] for a couple of the three days, five days, whatever.

INT: Sure.

INT: You made friends on the trains?

WM: Oh, yeah. [laughs] Don't put that on tape.

INT: So we've covered the Texas [13:36] thing a little bit which has been --

WM: Yeah, that was just an aside, yeah.

INT: Sure, but that's very -- it's very, very interesting. The other aspect that we were talking about a little bit towards the end of the tape -- and I know we've already asked a few questions about this, but these -- listening in to these U-boat [13:56] conversations or

radio transmissions [14:00] and I was telling you a little bit about the signal interceptions that were being made there at Fort Hunt [14:07].

WM: Yeah, you see now, there again, as I'm -- as we go along, some of that stuff comes back to me. I think that this stuff was prerecorded by someone else --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- and then sent to us for interpretation. Most of the contribution that we made was from listening devices in the rooms.

INT: In the rooms, yeah.

WM: But the listening devices in the rooms provided us for information to listen to naval information. It was all in the moment. It's -- it comes to me as I speak. And it's even interesting to me now, as I speak [15:00], that it comes back to me. We did a lot of work, a lot of hard, hard work. We were given -- the MPs, we were given -- what's the name for it? I'm so embarrassed when I can't remember names. There was a lot of leeway, freedom of movement, in the Alexandria [15:25] area. We could get drunk and the MPs couldn't pick us up. We had a pass and the MPs were told that, "This is 1142 [15:33]. You can report them but they did -- but you cannot pick them up."

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah. And why am I talking about that? That escaped me already.

INT: Do you have -- do you still have a copy of your pass?

WM: I doubt. No.

INT: Because I think Brandon might need to use it.

[laughter]

WM: No, no, I don't have that anymore. There's a lot of things. My son took off my -- took

my uniforms when he -- when I was much younger [16:00] and he used it for whatever.

My medals disappeared --

INT: Oh, geez.

WM: -- and everything else. But it's okay, my medals weren't that great.

INT: You can get your medals replaced if you'd like them.

WM: Yeah, I know. I know you can. I know you can. But you asked me a question?

INT: Let's see. Brandon was asking about the listening devices.

INT: Yeah, we were talking a little bit about listening devices and you said how it was all one kind of -- some of -- you mentioned it was more the bigger picture, how one thing might compliment something else I guess.

WM: Yeah, yeah.

INT: I guess since we're talking about the listening device -- oh, that's -- we were talking about the passes and how you could get around without being harassed.

WM: Yeah, yeah, so we had privileges, certain privileges. This was not a great privilege, but I [17:00] had another small room in Alexandria [17:07]. And it turns out that a Marine colonel lived in the same building. And he stopped me one day and he said to me, "You're really not saluting me when you should." I said to the colonel, "I don't think anybody needs to be saluted inside of a house." But he says, "Well, that's not really why I want to talk to you. I want to talk to you -- I want to know what you're doing, why you are not living on a post?"

INT: I said to him, "Well, it's a very simple answer. I'm at a post that has no name. It's a secret camp and we cannot talk about our activity [18:00] and so I won't." So he -- "As a matter of fact, if I were to meet you at the street and not salute you, you couldn't even

arrest -- have me arrested." And he couldn't take that for an answer. He could not take that for an answer. He says, "I don't believe it." So he must have called the MPs in Alexandria [18:23] and -- because about half an hour later was a knock on my door and it was one of the MPs that I knew. And he said to me, "Guess what happened? This colonel wants to find out why he can't arrest you." I said, "That's amazing. Doesn't he have anything else to do? Why is he a colonel? I mean, there must be a lot of -- lots of things he can do." I said, "I explained to him why I can't talk about my activity and I only suggested to him that I cannot be arrested [19:00]. He had no reason to have me arrested." And this guy explained to me, "Well, he didn't say he had a reason, he just wanted to know why." Can you imagine the things we ran into? That's another aside.

INT: Sure.

WM: But it just comes to me now as I speak.

INT: Oh, no, it's fantastic.

WM: As I speak, you know?

INT: That's outstanding. Well, did the MPs -- now, you said -- you mentioned you knew this one MP. Did you get the sense that they knew what was going on at 1142 [19:29] or did they just -- were they just --

WM: I don't think so.

INT: -- following orders? They --

WM: They were following orders. I don't think they had the slightest idea of what was going on. I don't think so, unless they found a guy drunk one night from 1142 [19:43], which is very rare that somebody got into trouble. But who knows. I didn't. It's possible but I don't think they had a notion of what was going on.

INT: Well, that's great. Any anecdotal stories [20:00] like that, that you come up, just as we're speaking, are fantastic.

WM: Yeah.

INT: That's very interesting.

WM: So I don't know where we can continue now. Do you want to ask me questions?

INT: Yeah, I've got a gajillion questions I could ask, but if you -- if you're on a roll --

WM: Well, if we want to continue first on might trip through the services --

INT: Sure. If you want to just kind of keep going chronologically --

WM: Well, I think we should chronologically because, remember, we -- I think we stopped off by me telling you that we were grabbed and sent overseas.

INT: And so this would have been after about two years at 1142 [20:40]?

WM: Well, we have to figure it out.

INT: We -- just you arrived there in July of '42, and I think that we discovered that it was around July of '44 that --

WM: '44, that's about right.

INT: And I remember looking and Carl Haden [20:55] left within I think two days of when you left.

WM: Yeah, so that would be right [21:00]. And we were -- in my case, I was sent to -- immediately -- I was immediately sent back to New York [21:11], and I was -- there was a holding depot in New York for me to reload onto a ship. It was just amazing. It was mind-blowing. It was -- I didn't think it was entirely fair. I mean, we performed a service here and because of an event that took place, not our fault -- we were really mishandled. We were badly handled to the point where our wives were stranded. All of

our wives or girlfriends were stranded in Alexandria [21:47] or Arlington [21:48]. And I was really pissed off at that point and I was -- I was this far away from going AWOL [21:58], to tell you the truth. I had [22:00] a new wife. I didn't think it was fair. But, anyway, that's where we were held and we were loaded onto a ship. We were told immediately that the ship was going to be overcrowded and half of us had to sleep during the day and the other half had to sleep at night. And the ship was the Britannic -- or Britannia [22:27]. On the way back from Europe back to America it was torpedoed and sank.

INT: Wow.

WM: Yeah, so that's the one we were on and we didn't even know where we were. We got on this ship. Obviously, the ships don't have any names. They're all painted out so you can't read them. And we were -- we were stuck in a place for two days and two nights. We didn't know where it was until we were out at the -- at sea again [23:00]. And then we found out we were actually anchored at the -- in Canada [23:11], what is that one city?

INT: Like Halifax [23:18] or somewhere up there?

WM: Halifax. That's where the convoy was assembled and --

INT: Okay. So you sailed from New York [23:29] to Halifax [23:30] and then the convoy --

WM: To Halifax. We didn't know it at the time.

INT: Okay.

WM: But we found it out later.

INT: Well, and I'm sorry for interrupting --

WM: Interrupt.

INT: Did -- at what point did you go to Ritchie [23:38]? Did you go to Ritchie

[unintelligible]?

WM: Oh, we missed Ritchie completely.

INT: Okay, so you --

WM: Should I do Ritchie now?

INT: If you -- since we were trying to do this at least initially chronologically, if you wouldn't mind --

WM: Well, let me see if I get -- well --

INT: If you would've -- did you leave --

WM: The whole bunch was sent to Ritchie [23:54] first.

INT: From 1142 [23:56]?

WM: Yeah, it was in -- we were all sent to Ritchie.

INT: Okay.

WM: And then in Ritchie [24:00], things began to look a little more rosy. Now, wait a minute. I got something mixed up here. Can you stop it a minute, the tape?

INT: Sure.

WM: I got something mixed up. I got to think. We were told that we had to be retrained with weapons, M1, the new one. Which was the light one? Which was --

INT: M1 carbine [24:27]?

WM: What was the small one called, the new one?

INT: The carbine?

WM: Carbine, yeah. Had to be retrained and we -- we went through severe, severe training at Camp Ritchie [24:38] to go overseas. That always was necessary even though we were intelligence. You never knew what would happen. And then after we were there for a

while, we were offered to become officers. And we had to go -- we had to go [25:00] through this test period, written tests we had to take. And I failed the written tests. Today, looking back on it, I failed mostly because I was no longer interested because I was still so upset with what happened to us. I was upset. I was concerned about my wife. And, we -- my wife and I are two items that didn't have family here, much family. And so I was worried about her. And I failed, that's all there is to it. I didn't become an officer. But sometimes these bad things turn out to be good things because when I left Camp Ritchie [25:53] -- maybe I need to dwell a little more on Camp Ritchie [26:00]. Camp Ritchie was a tough segment of my 1142 [26:05] experience because, like I said, that retraining was tough. You couldn't leave Camp Ritchie [26:11]. After a while, yeah, we were allowed to go to a town down Pennsylvania [26:18] somewhere. I think the camp that we were in, at Camp Ritchie [26:22] was -- it was actually -- there was a name for that camp other than Camp Ritchie.

INT: Okay.

WM: Camp -- I'll get -- I hope I remember. My wife would remember that camp.

INT: Now, it wasn't -- because elements of what was used out there became part of Camp David [26:50]. It was --

WM: Yeah, I know that. But Camp Ritchie [26:53] -- it was a camp name --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- because I revisited it as a civilian.

INT: Okay.

WM: I went up there [27:00]. I had family coming my way.

INT: And you say you went into Pennsylvania [27:03]?

WM: Well, Camp Ritchie [27:04] is up in the --

INT: It's northern Maryland [27:07] near [unintelligible]?

WM: Yeah, Maryland and much closer to Pennsylvania.

INT: Yeah, it's very close to Pennsylvania.

WM: Pennsylvania border.

INT: It's like Gettysburg [27:12].

WM: Yeah, Gettysburg, we -- yeah, that whole area.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Hi.

WM: That's where we could -- hi.

FS: Hi.

INT: Sir, we can pause it if you'd like.

WM: Hold on a minute.

INT: Sure.

WM: Let me say, "Hello," to my --

INT: Ritchie [27:25] --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- and you -- I know we were talking about the training that was going on there and that's one of the things I'd like to ask you about, specifically about the training there at Ritchie [27:37]. Do you feel -- did you get a very specific short hook training [phonetic] or did you just get the regular Camp Ritchie --

WM: Well, I think it was the -- what Camp Ritchie taught, yeah.

INT: Okay.

WM: It was tough. Live fire exercises, going into Gettysburg [27:57] down that -- down that

area for [28:00] they called -- what did we call them in those days? Those trips -- orientation.

INT: Maneuvers and things like that.

WM: Maneuvers, being sent out by yourself. We did not have the finding equipment that -- what is it, the GPT --

INT: GPS?

WM: -- the GPS like we're -- like I have on my car. And it was tough training plus the fact that you couldn't communicate with your family. But as -- when I went to Europe after I found out that that training was really a godsend. It was necessary.

INT: Do they train you in interrogation?

WM: No. No, interrogation wasn't part of training. It was just physical -- retraining of physical exercises.

INT: Okay.

WM: Like going to basic training but more severe. And --

INT: I know you were also talking a little bit about the test [29:00] that you had failed --

WM: Well, the test was a tough test. Not that tough that I couldn't have passed, but it was a two-, three-hour test. You sat there. All of us sat there in long rows and the test was -- had to do with a sort of higher education exercise of what you knew in mechanics, what you knew in language, what you knew in this and what you knew in that. And it was a very strict exercise. The officers were sitting there, watching, making sure you didn't steal any information from your neighbor, et cetera. And then we went back to our quarters and actually did nothing for several days [30:00]. As a matter of fact, now that I remember, we were allowed to bring our spouses up there. How do you like that?

INT: To Ritchie [30:13]?

WM: Yeah. I guess it was Ritchie, Camp Ritchie and now I think they call it Fort Ritchie [30:22]. I think it's in our signal corps camp.

INT: And it's actually at least for the time being closed right now. They [unintelligible] --

WM: Yes, we were told it's closed. Yes.

INT: They closed. And they're looking at possibly reopening it. In fact, a few years back, they actually looked at it as one of the locations for the Department of Homeland Security [30:40].

WM: Is that right?

INT: That was rejected but they're still trying to find a use for it.

WM: My wife and I came -- we were in the area one night and we stopped at a hotel there, the Howard Johnson when they were still around. And the next morning -- I had a big -- I had a big [31:00], not Cadillac, the other -- the Chrysler equivalent car. I can't think of the name now because I'm getting bad, and we drove up there. And there's -- of course there's a soldier at the gate, a guard. And when I stepped out of my car, he saluted me. He thought I was a civilian. And I went over to him and says, "You don't have to salute me." I said, "Believe it or not, here's where I had tough training whatever number of years ago it was then." And I said, "Do you think I could get permission to drive my wife through the camp?" He said, "Well, I'll have to find out." He called somebody and that somebody came up to the gate, was an officer, and I told him the same story, "I was stationed here." And we had a little conversation [32:00] of what's going on in camp now and what -- the camp was four times as big then, the second time. And he said, "If you want to drive through, go ahead. He gave me a pass, and we drove through and it got

dark. No, no, it was in the afternoon, not in the morning. And it got dark and I couldn't find my way out.

[laughter]

Anyway, that was an experience by itself, to relive that. I probably had tears in my eyes to relive that. But I -- as I said, the place had gotten much bigger and some of the areas I couldn't even identify. And so that was an experience we had there. And always -- this is one place I always wanted to burn down because our training was so hard. And there was a belief the general who was in charge was the commanding officer [33:00] was Colonel Killian [33:02] [phonetic]. Have you heard that name before?

INT: No, we haven't. And that doesn't necessarily mean anything. We'll have to look into that. In fact, another --

WM: Can you take that out?

INT: Oh, absolutely. In fact, someone else who works on our team, Sam, he's really, since as a result of this project, become a mini expert on Camp Ritchie [33:25]. In fact, we also have a volunteer who has done a great deal of work on Ritchie and he is actually going through. In fact, if you'd like -- do you remember what class you were in at Ritchie [33:39], like a class number?

WM: Not a chance.

INT: Because all of those Ritchie records are at the National Archives [33:46] and he could go in and pull your class information and give you the names of all --

[End of Tape 2A]

[Beginning of Tape 2B]

INT: -- Fort Ritchie [00:06] questions, did you go to Ritchie as a group from 1142 [00:12], that

group that included Haden [00:15]?

WM: Group that -- yeah, the group that got kicked out from 1142.

INT: Okay, that's interesting. And, second of all, in terms of your training there, you had mentioned earlier that you didn't get your interrogation training early on, you got it later.

Where did you get your interrogation training?

WM: Oh, we got it at 1142 [00:35].

INT: You did get it there?

WM: Oh, yeah, we got -- the British [00:38] taught us a lot.

INT: Great. Did the British come with you or have any involvement at Ritchie [00:43]?

WM: No, none.

INT: Okay.

WM: I know I met a British officer there.

INT: Okay.

WM: It was a tough place because if I have the name right, Colonel Killian [00:56] was a tough cookie. He was very much disliked, even by his officers [01:00]. And I just don't remember if it was the same Colonel Killian [01:07] who ran our prisoner camp in England [01:10], our American prisoner camp in England who was later indicted and found guilty for abusing his power, his -- see, because of her loss of sight, not being able to see, everything's dark, she gets very, very tired. Anyway, yeah, he was -- if that's the same Colonel Killian [01:40], I'm pretty sure it is.

INT: Well, and we can look into that. We might even be able to make a call --

WM: Yeah, it's not that important to me, but I --

INT: Oh, but it would be [unintelligible] to know.

WM: -- I'm pretty sure it's the same guy because --

INT: Yeah.

WM: -- in my opinion, he was a sadist to begin with. So --

INT: But it sounds like in a way, though, it still prepared you fairly well for your experiences in Europe [02:00]?

WM: Yeah, it -- yeah, it contributed to it. No question about it. The training in the woods and the -- yeah, there's no question about that. But I had a very bad taste for the Army [02:16] as a whole because of the way we were kicked out because we had done fabulous work. Unfortunately, it was at a low level where we couldn't complain to anybody and if you complained to anybody, I was told, it gets worse. So we never said anything to anybody.

INT: Okay, so then I'm a little confused again. You said you had a bad taste in your mouth when you were at Ritchie [02:41]?

WM: Because we got kicked out. No.

INT: No? Because of being kicked out of 1142 [02:45]?

WM: We were kicked out of 1142.

INT: Okay.

WM: The way we were kicked out, didn't even really know it till later why we were kicked out. And we had done a good job -- well, we knew it but not the day we got kicked out [03:00]. I mean, here comes an order, everybody's out. And it was a terrible experience.

INT: Did you ever get anything in writing saying why you were removed from 1142 [02:46] or just you've been [unintelligible].

WM: That's not the Army [03:18] way.

INT: Sure. Well, that's what I figured.

WM: No, that's not the Army way. They would deny it even now if they were alive. But that's what happened. Every officer with us knew it. We did our job. We reported V1 and V2 [03:36] and the location. And then once we got shipped out, we started to bomb Peenemünde [03:50]. So that's the proof in the pudding.

INT: But this would have been only after the first rockets had begun launching though [04:00]?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

WM: But they might have had Peenemünde [04:06] pretty much under scrutiny anyway by then. So that was very irritating. Now, put yourself in our position.

INT: Sure.

WM: You work nights. We worked day and night to identify some of this stuff because those records were not very good. Those prisoners laid back and they just talked and it reverberates from the ceiling and it doesn't come through very well. Their voices don't come through very well. It was hard work. We sat there sometimes arguing with one another, "What is this word? What is it? Where is it located?" It was located way up in North Eastern Germany [04:45] of the Baltic Sea [04:48]. And I think it was the Baltic Sea. Isn't that the Baltic Sea? No, I think it was -- no, not the Baltic Sea. It was the --

INT: North Sea [04:56]?

WM: North Sea, North Sea.

INT: Yeah [05:00], just one more question. I appreciate it. Ritchie [05:05] primarily was a

training camp for interrogators. Maybe since you already had interrogation training --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- in 1142 [05:13] that they gave you some specialized training at Ritchie [05:18]. But there's one instructor who we had met who actually was an instructor at Ritchie taught interrogation. He talked about exercises where they had red team, blue team and they would have the interrogators go out and actually capture some German [05:34] prisoners?

WM: That's true. Now that you mention that --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- oh, no, they didn't -- we didn't do that German -- capture German prisoners. They had teams. We had classes. We were actually never engaged in one-on-one interrogation exercises, but we had classes that we would listen to. And now that you mention that, there might have been a British [05:57] officer involved there. I'm not sure [06:00].
Again, I invoke my old age.

INT: Absolutely. That's perfectly acceptable. Just so -- you may already know this. There's a video production called the, "Ritchie Boys" [06:12].

WM: Yeah.

INT: Have you seen that?

WM: Yeah, you sent it to me, I think.

INT: Oh, do -- I think I mentioned to you how to purchase that. Were you able -- I don't know if we -- it's a video. It's a DVD, an hour, hour and a half documentary.

WM: Yeah, I haven't seen it now.

INT: Okay. It talks a lot about what had gone on in terms of training.

WM: Who does the talking and who does the -- where does that information come from?

INT: It's veterans like yourself.

INT: Like yourself.

INT: It's almost a similar format to what we're doing now with -- they've interspersed -- it's a documentary for television. They intersperse interviews with veterans with archival black and white footage and that sort of a thing.

WM: Now, who did this?

INT: This was actually done by a German [06:58] film producer [07:00] about two or three years ago.

WM: Where did he get the names to interview? Do you know?

INT: That's a good question. I don't know.

WM: Because I should have been contacted, I would think.

INT: Well, they -- and, again, our project is specific to 1142 [07:16]. Overall, we think that through the entire course of the war, there were maybe 500 or 600 Americans who went through 1142 [07:28] at any -- not all at the same time, but here and there.

WM: Right.

INT: Camp Ritchie [07:34] as a training ground I believe is somewhere in the several -- I mean, thousands if not 20,000.

WM: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

INT: So they didn't -- I -- this documentary had interviewed 10 or 12 people. So they didn't go out and try to find --

WM: You mean they picked them up out there from their records maybe?

INT: I don't know how they went across them.

INT: Yeah, I don't know either.

WM: Yeah.

INT: But I think for the large part, they didn't [08:00] talk about 1142 [08:01] at all. They mostly focused on fear -- field interrogation. These men would go out and they would be attached to a company and they would do field interrogations.

WM: No. I didn't -- get not -- I did not go through training like that.

INT: Okay.

WM: I did on-the-job training.

INT: Okay.

WM: In Europe. And we did good work. My god, we did terrific work. And if we are now at a point of Camp Ritchie [08:27] where I'm about to leave Camp Ritchie --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- and being shipped overseas on this boat and we arrive in England [08:34], and we're being sent to Scotland [08:38]. I am located at a place called Kingstanding [08:44]. You wouldn't find it if you went there. I mean, a school, a church, and a couple of houses and barracks. Kingstanding [08:56], it was a bore because we did nothing. Yeah [09:00], we had assembly in the morning. Yes, there was role call in the morning. Yeah, I -- we heard a couple of lectures. Basically, it was terrible because it was -- we were bored. I mean, we -- I didn't think I was sent to England [09:19] or to Europe for that. I wanted not necessarily action, that I was eager to get into a firefight with the Germans [09:31]. But I wanted to contribute. I wanted -- I sound like a superhero or Superman himself. But I wanted some action and England [09:44] was a bore. But we were eventually shipped to Southern England and -- by train and then loaded on -- what was it called? LSTs [10:00]?

INT: LSTs?

WM: LSTs. We were -- about eight of our interrogators were sent -- was put on an LST [10:14] and across the North Sea [10:19] to France [10:20]. And we went up the Seine River [10:23]. The second day out on the Seine, the ship stopped -- the LST [10:30] stopped. It was full of tanks and other equipment. It's not a human transport. It was a machine transport, weapons transport. And we -- our quarters of course for two nights, three nights were very bad, sort of face to toe, toe to face, nose to face. And way down below in the hold, so to speak. But the ship stopped and I noticed and I woke up [11:00] and I went up a couple of flights. And there was a naval person told me that they had gotten information that the Germans [11:15] had dropped mines into the Seine River [11:18] and that we have to proceed very slowly. And shortly thereafter we were all ordered into upstairs on deck. And this officer told us that mines had been dropped into the Seine River [11:38] and that anything could happen and we should be prepared for it. It made me a little nervous. The third day out, later afternoon, we hit a mine. And our LST [11:58] blew in half, so to speak [12:00]. Our guys were fantastic. They closed that -- what do you call those heavy doors, those --

INT: I know what you mean, the -- like fire control doors or --

WM: Yeah, there's a name for them, though.

INT: Yeah.

WM: We closed them immediately. We got very little water, and the other side sank in spite of the French Navy [12:27] coming to the rescue. They rescued some people, but we lost some people. It went down. So that was an experience.

INT: Do you remember the LST [12:42] number or anything like that? This would have been -

-

WM: I have all that written down but with the number of moves we made from house to house and into this condo, there's a lot of material -- a lot of pictures I lost, also. It was partly negligence [13:00] and partly disinterest because this was a time in my life where I -- what does it mean to me? It's part of my history and, frankly, I have no grandchildren. I have lazy kids, divorced, and I'm pissed off about that, too. It -- grandchildren fill a void in your life. We don't have any. We're upset about that. But we are punishing our children by spending their money.

[laughter]

So yeah, that was quite an experience. And so we were taken off by the French [13:48] -- what do you call those Navy [13:52] persons that operate on the river? Well [14:00], you guys should know.

INT: Like a ferry?

WM: No, but I mean the name for the whole unit, for the unit.

INT: Brags, river assault?

WM: It's -- anyhow, we'll leave it there.

INT: Okay.

WM: I don't know the name. It's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't come out with it. The French [14:18], they took us off and we were -- two experiences. We were shipped to an American camp in France [14:40] for cleanup, for reissue of uniforms, some light training. I mean, it's just to keep us busy. And then I got sick. I forgot to tell you [15:00] one very important part of my basic training, but we never did talk much about basic training, at Camp Croft [15:06]. Can I intervene and say that?

INT: Yeah, let's go with that. That's fine.

WM: I was a bit of a guru [phonetic]. We were in camps. We were in Louisiana, actually, the Maneuvers [15:15] out of Camp Croft [15:20].

INT: We've interviewed several people who were at the Louisiana Maneuvers [15:23] --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- there in the -- like late -- like March of '42, March, April '42 --

WM: That area.

INT: Yeah.

WM: And [unintelligible] --

INT: George Frengal [15:34] was actually at the --

WM: Was he? He might have been my roommate in the tent. I don't know. But I woke up in the morning. It was one of those guys that I knew well, Frengal [15:44] or Haden [15:45]. And I woke up and I couldn't move my left arm. And then the guy looked at -- whoever it was looked at my arm and he said, "Your arm is like three times as big as it should be." To make a long story short [16:00], they sent me to a field hospital and they recognized what it was. I had been bit by a black widow spider. You know they're deadly?

INT: Oh, yeah.

WM: And they sent me to Washington [16:17] -- they sent me to Walter Reed Hospital [16:19]. They saved my life. They didn't have anything for it, really. They put me in a bathtub with oatmeal to soothe it. And sulfa drugs were big then, the sulfa drugs. They did some of that. And, anyway, I lived obviously and I went, rejoined my unit. That was just another aside. Where that's been, it was way, way back in my brain. That was

something. Anyway, we are now taken to a camp in France [17:00]. And we hung out -- we hung out in that camp for a while. And I got sick there. I forget what it was. But it was -- but they wanted to send me to a better hospital. So they put me in -- what was that flying -- what was the flying boxcar, the C54? Was that the C54?

INT: Oh, the C54? Yeah, there was the C47 and then the C54.

WM: C54 was the flying boxcar. Well, we rode in a flying boxcar with 12 casualties on the floor. And there were ones that could walk and talk were sitting up around the bunker [phonetic]. Everything is open. And we could hear the captain talk to the tower or whatever. And we got into Nancy, France [17:54] and he wanted to land. And he was told to get out of the way, that [18:00] a flight of P-38s [18:02] was coming in. So he wanted to get out of the way. He could never lift the plane again and the plane crashed at the -- just outside the airport. And some of the people who were casualties already on the floor got killed. I walked away, dazed.

INT: You were on this plane?

WM: I was on that plane and I walked away from that plane dazed and tattered and torn.

INT: I can see why they call you lucky.

WM: Yeah. And a French [18:35] --

INT: That doesn't sound like you're supposed to be here, giving us this interview.

WM: Well, there's more I could tell you. Oh, god, could I tell you a bunch of stuff. And a French [18:44] nun picked me up, took me to the church. What do you call it?

INT: Like a monastery?

WM: Monastery -- they cleaned me up and they had one nun there that spoke a little English [19:00]. And they got in touch with the local French [19:06], local American station, told

them about me. "Oh," they were [unintelligible] -- they were so happy that I was a -- that I was not a casualty. But I was dazed, nothing bad. I had a few bruises.

INT: So I've got to ask some questions for this.

WM: Certainly.

INT: Why were you on -- why were you on this plane? What was your reason [phonetic]?

WM: Because -- to go to a hospital, to be taking care of my sickness.

INT: Oh, because --

WM: I had gotten sick up there.

INT: Okay.

WM: They couldn't quite identify --

INT: Got you.

WM: -- or weren't prepared to handle it.

INT: Okay. So was this almost as soon as you had arrived in France [19:46] off of the LST [19:47]?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

WM: That was shortly thereafter.

INT: Okay.

WM: I don't remember [phonetic] anymore how many days. I got pretty sick and that's all I can tell you. What it was, I don't know.

INT: So they were then going to fly you back to England [20:00] or just to somewhere else?

WM: No, I don't think so. No, I think they were going to handle me there in France [20:07], in Nancy [20:09], probably. They had a hospital. I would assume because where these

other guys, these other casualties on the same plane with us. And so I was one of the guys that walked away.

INT: And, again, why did the plane crash? Did it have something to do with these P-38s [20:27]?

WM: Yeah, positively. This I know for sure. The P-38 -- this guy was landing in a landing mode. And then this heavy boxcar -- he had to lift again -- I mean, this -- this is just a sort of a perception that I have of what happened. All of a sudden, he got to lift this thing, get out of the way. The flight of P-38s [20:58] are coming in. And there was a possibility [21:00] they might have collided. They came in pretty swiftly, P-38s. You know what they say about P-38s, right? You drink 37 and you pee 38.

[laughter]

That got to be on the tape? And, anyway, that's what happened. And the thing crashed. It fell. It literally fell down, this plane. There was no fire that I can remember. All I can remember was I hustled out of that plane with some other people. I don't know what happened to them. Most of the people on that plane I didn't know.

INT: Right.

WM: None of them I knew. And what happened to them, I don't know either. I just went about my way of getting off that plane. And I walked out of that, I guess -- I guess it was a military airport. Maybe it wasn't. But I walked away and I ended up on these streets in Nancy [22:00] and this woman picked me up, this nun. So that's another aside. So now they -- I ended up with -- in American hands again and they took me to the hospital and they fixed me up. And after that, I was put through what they called a repple depple [22:27]. What do they call them? Replacement depot, they call them repple depples to

be shipped out into the front lines or whatever. I was attached to a Third Army [22:47] headquarters.

INT: So up until this time, had you been attached to Third Army?

WM: No.

INT: Okay, so you were just on your way to the first run to LST [22:56], then it sank --

WM: Yeah, then it sank.

INT: And then you got sick [23:00]?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

WM: Yeah. I know I'm probably rattling a little bit here.

INT: No, that's okay. I'm just trying to --

WM: If it's not clear, just ask me. But, some of these things come back and I get a little excited.

INT: Sure.

WM: I'm reliving it so to speak.

INT: Yeah.

WM: And then I became -- was attached to Third Army [23:21]. And when you are attached as a -- let's see, we were with -- our unit was called CID, Criminal Investigation Division [23:38]. It was not CEIT, it was not CI -- what is the --

INT: CIG?

WM: No, CID [23:48].

INT: Right, but you're saying it wasn't -- because there was a -- later on, there was a CIG, I believe.

WM: No, I was not CIG.

INT: Okay.

WM: No, I wanted to make sure that I was not part of CIA [23:57]. I was not part of that. It was CID [24:00], Criminal Investigation Division [24:04]. But you were attached. You were -- never belonged to it. You were -- I was only attached to the Third Army [24:12]. And the reason for that is that they could detach me for service in different places. And so we were detached in different places. We'd get an order, four or six of us as a unit shipped out. One time, we were just shipped out to interrogate some German [24:40] prisoners had come off a tiger tank [24:42]. The tiger tank had slid off a street, icy street [24:47] in France [24:48] and we captured it. And so we interrogated them, things like that so we were sent out [25:00]. I want to get to the real important stuff in this connection. So we traveled with the Third Army [25:08]. And then of course you know -- you all know what happened. We had this -- when the German [25:19] armed the counter offensive, what was it called?

INT: Battle of the Bulge [25:22]?

WM: Battle of the Bulge, and that set us back quite a bit. And we were detached and sent here. We were detached and sent there. And in the process of doing that, we had something nice happen to us. We found a couple, husband and wife, who were bakers and cooks and we made them our own. We brought them along and we loaded them on our jeep and we kept them going and they cooked for us. They made breakfast for us. Fantastic. It was near unbelief. Those things, when you think about them today, unbelievable. So [26:00] -- and each time we reported back to headquarters with Third Army [26:05], we had to hide this couple, literally had to hide them. We'd go to another -- we'd go to a guy

who drove a truck and had them sleep in the truck. I mean, it was unbelievable the things we did. But we were -- we were sort of freeloaders. We could do as we pleased. We had to report to Third Army [26:27] what we did, of course, naturally. In the process of doing all these things, we now win it -- Battle of the Bulge [26:40], we win it. And I am -- we're stuck in with -- stuck in western France [26:52] when the Battle of the Bulge [26:55] was critical, very critical at Saint Lo [27:00], at Saint Lo. At Saint Lo, the -- I think it was the Seventh Army [27:05] had a hard time hauling the Germans [27:09] back. And they asked General Patton [27:14] to come across the field from western France [27:16] and help out, and he did, and we came along with that. And Patton knocked the hell out of the Germans [27:25], the Third Army [27:27]. And then I want to also put in a word for Patton [27:33], George Patton here. He had a bad reputation in the country, but he was really a soldier's soldier. We all really loved him because he moved. He knew what he wanted to do. He was rough and -- because he slapped that one soldier in Sicily [27:51] gave him that very bad name. Are you familiar with that?

INT: Yes.

WM: You're familiar with it? He had a very bad name. He was tough on us, yes [28:00]. He wanted us to serve. He wanted us to do what were called to do, serve our country. He didn't like -- didn't like people that were -- again, I can't think of the word. Who laid out - - who has a little blood on their wrist and went to an infirmary and then ended up in a repple depple [28:35], he didn't like those. He wanted to be up with his comrades at the front lines. Serve your country. Don't let your -- the other guy do the work for you. That's -- that was him. I remember him coming out. We were now in Germany [28:52]. Well, I might as well go there now. I come across the Rhine [28:56] and into Germany

and his headquarters is established in a place [29:00] called Bad Nauheim [29:02]. Bad Nauheim? Yeah, I think it was Bad Nauheim. Yes, that was his headquarters in a beautiful place, chateau-like place. A lot of -- not far from the Rhine [29:15] itself, the Rhine River. In Bad Nauheim [29:18] was a very wonderful spa. So of course the GIs -- the first thing we did, we took possession of that spa to the point where Patton [29:31] intervened -- he said you can't all run over there. "Right now, this is reserved for officers." So we got a little pissed off at that, but then a day later, we had a black board down in the hall he would put in his commands and they were not nice, "You son of a bitch. You stay away from that spa. Officers go first." The next day would say, "All right, the son of the bitches can now go use the spa [30:00]," and it was terrific. We used that spa as long as we were in Bad Nauheim [30:05]. And then the time came to move on again. This was only a temporary situation in Bad Nauheim. Of course, a lot of this infantry and all that, and then tank corps had already moved out. He was a tank -- he was a tank corps basically. Am I going too far off field?

INT: No, this is fine. I'm just checking the tape.

WM: I got to tell you this as it comes to me.

INT: Yeah, no, by all means.

WM: And we're now being detached again to find -- primarily to find German [30:39] bigwigs. That was order number one, "Find the big top Nazis [30:45]."

INT: And so the war is over at this point?

WM: No, no, the war's still on.

INT: Oh, it's still on? Okay.

WM: The war is still on. Geez, my foot fell asleep. The war is still on [31:00]. Well, it was

somewhere in between. The war was still on at that point because we started to fan out. You might have read -- you might have read that at that point, out at Bad Nauheim [31:15], the Germans [31:16] collapsed pretty quickly. And this march -- Third Army [31:19] march and everybody else's march proceeded swiftly into Germany [31:25]. We come to the outskirts of Nuremburg [31:32]. Maybe -- I may be going too far. There may be some other things that are [unintelligible].

INT: Well, we can -- and we can come back to it as well.

WM: They might have come -- [unintelligible] outskirts of Nuremburg [31:44] and it was probably late in the afternoon. It was probably late in the afternoon. It was getting dark and we see three guys marching toward us, one with a white flag [32:00] raised, two other guys with guns. So I went back to my guy with the phone and I said, "Here's what's happening. Give us some orders, what to do." Now, they stopped. We fired a couple of shots. They stopped, but they had a white flag. They wanted to talk to us, obviously. They wanted to convey something to us. So the guy from Third Army [32:34] said to us, "Well, tell them to drop their guns and march forward." And that's what we did. And they dropped their guns and they came. And they wanted to tell us that they were from a division and the division wanted to surrender.

INT: The whole division?

WM: The whole division. So here I am, I'm taking possession of a division. Isn't that unbelievable? Now I got a division. So now I called Third Army [33:00] again and I said, "What am I going to do with these people? It's getting dark." He says, "We sent you people from the --" what is their -- what was Fort Belvoir [33:17]? What was the main --

INT: The MP?

WM: No.

INT: Fort Belvoir [33:21] was in Virginia [33:22].

WM: Yeah, and now what was their main training?

INT: I thought they trained MPs there.

WM: They did train MPs, but --

INT: Engineers?

WM: Engine -- well, they -- yeah, engineers. They told, yeah, engineers, too. But anyway, they told us they're going to send us a bunch of people from whatever, I can't remember now, with wire and soldiers to put wire around that division and call it a prison camp.

Yeah. Unbelievable, sounds unbelievable.

[End of Tape 2B]

[Beginning of Tape 3A]

WM: I know now where I was more or less. Can I go?

INT: I'm going to just do my quick introduction that I have on every tape and I'll see --

WM: Oh, okay.

INT: -- if I can pronounce your name correctly this time.

WM: Anything else I can do for you guys?

INT: No, we're good.

WM: We're going to feed you good. You got a terrific meal here.

INT: Oh, outstanding. All right, today is July 23rd, 2007. This is the third in a series of taped interviews with Mr. Werner Moritz. Is that close -- all right, great, with Mr. Werner Moritz in Charlotte, North Carolina [00:47]. And this is part of the Fort Hunt Oral

History Project. This is Brandon Bies as well as Vince Santucci of the George Washington Memorial Parkway [01:00]. And, with that, we're going to pick right up. And I think we're on the edge of two different -- two little related stories. One, you were talking a little bit about Patton [01:11] just right now before we started and his establishing a headquarters.

WM: Headquarters near Nuremburg [01:19], right.

INT: Right, right.

WM: And we were given orders at that point just to just do our thing every day, roam around, find the Nazis [01:33], find the bigwigs, find the big shots. Well, you know, who do you start [phonetic]? We were a team of four. If we wanted to, we could get two more all in a jeep and we had to establish those bars for the jeep because the Germans [01:52] had strung wires across --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- the big autobahns to cut our necks off [02:00], cut our heads off. So we started to roll.

INT: And I'm sorry to interrupt before --

WM: Sure.

INT: -- you get going on this. Do we want to finish that other story about the -- you mentioned you had them stack arms, the prisoners?

WM: Oh, yeah, that should be finished. Yeah, well there's not much to say. We had one man [laughs] cuffed in the division. That was funny as hell. I don't remember the name of the -- I have all this stuff. And I met the general. And then the general said to me, "I really would like to speak to a higher officer." Not much I could quarrel with that. And, besides, I was already interested. I did my thing. I had the Army [02:59] engineers --

yeah, the Army [03:00] engineers came with all that wire to put a wire around them. Typically German [03:07] -- I had them sit down, squat, forbade them to get up unless they were ordered to, forbade them to speak unless they were ordered to. I took one of the Germans [03:21] to help me out. First thing, I asked if there was any Waffen-SS [03:27]. You know what Waffen-SS is? Those were the very bad guys who had their own initials or numbers in their -- branded in their -- et cetera, things like that. But, in the meantime, we were told by Third Army [03:51] that I think a colonel was on his way over, or a lieutenant general to take over. And we had done our work but the Germans [04:00] pretty soon assembled a band and did "oom pa pa, oom pa pa, oom pa pa." Playing around and all they wanted to do -- the one guy wanted to know when they were getting food, "When the hell am I going to get food?" But we did feed them later on that night. I wasn't there, but they were fed that night. And that was the end of my involvement. I was amazed that a guy -- the guy knew it was useless. In my little conversation I had with the general, very little, I asked him why he was giving up. He says, "There's no place to go. We're finished. We're done." But when I wanted to interview him more, he said, "I want another -- I want my counterpart."

INT: Because you were not -- you weren't an officer [05:00]?

WM: I wasn't an officer.

INT: [unintelligible] sergeant --

WM: I wasn't an officer. You see, that's where it came in. This is where I was hurting. It happened one more time I wanted to get that either. So we're not done with that.

INT: Sure.

WM: And we keep moving around. We headquartered at nights and we had our beggar cook

with us. They cooked for us. They only took our rations and made them sound like fresh eggs. They were fantastic.

INT: So they just took your regular rations and --

WM: Yeah, I gave them a chance to eat also.

INT: And then they made all of your meals out of your rations and just kind of spruced them up a bit?

WM: Exactly, exactly. And they would take some of the stuff and make bread [06:00] -- French bread out of it and they would go to -- we -- all of us would go -- this was friendly territory. We'd ask for some flour. We'd ask for some sugar and people were all for us now and with us. Anyway, not all, but I wanted to tell that story. It's really not important. What was I -- now, I've forgot.

INT: Well, you were starting to talk about going out and roaming around.

WM: We were roaming around and -- am I at this point already? At this particular afternoon [07:00], it was hot as hell, we were all -- we had two jeeps. Our jeep, four, and another team. We're rolling around and we're passing some houses sitting on the hill and a kid came running down and was hollering, "Streicher [07:28], Streicher!" I stopped and I got out of the jeep. I asked two of the MPs to stand near me. I said to one in German [07:42], "Tell me about this Streicher [07:44]. What is Streicher?" He told me, "Streicher is in the house." How much luckier can you get? So we staked out the house [08:00]. We had -- I think we had four -- we had four MPs and four interrogators. Staked out the house, I knocked on the front door. I had my gun ready. It was locked. I walked around the house and looked through the windows. Shades were down. We finally decided we were going to break into the house. It was painted green in the front.

I remember what it looked like, and it happened on this afternoon and I asked the MPs to break down the front door. They did. And we heard steps running, feet running. Then [09:00] I asked to the other two MPs to come in. We were four MPs, me, and one more interpreter. We looked around and went upstairs. We found [Julius] Streicher [09:13] in bed with a 15-year-old girl. So I said to him, "You're Streicher. You're Streicher [09:25]." That's [unintelligible] pronounced, "Streicher." He says, "No, I'm not Streicher." I said, "Well, I think you're Streicher [09:38]." And, to me, he looked like Streicher because I have -- I still have a memory of the son of a bitch.

INT: Is this from when you were living --

WM: Yeah, when I was living in Germany [09:50] as a kid. I said to him, "I'll tell you what. You follow us. Get dressed." He was naked, too. "Get dressed [10:00]," and I told the MPs to watch him. And we stood outside the building, outside the room. And he got dressed. And I said to him, "Now, one more time, are you dressed? We're going to take you in regardless. Are you Streicher [10:24] or are you not Streicher?" He says, "I'm Streicher." Then I had him handcuffed, put him in the jeep, and took him to Third Army [10:39]. And then you -- we come to this little hut that I have a picture of. There -- we put him in there. I explained to the MPs -- three out of the four were black.

INT: I saw that in the photograph.

WM: Yeah.

INT: So you were actually [11:00] going around the countryside with three black MPs?

WM: Two others -- there were some others. We could always borrow them. And I said to them, "We captured a guy here that's of great importance. He hates everything. He hates blacks. He hates Jews, especially Jews, but I want you to know he hates blacks almost as

much as he hates Jews." So I am -- I explained to them who I was. I said, "I will have no mercy for this guy. I might even kill him." I was enraged. I was trembling. There were tears in my eyes [12:00] that I had captured this guy. I had him to myself. I posted two MPs back at that house. Of course there was no door there, but you couldn't trust the windows. And to inform them, I said, "Don't you ever leave this guy alone." First thing I did -- I called Third Army [12:25] for four more MPs to change off day and night. And they had them over there pretty quickly. I think within two hours there were two more. I walked into the room with one MP. I put the other MP aside and I said to him, "Look, I'm going to do things you probably think I'm crazy [13:00]. And you want to know something? I am crazy. I am crazed. I captured a Nazi [13:08] of unbelievable mischief. I captured a Nazi who doesn't deserve to live. I would like to shoot him right now, but I know I would be court marshalled and end up in prison. But I'm going to do what I have to do." I had him undressed and his clothes thrown to the side. Underwear, everything, I told him, "Everything to one side. And from now on, you sleep naked on this cold floor and you will not speak unless you're spoken to. You will not [14:00] -- and your hands will always be above your head. You will not move. You will not move or alter your position until somebody gives you permission if I'm here or not, especially if I am here. You will not make a move." And with that - - terrible thing to tell you - - I took out my penis and pissed on him. I pissed all over him, his head and everywhere. And he started to move his head and I said, "Don't move. I have my pistol in my hand. I'll shoot you in the ass." This is the god-honest story. That's how enraged I was with this guy. I said, "Don't move." And eventually I ran out of urine of course. That was the end of it [15:00]. It's a terrible thing to tell you, but it's the truth. That's what I did. And he said

to me, "Towel," in German [15:12]. I said, "You're not to speak. You're just to lie there, to get some sense of what you Nazis [15:22] did to the Jews. This is only a small sense. You will not be burned here. We won't cook you in an oven. But some small sense this German Jew will heap upon you, and don't you move or else you're a dead man, a dead person." This was an event that gets me very upset even now [16:00]. So I gave the MP instructions and I called him in the morning. I said, "Now, this guy will not -- is not to move. You're not to shoot him willy-nilly if he moves, but if he wants to turn around, he has to get permission from you. His hands must always be above his head. If he even starts to rise or pick himself up, you blast him. That's the orders you get from me. I'm responsible." I left, went to my quarters, and went to sleep. Only, we didn't have -- we had walkie-talkies but I didn't have them with me. They were -- and I -- the first couple of hours I seem to remember I went over [17:00] and checked on these guys, they were all right, and told them they could change with the two MPs that I had in the back. That's my story of Streicher [17:13]. I had him the second day. I don't know if I can tell you this story, but I guess I will. I had brought -- I had uncooked potatoes brought over. No, uncooked -- no, potato peels brought over for him to eat. And he started to eat and he spit out. Then he ate some more. I guess he was hungry enough to eat some more. And then I pissed over the rest of them [18:00]. It's a terrible thing to tell other two human beings, that story. But that was what I had to do. Then he -- I guess he didn't eat anymore. That was the second day. So the third day, he still hadn't eaten, and of course our MPs got their meals brought over to them. And there were strict orders not to throw anything to him, nothing. He will get nothing. But I spoke to one not officer, but [19:00] what kind of officer, what was it? It was a master sergeant, I think he was. I said to him,

"We got to feed him. You know, we don't want to have a dead Streicher [19:21] here." So they brought him a meal. And we had also been informed by them that Third Army [19:30] didn't want me to keep him, that he was going to be turned over to 12th Corps -- 11th Corps [19:40], 11th Corps. That was -- I think it was the 11th Corps. That was Bradley [19:50]. And then the fourth day, they came over. Two officers, a lieutenant [20:00] -- two lieutenants, I think it was, two lieutenants, four of their men MPs, I guess. MPs, they took him from me and I asked them to sign off. I made a little slip that said, "11th Corps [20:23]," or, "12th Corps." It doesn't matter. I don't remember exactly. And one of the officers signed it, that they took over Streicher [20:32]. Then I even sent -- I made the mistake without a copy to send this slip to the war department the first time I was looking for Colonel King [20:46]. Well, now when I reported -- when I went over to King and I said to him, "Look who I caught. Look what I did. Am I entitled to be an officer?" He said, "Absolutely [21:01]. I got you put in to be an officer. I got you in for a field commission." I never got it. I'm not done. I'm going to keep going. Now, the Streicher [21:17] affair's over. I'm still laughing on the inside, crying on the outside. And at that point, I met another one of the Ritchie Boys [21:35]. He was an officer. I told him the story and he said, "Well, I can't do anything." He was a second lieutenant. He was like, "I can't do anything. Wonderful that this happened to you, that you captured this guy. It's a wonderful story." He himself also had a story to tell. They captured [22:01] a big SS [22:02] guy who ran Holland [22:08]. He ran Holland during the Nazi [22:12] era. And they captured him -- captured him in Bamberg, Germany [22:25]. So -- and so we said goodbye to each other and -- because he had his own bunch. He had about -- he had three of our units he was responsible for. For some reason, they let us

roam. I mean, I just roamed all over the place. I could have been killed easily, really, because I was careless at that point. But about [23:00] two days later, I was going to headquarters near Nuremburg [23:05], Third Army [23:06] headquarters and I see this SS [23:11] guy walking around by himself. How could this be? He came over toward me, turned up like this with his hands up and I see he's a Waffen-SS. [23:29] officer. He came over to me and I said, "Stop." And he said to me, "I'll stop. I'm willing to tell you a big story and I'm willing to turn over all of Goering's [23:57] stolen goods. I know where they are [24:00]." I said to him -- I said, "How could I be so lucky twice in a row?" If you call this other -- if you include this other thing with the division, three times in a row. He says, "I'm losing my right eye. I'm losing my right eye and I would like it saved. If you can do that, I'll tell you everything I know." So first I had the guy put in shackles. And then I went over to King [24:44] and I said, "What am I going to do with this guy?" He says, "Well, we'll keep him here in the building in shackles. We'll feed him. We'll see if he's telling the truth, see what happens tomorrow [25:00]." The next day, I interviewed him. I interviewed him a little bit the night before also. But the next day, I interviewed him again. I said, "Now, look, we're bringing here now hospital people to save your eye to see what we can do to save your eye. And one of the divisions from -- attached to Third Army [25:35] sent over a whole team. And they walked in. Three or four people came in. They washed his eye and one of the guys said to me, "I think we can save that eye." And then that afternoon, I had him brought before me and I said to him [26:00], "I would like to take your shackles off and I have you talk to me honestly what you know." He said, "That would be wonderful." And I also want to tell you he said to me that, "I am from a Prussian [26:19] feudal family." The Prussians [26:23]

were known as the top elites. But the officer -- officers -- most officers -- top notch officers were Prussians [26:34] from the province of Prussia [26:36]. Did you know that?

INT: I knew a good bit of them were.

WM: Yeah. He said, "I'm a Prussian [26:44]." That was to impress me. And he said, "Not only that, I only live about 12 miles -- 12 kilometers from here, my chateau." He had a chateau. "And if you take me home [27:00] and let me meet -- be together with my wife and two children, I'll show you where Goering's [27:08] stuff is. It's all in my -- on my grounds." I couldn't believe this. It's quite an event. I said to him, "Are you sure?" He says, "Absolutely. If you save my eye, I owe you this. And if you let me say hello to my wife and my children, that would be fine." I said to him, "You're not going to sleep with your wife that night. You're going to be a prisoner." He said, "That's fine." So we were advised by Third -- by the -- what do you call the guys, god damn it, from the -- the hospital guys in the [28:00] --

INT: Medics or --

WM: Medics. I was told by the medics not to let him move too much because the eye was in danger of being lost. "Just let him rest just enough to lie down. Let him rest till tomorrow," because we had decided to go to his chateau that afternoon. And I spoke to King [28:23] about it, and King said, "Okay." The next morning, King decides to attach an officer to me. I was really pissed off. I was offended. I mean, I transferred two things without an officer. I wasn't an officer and now he's attaching an officer to me because he wanted to be sure I don't steal anything from Goering's [28:48] loot, maybe. That's my interpretation. This was a Lieutenant Brown [28:55] and he was from New York [28:57] state [29:00]. That's all I know about him. He was a nice guy. He was --

INT: Did he speak -- did he speak German [29:04]?

WM: He -- broken German. That's why he was there. He would speak -- spoke broken German [29:15]. But, anyway, the next day, we had a truck, a four by four, two jeeps, and the second jeep was full of MPs. And we -- I told the MPs to bring shovels, anything -- even motor -- even these things that go into the ground. What do you call them? Those --

INT: A jack?

WM: Jack, motor -- yeah, those motorized -- those electric jacks because I believed the guy by now. So we went over there and we didn't want anything that evening. We had the MPs rotate guarding it. And we slept [30:00] in the chateau on the floor and the -- this officer, this Lieutenant Brown [30:07] and I and the next morning we started. This guy -- we had him unshackled. This guy gets from one of his rooms -- he gets a bar, a metal bar. And it had points on each end. One side was painted white, the other side -- no, excuse me, blue and the other side was painted red. The red pole went in a little farther than the white. And he went -- he counted his steps from his front step of his chateau to a spot. I don't know what the count was, 12, 14, 16, whatever. And he said to me, "Now, let your guys take this metal rod [31:00] and drive it into the ground till they hit something." And our guys did that. They took the red part, I think, and they drove it down into the ground. All of a sudden, they couldn't go any farther. And the guy said to me, "Let them dig." Took the metal rod out and dug for about two, two and a half hours. It was a massive, massive vessel down there. I mean, it was out of steel we found out later. And they had to dig around it yet. It took another hour and a half to -- so they could stand to lift it. Then it took six guys to get it out of there. Little by little, they had to lift it and get it out

of the ground. We didn't have any cranes or anything with us. And we had thought about getting more help [32:00], but they did it. They got it out. We opened it up. The first thing we found was the entire Dutch [32:11] -- the entire Dutch -- what do you call the king and the queen? What do you call that? What do you call those people?

INT: Like monarchs or --

WM: Monarch, yeah. Well, monarchs, yeah, but -- yeah, although the monarch will do. They had the entire -- god damn it.

INT: Royal?

WM: Royal [33:00] -- they had the entire royal possessions, meaning their crowns --

INT: Dutch [33:17] crown?

WM: Dutch crown, their belonging -- their gold inlaid with all kinds of pearls. I mean, genuine stuff, massive stuff. The entire -- so that's the first thing we handled, Lieutenant Brown [33:44] and I and the MPs. I forget what we did exactly. We tied it all together. You could have broken off one piece and you would have had [34:00] maybe \$10,000 in your possession. And it's possible that the lieutenant and I both thought that way, but we didn't do it. We each watched each other I think and we didn't steal anything. It was tempting, very tempting. We tied this all together. Then we got -- they brought us from only 10, 12 miles away. They brought us burlap, what have you, and we covered it up. I mean, the MPs did that while we did other work. Then we found three boxes and lifted them out, full of American bonds, corporate bonds. We sat there for hours at night and guarding them during the night [35:00] into the next day in counting bonds. A couple of million dollars' worth. In addition to that, we found dollars. We had the MPs help us count. Another million, million and a half dollars in big denominations. A \$100 bill was

the smallest and \$1,000 -- I had never seen a \$1,000 bill before -- and counted that, tied it all together, and now I can -- I guess I can shorten up on the story. Now this entire box was empty. Now he told us now we go -- now he -- now, he measured off [36:00] more steps from the front to another location. He said, "Well, now you take the blue side and dig it in to the ground and when it stops, you can pull it out and dig a hole." Same thing. Found another container down there, got it out, and I think we had to stop because of nightfall. Couldn't see anymore. And -- although we might have brought up some jeeps - - give them light. I don't remember because we worried -- we were worried about losing it, somebody come along and stealing stuff. So we didn't even let them go in and get them out. I remember now. Got it out the following day and, again, full of bonds. Oh, the -- most of them were Pennsylvania Railroad [37:00] bags -- bonds, loads and loads of bonds. So that was what he stashed away, Mr. Goering [37:14]. Now, Kubala [37:16] captured Goering, but we captured his loot. So we hauled it back to Third Army [37:25] headquarters. We let him sleep with his wife one night and his kids and the MPs guarding him. We now became a little -- we became a little more human. The guy really couldn't go any place with that big bandage around his eye. And now he had to say goodbye to his kids and wife [38:00] which affects you, too, even though he was Waffen-SS [38:05]. And we -- because the guy didn't have to be Waffen-SS. He could have been a good general in the regular army, but he must have requested this. So that's where I got a heart for him. Excuse me, whoever listens to this. And now he was -- we took him back. We all went back in the caravan with all the loot. And now here, again, we're told it's going to be turned over to G5 [38:47]. G5 is the -- G5 is -- I'm getting really so bad. Oh, god [39:00]. It's the same outfit that issues uniforms --

[End of Tape 3A]

[Beginning of Tape 3B]

INT: Okay, so you said you -- so you turned all that over?

WM: Turned it over to corps -- in fact, we took it to that. We took it to 12th Corps [00:14].

Turned it over to them and they gave a receipt to Lieutenant Brown [00:19]. Now, I may have to go to another story for a minute so not to forget it.

INT: Sure.

WM: But, in doing so, I have to get something out of my office.

INT: Okay.

WM: Can you turn it off a second?

INT: Yes, I can definitely pause. We're recording now.

WM: Now, hold on a minute. I need to find this.

INT: Okay [01:00].

WM: I want to tell this story before I go any further [unintelligible] --

INT: Have you told this story before, what we've talked about today, other than family?

WM: It's possible.

INT: Other than Colonel King [01:26]?

WM: Oh, I told Colonel King, of course. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I have to -- I don't want to get things mixed up. If I can't find this now, I'll be embarrassed and you may have to --

INT: Take your time. Take your time.

WM: -- and you'll have to wipe that out. Or maybe I did put it with my --

INT: That's behind your head. I can get that for you [02:00].

WM: -- with my pictures. Is it above me?

INT: Here's the album and the --

WM: All right, let me finish this here. Thank you.

INT: Sure. Now, please take your time.

WM: It's very emotional because I got very upset with this. All right, you want me to start again now before I -- let me find it. Let me --

INT: Sure. You have plenty -- take your time.

WM: I should be [unintelligible].

INT: While you're looking, can we ask you questions? There were no guards with Streicher [02:44] when he was in that house? There was nobody protecting Streicher?

WM: Yeah --

INT: Oh, there were?

WM: -- I said it several times.

INT: You had the MPs --

WM: The MPs, yeah.

INT: I meant before you captured him, when he was in the house --

WM: Oh, there was nobody with him. No [03:00].

INT: That's amazing.

WM: They all -- they all were captured that way.

INT: He was vulnerable, I mean --

WM: Oh, they all were vulnerable. They all got captured without guards. They went in different directions and their main purpose was not to get captured by the Russians [03:16]. They knew they were going to get captured sooner or later. I thought I put the

damn thing out.

INT: These are all the receipts for the Dutch [03:35] crown and --

WM: No, no.

INT: Yeah, we're still waiting for you to have your wife come out, modeling the queen's crown or something.

WM: Maybe it's in here [04:00]. Maybe I'll tell the story later.

INT: That's fine. Whatever the story is --

WM: Maybe it doesn't belong in this segment, but I do want to tell the story.

INT: And so we can remember, what is the story in regards -- without giving it away?

WM: Well, let me -- I have a few more slips here.

INT: Okay.

WM: No, I'll give it away. I mean, it's amazing. I can't believe this. Well, I may have to tell that story as an aside later on. What happened was this [05:00]. You turn all this stuff over, but in this particular case, I didn't get a receipt. It was given to Lieutenant Brown [05:12]. This was a -- this was a big haul and the haul was acknowledged in Stars and Stripes and some of -- as I understood, some of the American newspapers. Not mentioning names, but the haul -- what happened was this. I bet you I have that someplace, okay? I'm now out of the service. I'm discharged. I'm home. And one day, I opened a paper [06:00] and the paper says, "Former Air Force [06:20] officer and mistress apprehended, charged in the selling and distributing of the Dutch [06:37] crown jewels." Here, you see. That was all I could think of, saying it. And that was -- became known as the Durand Affair [06:48], D-U-R-A-N-D, the Durand Affair. That's all we need to really know. Actually, it was a two-name case [07:00]. So the officers from the

12th Corps [07:04] evidently helped themselves to making some money. I mean, it got sold to somebody who sold it to them and then sold it to somebody else and it ended up with the Durands. Here it is. Nash and Durand [07:29], it was called, the Nash and Durand affair. Her name was Nash and his name was Durand, or the other way around, Dutch [07:39] crown jewels. That I wrote down [phonetic].

INT: How do you spell Durand?

WM: Well, I spelled it here phonetically. I imagine that's what it is, D-U-R-A-N-D.

INT: It sounds [08:00] vaguely familiar. We'll have to research that.

WM: Oh, plenty written on it. Oh, man --

INT: That was --

WM: -- because of the computer, you'll find it.

INT: Yeah, I'd say.

INT: Do they have your story?

WM: No.

INT: That's the important part.

WM: Well, look, my friend, I was very busy trying to make a living for my family. There are some more pictures in there. I was busy. That was all recorded, right?

INT: Yes.

WM: Yeah, now, see that? This was my third big haul to Colonel King [08:49] and I never got recognition. Now, you can say -- I can write to Senator Dole [08:58] tomorrow and tell him [09:00] -- tell her the same story. She'll listen to me. She's that kind of senator. And she'll ask me one question, "Why did you wait so long?" And she would be right. I ask myself the same question. I made two efforts. I wrote the war department right after I

came home, that we captured those crown jewels and were the -- if the quartermaster is in charge of it. Never got an answer. Never got an answer. I made a second attempt by trying to find Colonel King [09:48] and -- are you recording this?

INT: Yes.

WM: Yes, and find Colonel King [10:00] and tell him the same story that we captured all Goering's [10:05] entire theft from others, not the pictures. He had a whole crate full of pictures.

INT: Paintings?

WM: Paintings.

INT: Were they in the same area or were they --

WM: No. Well, no, they were -- yeah, they were in the same area, yeah. They were in the same area. That's the Durand Affair [10:41] that I'm telling you about. So the way this stuff was stashed away as loosely as it was stashed away, that people could get a hold of it piece by piece is unbelievable [11:00]. Now, some of it was recovered, I understand, only by the newspaper reports. Some of it was recovered and, yeah, I never got credit for that. This was distinctly mine -- it was luck that I ran into that officer. That was luck, but he was looking -- we have these armbands on, "I speak German [11:27]."

INT: Oh, really? So you -- an armband that says that you speak German?

WM: Yeah, German spoken, German -- "We speak German." And he was drifting toward me which was natural, but I was there and I was lucky enough to interview him and I did what I did and I got it. I never got credit for it, not to this day. And I'm saying it again, I only would like to be bestowed a second lieutenant's commission before I die [12:00]. I don't want any money for it back. I want nothing -- no money for a person. I want no

money going forward, just the pleasure that I was -- that a promise was kept, really. Now, I've tried -- I've made several attempts and always I lay off because something distracts me, something with the family, and I never go fully into it. You could sit there and say to me it sounds stupid that I never followed it up. I never really wrote to -- I did write. I did write to a previous senator and that senator answered me by saying it was not within his purview to handle that. Then I laid off again [13:00]. It's one of those things. It is a story that I want to tell, and if I never get a single lieutenantcy, that's fine, but I think I deserve it, even if King [13:17] never promised it to me, based on my story. And all these stories can be proven out. They happened. All right, now I told you the Durand [13:28] story. Now, where did we leave off?

INT: You just generated about a thousand questions.

[laughter]

WM: So you're stopping now?

INT: No, well -- no --

INT: Whatever you tell us.

INT: Yeah, if --

WM: Well, that's the end of the -- that story, but let me see what else I could add to my experience.

INT: Sure, because we've got about 15 or 20 minutes left with this tape --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- and then I don't know in terms of our schedule [14:00] -- right now, it's a little after 5:30.

WM: Oh, we got to leave soon.

INT: So we'll just finish up this --

WM: We got to leave at a quarter of 6:00.

INT: So --

WM: Let me take -- Paula [phonetic]?

FS: Yeah?

WM: What -- we want to get down there by 6:15, right?

FS: Okay.

WM: Will you be ready?

FS: Yeah.

WM: All right. Yeah, I'm ready.

INT: And if we need to stop now, that's fine, but we've got about 15 minutes of tape left.

WM: Yeah, [unintelligible] remember I started to say something. Yeah, all right, I'm done with these -- with all this.

INT: And I know we both have some specific questions about these stories.

WM: Yeah.

INT: Would you rather just keep going and we maybe continue to --

WM: Well, let me see what I can find because nothing much happened after that, I don't think.

After -- that was my final coup, I believe [15:00]. And the tragedy of it is that while it happened, it wasn't that important to me. It was just a glorious endeavor to me. And while it happened, the other guys I was with had no interest in it. I certainly had a wonderful feeling about it. I had a very hot feeling, not only a warm feeling, that I could accomplish this. From the surrender of the division to Streicher [15:44] to the crown jewels, it's fantastic. The fact that I never got my answer from the war department, just

asking, "Where are the crown jewels?" turned me off after the war [16:00]. Now, after -- I think after that, the war had ended. I remember where I stood exactly in France [16:13] in a field when I read the news that Roosevelt [16:17] had died, which made me sad because all of us were -- not all of us, obviously, but a lot of us soldiers were happy for the company commander. We all knew how he looked -- how bad he looked. We knew that he was dying and he did before the war ended. He did not have the pleasure of seeing it ended. So what happened to us in France [16:55]? We stayed in France for a while, doing nothing, basically [17:00]. Yeah, we did do a lot of interviews of captured Germans [17:06] of no consequence. Not really -- if we had any of consequence, we reported them right away to G2 [17:20] at the Third Army [17:22]. And we were evidently highly thought of, my team, because we could detach ourselves any time we wanted to and do what we wanted to.

INT: And when you say, specifically, your team, who are you referring to?

WM: Me and five other guys.

INT: All interrogators?

WM: No.

INT: A couple of interrogators and a couple of MPs?

WM: Two interrogators.

INT: Two interrogators and the rest were MPs [18:00]?

WM: MPs, yeah. Whatever.

INT: Okay, do you remember the names of the other interrogator -- the other interrogator?

WM: Well, if I look at the pictures, I could probably pick him out.

INT: Was -- did --

WM: I think he was a Ritchie [18:17] guy. I'm not sure.

INT: Do you know if he was at 1142 [18:21]?

WM: I don't know that.

INT: Okay.

WM: Maybe the pictures will tell me.

INT: Sure, sure.

WM: I just had a funny incident I wanted to relate to you, but it's escaped me.

INT: Okay.

WM: If you don't bring it out right away at my age, it just goes away.

INT: You were in France [18:51], you were talking about going and communicating to G2 [18:55]. Something important came up [19:00] --

WM: I don't know.

INT: -- right after Roosevelt [19:08] died.

WM: I don't know. The mind left the body. [laughs]

INT: Well, that's all right. We still have another day left to think of everything, so --

WM: Yeah. Yeah, this time I'm going to write it down if I think of it.

INT: Sure. Good.

WM: Well, can you turn it off a minute?

INT: Okay.

WM: Because I --

INT: Okay, go ahead.

WM: Ask me the question.

INT: Okay. You're -- when -- do you recall you heard when the war was over in Europe and

what your reaction was?

WM: Well, there were three or four of us [20:00]. I don't remember what day he died, but I remember we had an afternoon off or the whole day off, three or four of us. We were just horsing around in the countryside in France [20:14] when we -- somebody told us that the war was over. And also there was celebrations and -- without any notice. We jumped in the air. "When are we going home?" That was our first thought. And I believe there was an officer with us who said, "Not so fast. You're not going home -- going home that fast." I knew I was going to go home fast because I had a lot of points. From December 8th to that day was a lot of points. You were sent home by points and [21:00] -- if we wanted to. We didn't have to. I don't remember the story that I wanted to tell. I kissed the ground. Yeah, I absolutely kissed the ground. I fell to the ground. We all fell to the ground. We were so happy the war was over.

INT: You felt welcome from the French [21:28]?

WM: Oh, the French were not too great. The French were not nice. I can tell you a little short story and you can record it. When the war was over and we had time off -- I'm sorry, I'm mixed up. It happened while the war was on. We were in a countryside and we had a lot of snow in front of us [22:00]. It was our team and another team. We were together and we saw a little French [22:07] cottage. No, it was a house off the highway. And I asked the men to drive over there, see if we can get some -- a little warmth, we could check in with them, and maybe some bread. We did. We knocked on the door four or five times before they even answered. Now, one of my guys in the team spoke fluent French [22:40] because his father was a former French -- American ambassador to France [22:46] -- not ambassador, counsel. And the guy refused to let us in [23:00]. So I

stepped my foot into the door. I said, "We're coming in." I said, "We're here. We liberated you. We're coming in. We're all going in." And I told the men, "Turn your quotas [phonetic] off, come on in and warm up." Then we said to the guy -- it's an interesting story because it's a human story. We said to the guy, "We're hungry. We have rations with us, but we're tired of rations. How about getting us some bread, some butter, and some jelly," things like that. He says, "No, no, no, I don't have it." So this guy who spoke French [23:50], French-speaking guy with us, he said, "Just a minute." He asked him a question, "If you don't give us a little bread and butter and jelly [24:00], I'm going to have your whole house ransacked till we find it." And you ought to see the loaves of bread that came out. Beautifully, already baked, crisp, French bread and then bottles this high. They weren't squared off. They came in big jugs. Then we ate and we ate and we ate. And when we were finished, we said to the guy, "Oh, how much do we owe you? We'll pay you." You know what he said? He gave us the amount. The French [24:39] guy translated and we paid it. That's the things the French did. And another incident -- we walked in a restaurant one night. And we were with this French [24:53] -- also with this French speaking guy. And two other guys -- two other GIs [25:00]. We sat down. It was a sort of a -- it was a sort of a beer hall. We ordered beer and some knickknacks. And we noticed our menus were of a different color. So one of the guys -- a pretty, pretty aggressive guy said, "Do you all want to find out why we get a different color? Maybe they have something to eat I want to eat on the other menu." He grabbed it, it was the same menu except lower in price and higher for us. That's the French [25:44]. And I hated them ever since. End of story.

[laughter]

Those are things that happened along the way.

INT: That's fantastic [26:00]. This is all while not immediately relevant to 1142 [26:06], it's important to understand what your experiences were like afterwards.

WM: Well, I mean, we did a lot of --

INT: And we're interested in the whole picture here, as well, so --

WM: Well, I mean, I would have not experienced those three big ones --

INT: Right.

WM: -- in France [26:27] if I hadn't been with 1142 [26:29], let's face it. I was a sort of a roaming intelligence officer -- intelligence officer.

INT: It's amazing the level of freedom that they gave you --

WM: Oh, there was --

INT: -- considering you -- again, you weren't an officer [26:50] --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- and you were allowed to just kind of do your own thing.

WM: We did. Instead of writing those detachment papers time to time, they didn't want to [27:00] -- they didn't even know what to tell us. Detach to where? We just detached out of the woodwork, totally on our own after that division thing.

INT: Right.

WM: I mean, there was -- it was better for us to be alone because we could really roam. We found Streicher [27:25] that way. We may have found Streicher anyway. I'm sure we would have. But when? What else can I tell you? Maybe it was -- maybe George didn't know about it, George Patton [27:48]. But some of us knew about it. In fact, they detached themselves. They detached themselves. They detained themselves [28:00]. I

remember with Patton [28:04], before we crossed the Rhine [28:06] -- Patton crossed the Rhine did you know that? He crossed the Mein River to the Rhine without orders.

INT: Right.

WM: And Eisenhower [28:18] told him to come back. Have you heard of that?

INT: I've heard that he crossed the Rheine [28:24] when he wasn't supposed to.

WM: Yeah, we were with him and we came -- in the process, we were so ticked that we dumped our gasoline and filled -- what do they call those gasoline tanks?

INT: Jerry cans?

WM: Jerry cans with wine. Yeah, we filled them with wine and got drunk. Not me, but a lot of GIs got drunk. That's how ticked we were. But, again, it was Patton [28:55] and it was Patton's soldiers [29:00]. These were the experiences that I had.

INT: Good time to stop now?

WM: Yeah, I think so.

INT: Okay.

WM: I think we have to get ready --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- mentally and physically --

INT: Oh, that's fine. We were just --

WM: [unintelligible]

INT: -- about done. I've got a quarter of 6:00.

WM: Yeah, maybe we should stop for a minute.

[End of Tape 3B]

[Beginning of Tape 4A]

INT: It is July 24th, 2007. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. This is the fourth in a series of interviews with Mr. Werner Moritz, here at his home in Charlotte, North Carolina [00:25]. This is Brandon Bies with the National Park Service as well as Vince Santucci. And, with that, we're going to go ahead and conduct what's probably our final of this series of interviews today.

WM: Okay.

INT: What I'd like to get into a little bit today -- we covered a lot yesterday. We'd like to talk about some more specific questions. We were picking your brain a little bit over lunch today.

WM: All right, that's fine.

INT: But could you describe -- and you talked about this a little bit yesterday, but could you describe, when you first arrived at 1142 [00:54] in July of 1942, a little bit about what the post looked like [01:00]? Was there construction going on?

WM: Yes.

INT: And what -- did -- do you remember what they were working on?

WM: They were -- I think they were just about finishing the holding barracks for the prisoners.

INT: Okay.

WM: As a matter of -- when we came in, we didn't even know what it was. But it turned out to be that. There was other constructions further away which I don't remember what it was. That's about it and there was some construction to the right of us, too. There was a lot of constructions, actually. Slow, but there was a lot of construction.

INT: And when you first arrived, you were living in tents or you were living in barracks?

WM: No, we lived in barracks.

INT: And were those existing barracks that had -- that were a little older or were they brand new?

WM: No, they -- no, they were pretty new.

INT: Okay, okay.

WM: They were pretty new. I mean, there was a lot of confusion where the place is, which barracks to go to. It looked like they were not perfectly organized for us yet [02:00], but everything turned out okay.

INT: And when you got there, you mentioned names like Carl Haden [02:11] and other folks. Were you living in the barracks just with other interpreters and monitors and interrogators or were other people mixed in, folks like Wayne Spivey [02:23] who worked in the evaluation section? Were they living in your barracks as well?

WM: They were -- we were together.

INT: Okay.

WM: I mean, we were -- yeah, Spivey [02:31] was with us.

INT: Okay.

WM: So I can't find where there was any difference --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- between people down there. People might have come along on the transport with us --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- that ended up somewhere else. But yes, we were together.

INT: Could you, from your recollection, describe what the barracks looked like, how they were organized? Were they typical Army [02:57] barracks or were they -- were they [03:00] peculiar in any way? Anything you can remember about your living accommodations?

WM: I don't remember them very well, but I seem to remember, though, unless I'm -- what is this? Is this my wife [phonetic]?

INT: That's you.

WM: Okay. Unless we -- unless I confuse the -- these barracks with someone else's -- with another barracks somewhere else, I seem to remember that they were different from regular Army [03:27] barracks in that I think we had a walk or a hall in front of each barracks. They were more like rooms, subdivided into rooms. And I also seem to remember that there was a -- at the end of the barracks coming in, there was a huge what you might describe as a family room --

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: -- where we would assemble and talk, et cetera. And then we had conference rooms different directions [04:00].

INT: Was each -- so they were -- were they long, linear barracks or were they -- were they just one story?

WM: I'll have to -- if you're recording.

INT: Oh, it's fine.

WM: No, they were one story.

INT: One story?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay, and you had mentioned, I think, earlier -- I think over lunch that you remember them as being fairly close to where the prisoners were kept?

WM: Well, the -- this building that was going up, which I didn't know what it was, yes.

INT: Okay.

WM: I mean, reasonably close. They weren't -- they were within walking distance.

INT: And could you describe where the prisoners were kept?

WM: The inside?

INT: Inside and outside.

WM: I was never -- I was inside of one, one time. Just bland, I would say about this size [05:00], to there, whatever that is, about -- or maybe even -- not even this big. There were two -- about two bunks in each.

INT: Okay.

WM: A central light on the ceiling. It's really -- I -- that's all I can add. I was not -- there were no current --

INT: What about the outside? Was it surrounded -- were there fences around it? Were there guard towers?

WM: No, no. There were -- we had towers, but we had no fences around them. No, not to my recollection.

INT: What kept -- so were the prisoners kept in cells or were they given --

WM: There were cells.

INT: Okay.

WM: There were cells. They were taken out now and then for exercise. And, by and large, they were there quite a bit of time. I remember when we got there, we had no prisoners at all.

INT: Right.

WM: We -- in fact, we monitored it. Three teams monitored it, the first two prisoners that were brought there from North Africa [06:00].

INT: And what do you remember? So you remember the first prisoners, and you mentioned this yesterday, as being from North Africa [06:06]. They were not U-boat [06:07] prisoners?

WM: No.

INT: Do you remember about how long into your stay at 1142 [06:13] that U-boat prisoners started showing up? Was it fairly immediate or was it several months?

WM: Oh, a couple of weeks.

INT: Okay.

WM: A couple of weeks.

INT: Okay, so -- but still some time that summer, the summer of '42?

WM: Oh, yeah. Definitely, yeah.

INT: Okay, okay. And I'd like to get a little bit into the prisoners just a little bit later, but we'll finish up with some of this description first.

WM: Sure.

INT: With the rooms -- you were describing a little bit these rooms I know you were only in once or so.

WM: Oh, prisoners?

INT: In the prisoner rooms, but these were where the bugs were hidden?

WM: [affirmative]

INT: Do you remember anything about the bugs? I know there were engineers who worked on that sort of a thing. But you mentioned yesterday about how they'd been -- they were discovered by some --

WM: One was discovered [07:00]. And then they had to change the whole system around.

INT: Do you know what they did to change it around?

WM: I don't. No, I really don't. I know they were planted elsewhere in the same -- in the room. But I think they might have -- I don't know.

INT: Okay.

WM: The first ones that were discovered were very primitive. If a guy like we had was a little bit the engineer type, I think he could -- I think he discovered this microphone by sound coming back to the room. He must have had some experience in that. And then he said - - all of a sudden, he said to his partner, "I think we're being bugged, and I think I know where it is." He went straight up to the light, unscrewed the whole fixture, and there was the microphone. We heard the noise.

INT: So you actually listened in on this?

WM: Oh, yeah, we heard the noise. Well, we listened in as it was being -- yeah [08:00].

INT: As you were monitoring the room?

WM: Yeah, right. And you could hear the noise of the dismantling and the ceiling coming down. And of course we got a big boot out of it in our room. It was really funny to us.

INT: Did that happen any other times he went -- do you remember when they --

WM: One time. I think it happened one time period.

INT: Okay.

WM: And then they went to work and -- of course, it was unfortunate that they had a guy who was familiar with bugging, evidently. All the rest of them may not have been and not been able to discern that little sound that sent back into the room. But I don't think there was any other -- they went to work then after that, room by room, and changed the whole thing.

INT: And where you were doing the actual monitoring, where you were listening in, can you describe that at all? Was that a separate building from where [09:00] the prisoners were kept?

WM: Oh, yeah.

INT: What --

WM: It was near our quarters, not too far from my quarters.

INT: Okay, do you remember anything about that building, how it was -- were there different stations? Was it an open room?

WM: Different rooms. And sometimes there were one -- was one person in the room, listening, sometimes two persons listening to two different rooms, sometimes two persons listening to the same room. That's all I can say. And they were fairly soundproof. So we could -- yeah, that's -- they were soundproof. And we were -- the routine was that we could listen for an hour and get off for an hour or something like that because you couldn't stay with it, couldn't concentrate that long. And, of course, there was a second person which -- who stayed longer so we overlapped. And there was some complaints about that in the personnel [10:00] because it was a tough chore to listen and listen and listen to a language that we hadn't spoken in a long time or heard in a long time even though we had some training again in the language. It was not easy, but it worked out okay eventually.

INT: The -- this building where you were going to monitor, this -- is this where you did most of your work?

WM: [affirmative]

INT: Was it aboveground? Was it belowground?

WM: On the same level.

INT: It was just on regular ground level --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- as all the other? Were there -- do you remember anything at 1142 [10:36] being belowground or buried in the ground or anything like that, any underground rooms or anything?

WM: No. As I'm searching my mind here, I don't think so.

INT: Okay. This monitoring building -- what -- did this also have conference rooms or anything --

WM: Yes.

INT: -- like that in it? And is that where you would have some of the -- we were talking over lunch about some of these [11:00] kind of informal debriefing room that you would have.

WM: Yes, either a conference room or sometimes they were in that, what I call, family room -- this gathering --

INT: In the barracks?

WM: -- this gathering area, okay, where we just came out and then they'd say, "Well, did you listen to it? Well, what did you get from it?" That's, of course, supposing that both of us listened to the same tape. And then we would also have time to discuss, actually, what we heard with people who weren't listening to it in the hope and the possibility that they had found out something similar. It was interesting.

INT: How -- was there an officer in charge of the monitoring section?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Do you happen to remember the name of that officer?

WM: None. I was looking for names last night.

INT: Did they assign you to a specific room or prisoners or [inaudible] --

WM: Yes, yes, they did. Yes, they did. I don't know if it was done with any deliberate schedule [12:00]. I think they just took it, "Two go to A. Two go to B." No names were ever mentioned. We could tell by their tongue from what part of Germany [12:17] they came from. But that's about all.

INT: And so we've touched upon this a bit already, but the day-to-day monitoring, is room monitoring -- was that your primary activity --

WM: Yes.

INT: -- at 1142 [12:32]?

WM: Yes.

INT: Could you take us through what a typical day might be like in terms of how often -- you mentioned that it was an hour on, hour off sort of arrangement?

WM: Sort of, yeah.

INT: Was it largely a 9:00 to 5:00 sort of operation --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- or would you some -- would you --

WM: Well, we would get up at a regular time, which I wasn't the strict camp type, but I would say we probably had [13:00] -- probably around 7:00 in the morning and assembled. Then we -- then we'd -- those of us who wanted to take a shower in the morning could take a shower and then had breakfast. Some of us had breakfast on the go. And then we would come to this area, this assembly area and be directed to what room to go to. Never given any advice, what to listen for or who to listen to. Just listen. Now, if there were -- there were days when they would specify after we had discovered, for example

Peenemünde [13:47], we'd like to get all we can. I mean, really listen to this. And sometimes we'd be even tuned in to the same two guys for two or three days in a row, to see if they talked about it some more [14:00]. But there was some -- a little trickery used, but I don't want to formally announce it, but I'll mention it, in that we sometimes gave them I think a German [14:13] newspaper in the hope that it would trigger other discussions about the German way, I've heard. And this is about all that I can say about that.

INT: Did you ever give newspapers that were artificial that had news that wasn't true?

WM: No, not that I know of. No, I don't think so.

INT: Now, you talked about a typical day, but do you want to talk about an extraordinary day when you learned about Peenemünde [14:43] in terms of the excitement and how that was shared?

WM: Well, I mean, the excitement when we found out about Peenemünde -- which, we didn't know what it was at first. It sounded like a real foreign word. But it -- but I think one of the guys was [15:00] clever enough or had heard of it to point out what it might be. And then we really, really listened carefully. There were two of us that listened at the same time and there might have been a third. I think there was a third in a different room who listened to it independently. And then we were told -- that day, we were told in these informal gatherings, "Now, look, you want to see what's going on in Peenemünde [15:30]." Did not know what it was, but it was exciting because they kept talking about it, especially this one pair that I mentioned before. It was an officer and an enlisted man. And the officer said, "Don't worry about it. We're going to win this war because," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, talking about Peenemünde [15:52] again. And then I think this

guy mentioned rockets. I forget what the name is in German [16:00], "It's going to turn the war around completely."

INT: And so this was a German [16:12] enlisted man and an officer put together?

WM: Put together.

INT: Was that typical or unusual to put an enlisted man with an officer?

WM: Well, I think they didn't have another officer to put with him. So they probably put the highest enlisted man -- highest rated enlisted man, put him in with him.

INT: And were they both off of a U-boat [16:28]?

WM: No.

INT: No, they weren't?

WM: No, no, no.

INT: So they weren't from a U-boat?

WM: They were not off a U-boat at all.

INT: Okay.

WM: They were from North Africa [16:34].

INT: Oh, these were North Africa? Okay.

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay. Could you discuss generally -- and this is a real generalization -- percentages, what chunk of prisoners would have been from U-boat [16:48] versus from North Africa [16:49] or somewhere else? Were the U-boat prisoners a majority or a minority or did it vary?

WM: I would say [17:00] the land operations, the soldier was the majority. Very few captured U-boat [17:10] personnel in the beginning, especially. I do not remember that they

increased very much. No, I can't say that. It was the -- I would say 80 to 20 percent --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- if that much.

INT: Sure. And I just real quickly want to hand you something as a -- since we're talking about this, I actually meant to give this to you earlier. Some examples of what -- and this is a poor photocopy, but of what some of these room monitoring forms --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- looked like. Now, again, that's very lightly written.

WM: Yeah.

INT: But just --

WM: But that's about what they looked like. In fact [18:00], I remember in the very beginning, we didn't have them. What would I say? They were just paper and we wrote all this in. But this is what they eventually became to look like.

INT: Okay. And you -- that's an example -- that's a room conversation extracted?

WM: Yeah.

INT: So I'm going to assume that that's from, say, one of those recordings that was made?

WM: Well, extracted could also mean -- extracted could mean hands-on interrogation. It doesn't have to be through a listening device necessarily.

INT: Okay.

WM: I could say by reading it, maybe I can tell, but you don't want that now?

INT: Oh, that -- we don't have to do that now. I first of all wanted to give -- these are just examples. Now, these were done in 1945, but just examples of some of the forms, just to see if they brought back any recollections of how you went about recording materials.

WM: This is an interrogation.

INT: Yes. Oh, that was an interrogation there?

WM: Yeah.

INT: Okay. And there's just more -- in fact, this one even says up top, "Interrogation [19:00]."

It has the prisoners. It has the interrogation officer, the monitor, the transcriber --

WM: Yeah, we were not privileged with this. I mean, this was typed up after they got our reports and then they put the prisoner with it. We were never given prisoner's names. I mean -- and we weren't handed a piece of paper that had the prisoner on it.

INT: You were just told, "Listen to this voice"?

WM: "Listen to this voice."

INT: Okay.

WM: Yeah. When two people are together, there was a great, great deal of conversation about where they come from, their homes, are they happily married, that sort of thing. He's falling asleep over there.

INT: [laughs] I'm trying to think.

WM: Oh. And in the beginning, there was more talk about the political situation in Germany [19:58], the military situation as a whole [20:00], and then it would drift off into these private conversations and back again. So you could sit there sometimes for two hours and be bored stiff and get no results. Anything else you want me to do with this?

INT: No, and you can keep those if you'd like to just go through them on your own time.

WM: Oh, okay. Okay.

INT: But I just wanted to bring them along.

WM: I don't have to keep a hold of them, though?

INT: Oh, no, you can put them down. Yeah, there's no need to --

WM: But, I mean, I don't have to -- I can throw them away after I read them?

INT: Oh, you can do whatever. You can burn them in the fireplace if you want to, whatever. I just wanted to pass them along as an example.

WM: Yeah, well this is differently an interrogation also.

INT: Don't get too far away from it.

WM: Room conversation.

INT: Peenemünde [20:42] discussion, you picked that up between conversations between prisoners that were held at the compound --

WM: Absolutely.

INT: -- as opposed to conversations were picked up off of U-boats [20:53]?

WM: Oh, yeah, this was strictly room conversation.

INT: Room conversation? Okay.

WM: Never -- it had nothing to do with U-boats [21:00].

INT: Okay, and then the North African [21:03] folks that you monitored, you didn't interrogate them? You monitored --

WM: We monitored them.

INT: But did you --

WM: I remember interrogating one man, one soldier, an enlisted man, once.

INT: Okay, do you want to get into that? If you want to talk about that now --

WM: There's not much to talk about.

INT: Okay.

WM: This guy was a dummy. He was -- I don't think he could have told me anything if he had

been able to because he was not bright. He was captured also in North Africa [21:37].

And I don't know why they brought him to 1142 [21:40], frankly. He was just -- he was just not well educated. I wouldn't call him a dummy. He was uneducated. And so he was a total loss to me. He was a little obstinate, a little inoperative, but as a whole [22:00], he was -- he would tell you some things inadvertently. So it goes to show you how bright he was. And that's all I can remember about that.

INT: For the other interrogations that were going on, would you monitor the interrogations sometimes?

WM: Someone else's interrogations?

INT: Yes. Let's say an officer was interrogating a U-boat [22:23] sailor, would you --

WM: You mean would we -- no, this was monitored. Yeah, it was recorded, but I wouldn't monitor that.

INT: Okay.

WM: If we have -- if we -- the person who did the interrogation did his own monitoring.

INT: So he would listen to his interrogation?

WM: Yes, to type it up --

INT: Okay.

WM: -- to report it, et cetera.

INT: So you would only monitor room conversations?

WM: Yes. Well, now, in this regard, if something came up that the man who was doing the interrogating didn't understand, he might ask one of us, "Have you ever heard of this?" That or the other, but that was about the extent of it [23:00], yeah.

INT: Do you -- from your limited knowledge, since you only conducted the one interrogation

at 1142 [23:08], but from your understanding, from what you heard from officers and other people, do you know how the interrogations were actually conducted? Was there a manner in which they did it? Were there particular methods that they were able to get information out of prisoners?

WM: I don't think there were any methods, prescribed methods or proscribed methods. I learned some of my interrogating from the British [23:36]. And we -- I don't remember an American officer ever talked to us about interrogation. I don't think there was such a thing. And my interrogating knowledge was hands-on in Europe.

INT: Okay.

WM: At times, I would have liked to have had more knowledge [24:00]. But that was not extended to us.

INT: Did you get the impression that the American officers at 1142 [24:07] who were interrogating people -- had they also been trained by the British [24:11]?

WM: Yeah, I think so. I mean, I have no proof of that, but I think so.

INT: Sure. Okay. Do you know if at any time you -- when you were at 1142 [24:22], did you hear through rumors or anything like that if there was any other -- anything physical done to prisoners? Were prisoners ever struck or --

WM: Just the opposite. We were always told not to strike a prisoner. I mean, in my case, I only had the occasion one time, but I don't think that was part of our methodology. Now, it may have been done. I don't know. I heard those rumors, too, but they were rumors.

INT: Did you -- so to get information from the prisoners, was it -- did they try to trick them somehow [25:00] or did they just have a conversation like we're having right now?

WM: It was a casual conversation. I mean, I'm -- the few that I listened to --

INT: Right, right.

WM: -- they were casual conversations. And in some of the -- once you brought me here, I see right away that most of them were not very cooperative. They stated what they did, where they came from, where they lived, married, not married, but the minute the interrogator asked them a question pertinent to the war, they wouldn't answer. Now, I haven't gone into this --

INT: Sure.

WM: -- material very much. It's possible that they broke down at some point.

INT: Sure.

WM: I have one interesting story to tell you, but I was overseas. Can I go back to that?

INT: If you'd like to real quick, sure.

WM: It's interesting because when -- right after this was -- after we captured that Waffen-SS [26:00] guy --

INT: The guy with the eye problem?

WM: Yeah, the eye problem. And while they were attending to his eye problem, I -- I mean, I interrogated prisoners and we had a list that we could go through every morning. We were allowed to go through this list and -- to see what is most interesting to us. So I go through this list one morning and I recognize a name of the -- one of the German [26:30] prisoners and I had him brought down to me. I told him to sit down. I sat down and I said to him, "Your name please?" And he said to me, "Why are you asking me this? We went to school together." Isn't that amazing?

INT: Wow.

WM: He remembered he -- I had gone to school.

INT: And he remembered you?

WM: He remembered me. We went to school together and then we had an interesting conversation. And I -- he did call my attention to the fact that he was not in the Hitler Youth [26:58], called my attention to the fact [27:00] that his father was a strict socialist and the Nazis [27:04] canned him a few times and watched him all the time. And he couldn't get jobs that he wanted. He was telling me that he was friendly to our side and anything he could tell me, he'd be willing to do. And then we proceeded for an hour. He gave me all kinds of information, not great information, but good information. So that was a piece of luck, also. So you can again call me Lucky Moritz.

INT: [laughs] With -- getting back to 1142 [27:36] and some more -- again, realizing that you only conducted one interrogation, did you ever hear of the use of stool pigeons [27:45]?

WM: I think I did hear that, but stool pigeon has to be defined. There may have been stool pigeons of German [27:54] prisoners.

INT: Yes.

WM: Yes, that is --

INT: That's the sense I'm interested in.

WM: Yes, that took place.

INT: Okay [28:00], do -- can you share any information on that?

WM: No. I don't know anything about it. I know they were used. They were friendly to our side and that's all I know. But I also know that -- that most of those stool pigeons [28:17] were not very successful.

INT: Okay.

INT: From what you learned from the British [28:21] or what you used yourself, did you ever

use -- did you ever provide any privileges or rewards to the prisoners that would cooperate? Cigarettes --

WM: No, that's wasn't my -- that's wasn't within my -- within my territory for me to do.

INT: Did you observe that or hear rumors about that?

WM: No. Well, yes, I did hear rumors about that, but I found evidence of that in Europe. I mean, if you found a good cooperative guy, we gave him privileges. As I told you earlier, we sent them to special camps back to America that were easier than other camps. There was no question about it [29:00]. We even got a memorandum on that from headquarters, to do that, to sort them out to make it easier for them. And, of course, they were good guys. They were good guys. I mean, I would -- I -- at one time I was in charge also near Munich [29:16] -- I was in charge of a battalion of German [29:21] prisoners and they were in these barracks. And it was dangerous for me to go in there. They could jump me. They were on straw. They were on straw beds. And so I -- by trial and error, I sorted out three guys to be my follow guys, so to speak, when I gave orders, et cetera, et cetera. And then they would shout it out in German [29:53] and I felt more comfortable. But I carried my .45 with me at all times [30:00]. And at some point, we took them one by one and sorted them out, where to send them. That was really not pertinent to what you were asking, but that's probably part of what filtered back and forth, what to do with the prisoners, good prisoners and good -- not that the others were exactly bad, but these were cooperative, good prisoners, so we gave them a little privilege and promised them that if they were cooperative. In the field, we promised them, "If you cooperate, we'll send you to a good camp."

INT: Okay. All right. That tape's probably about ready to flip. So we'll go ahead -- yeah, if

you want to go ahead and just stop that and flip it.

[End of Tape 4A]

[Beginning of Tape 4B]

INT: And so I want to talk a little bit -- we've got about a half hour left.

WM: Oh, are we on?

INT: Yeah, we're back on now. Yeah.

WM: Okay.

INT: Some specific questions about specific people at 1142 [00:21]. And we mentioned this a little bit, I believe yesterday, and that's that you would have been at 1142 [00:28] when Werner Henke [00:30] was shot. The -- he was the submarine captain who was attempting to escape. Do you remember anything about that whatsoever?

WM: Only the fact itself.

INT: Okay, you --

INT: I don't remember [inaudible].

INT: You don't remember [inaudible].

INT: How did he hear about it?

INT: Oh, how did you -- did you hear the shot go off or anything?

WM: No.

INT: Okay, so you just --

WM: -- I heard it from another -- from another contemporary.

INT: Okay, all right. We may need more tape, so [inaudible] right there [01:00]. And was there any rumors or anything about what he was trying to do or just that the prisoner was trying to escape?

WM: Just the fact that he wanted to escape.

INT: Okay. All right. But you didn't actually see him?

WM: Didn't see or hear.

INT: Okay. Do you remember any other specific prisoners at 1142 [01:21]? Anybody that sticks out in your mind or any other --

WM: Visually, you mean?

INT: Well, visually or just stories about any other prisoners.

WM: No. There were highlights of some guys, but we did not know their names, so they're not noted in my reports. The only one was that guy -- the first pair that I listened to was that officer from North Africa [01:45]. He was classified to us by word of mouth as a big shot. So we zeroed in on him.

INT: But you don't recall what his rank was?

WM: I think he was a -- I think [02:00] a lower-class general, like a lieutenant general, I think. And he might have been Air Force [02:09].

INT: Lieutenant General Arbrecht [02:11] [phonetic] or something like that?

INT: Yeah, all -- is -- there was a -- yeah, a General Albrecht or Arbrecht. Does that ring any bells? Because I forget who mentioned that, but someone did mention that.

INT: Oh, that was Captain Blan [02:26] [phonetic].

INT: Oh, okay. All right.

WM: No, that does not ring a bell with me.

INT: Okay. So -- and do you know of any other specific incidents or anecdotal or even humorous stories about your time at 1142 [02:39]?

WM: Oh, there were lots of humorous stories. As far as listening to the prisoners?

INT: Prisoners or just your time there.

WM: Oh, I'll tell you. There was -- when we were off, we just had to have a good time. There wasn't much to do. We went into town now and then. I forget the nearest town. I think it might have been -- the nearest town might have [03:00] -- could have been Gettysburg [03:02].

INT: Well, at 1142 [03:04], it probably would have been Alexandria [03:05].

WM: Oh, maybe I'm confused now with Camp Ritchie [03:09]. Yeah, yeah, right, Alexandria, right.

INT: Okay. And we talked about this a little bit yesterday, but maybe it would be good to cover it in detail right now. You married your wife while you were there at 1142 [03:21]?

WM: I married my wife before 1142.

INT: Oh, before 1142?

WM: Yes.

INT: Okay, okay.

WM: I married my wife -- I came to 1142 [03:36] in July --

INT: July '42.

WM: And I got married that previous January.

INT: Okay, okay. And so did you then live -- at what point did she come and join you in Alexandria [03:51]?

WM: Shortly after we got married.

INT: Okay.

WM: As soon as I could find a room.

INT: Okay, so then you didn't live in the barracks for very long then?

WM: No, no [04:00]. I mean, some days they wouldn't let us go.

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: But for the most part, we were allowed to go. We got that privilege extended to us and we took advantage of it. It was great.

INT: Were there a good number of your colleagues who lived --

WM: Off base?

INT: -- with their spouses off base?

WM: There was a good number, yeah.

INT: And did -- do you remember -- what about the officers? Do most of the officers live on post or off post?

WM: It's hard for me to say. The officers -- they were on and off the grounds period, on and off. It seemed almost as they pleased.

INT: Okay.

WM: In one case, I had one of our officers that identified himself as being from 1142 [04:54] lived in the same -- around the same brownstone home in Alexandria [05:00] that I did. No conversation between us. I was only an enlisted man, after all.

INT: Any other staff of observations like MPs or any other non-interrogator or monitor staff that you were aware of?

WM: Well, the -- we knew most of the MPs at 1142 [05:20]. Well, we were familiar with them. We were friendly with them. We had -- we didn't have to show passes. We went and came. They knew us.

INT: So they weren't mean? They were friendly? You got along with them?

WM: Oh, they -- most of them were friendly, yeah. And even the ones in town, I mean, they knew us and they -- like I said last night, they pointed out to a colonel that he couldn't have us arrested because we had this privilege.

INT: Do you remember while you were at 1142 [05:57] -- we spoke a little bit yesterday about other connections, for example, to the OSS [06:00] and you mentioned that you remembered, at least at some point, someone from the OSS coming by or --

WM: Yes. We had an OSS [06:13] -- I don't know if it was always -- was it called OSS already? I'm not sure. Was it?

INT: I believe it was --

WM: But it had a name previously --

INT: -- the Office of Strategic Services [06:20].

WM: -- previous to that. Yeah, but I know -- I remember what's his name was in charge of OSS. We had an officer come by from OSS [06:31], yes. In what capacity, I don't know. Informally, I think he talked to us some. But nothing -- nothing that I can remember, nothing that is great. He was great because he would always answer to us. Now, what was the officer who was in charge of --

INT: Donovan [06:52] [phonetic]?

WM: Donovan. No, Donovan was not in charge of OSS [06:55]. Donovan was in charge of CIA [06:59] -- of the intelligence [07:00] services. Donovan [07:02] -- isn't Donovan the guy that got relieved? Now, I may have my names mixed up. Who was the -- who was the daredevil that was in charge of OSS [07:11]? It wasn't Donovan [07:14], was it? I don't think so.

INT: I thought it was Donovan, but I'm --

WM: It could be.

INT: -- not certain.

WM: It could be. It doesn't seem like it was Donovan [07:24], to me.

INT: But do you think the leader of OSS [07:28] is who came and spoke with you or just an officer within OSS?

WM: Officer.

INT: Okay, and is that about it? Was there a regular contact with OSS [07:36]?

WM: No. That's -- no, no, no, no.

INT: I think you answered it yesterday, but then mostly Army [07:40], but was there any Navy [07:42] presence there?

WM: All the services came through once in a while. Not the Marines [07:48], but the --

INT: Air Force [07:51]?

WM: No, not run by Air Force either. Yeah, I do remember Air Force, an officer and -- two officers come through [08:00]. In what capacity, I don't know. They may have selected certain of our personnel and spoken to them. They didn't speak to me. And we were then extended the privilege of speaking to them in that gathering room if we had questions. But they wouldn't ask us, "Did you hear anything in particular about Peenemünde [08:22]?" or anything like that. It wasn't that kind of a meeting. Now, we had -- yes, I remember two of those. I also remember that OSS [08:32] guy and I remember this British [08:35] officer who was an undercover agent in the German [08:43] government. He spoke to us. He spoke quite a while to us. And am I confused about Ritchie [08:53] now? No, no, it was at 1142 [08:57]. And then we had [09:00] -- well, that's about it.

INT: This German [09:02] -- or this British [09:03] who was a German spy --

WM: Yeah.

INT: -- do you remember --

WM: Yeah, he was a --

INT: -- do you remember anything --

WM: Yeah, he was a spy for us.

INT: Yes. Do you remember anything about what he talked to you about?

WM: He was actually very funny. He told us how he lived in Germany [09:19] for years and years and years. He spoke German [09:23] impeccably. And he worked his way up in the Nazi [09:32] hierarchy and eventually became a spy for the British [09:37], reporting to them all the time until it got too hot for him. He felt like they had a bead on him. He made arrangements to escape out of Germany [09:51]. But in telling us that story, it was a hilarious story, how he dressed himself as a woman, had to do this [10:00] and that and make friends with other Germans [10:04] to do that, to get closer to where he wanted to go and eventually be picked up by the British [10:10]. I think he was pricked up -- pricked up, excuse me, pricked up by boat.

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: Yeah.

INT: Do you remember any civilians, American civilians who worked out of 1142 [10:25] or who were regularly coming in?

WM: No, I've seen American civilians coming through the building and through the grounds, but I don't know what they did.

INT: Okay.

WM: They might have been just contractors. What do I know? But we did not work -- I did

not work with any.

INT: What about any women on post? Anybody from the WAC [10:48]?

WM: I think there was some WAC -- small contingent of WAC office personnel, I think.

INT: Just doing clerical work or --

WM: Clerical work, yeah.

INT: Okay. All right [11:00]. As for the racial makeup, we spoke how unique it was. Over lunch, we were talking about how -- the fact that you had African-American [11:09] MPs with you in Europe. At Fort Hunt [11:13], was it essentially an all-white operation?

WM: No, there were blacks.

INT: Oh, there were blacks at 1142 [11:19]?

WM: Well, I've seen -- I remember one and I remember -- I remember a lot of -- now, I have to make a distinction here because I remember some black MPs in Alexandria [11:31]. But that might have been from Fort Belvoir [11:33]. They would just send to -- they were sent to these small cities to pick up unruly soldiers, random sailors, whatever. But I had no contact with them except they knew us and we knew them.

INT: And they were MPs, you believe?

WM: MPs, yeah.

INT: Okay. And as for Japanese [12:00] or -- do you remember there were any Japanese prisoners at 1142 [12:04]?

WM: I never saw any.

INT: Okay. And, likewise, any Japanese-American [12:08] interrogators like yourself being a German-American [12:11], were there any --

WM: No.

INT: Okay. You just mentioned the one gentleman who was -- on the side was kind of learning Japanese [12:16]?

WM: Yes.

INT: Okay.

WM: The tall guy, skinny guy, yeah.

INT: Okay. All right.

WM: I wish I knew his name because he was pretty private always [phonetic], but I couldn't find him on your list.

INT: Okay. A couple more specific questions about the post. You mentioned yesterday -- we were elated to find the photograph of the flagpole and I think you just mentioned just in passing that every week, there were Friday afternoon parades or inspections?

WM: I said -- I think they were Friday afternoons.

INT: Okay.

WM: Yes -- yeah, they were right after lunch, Friday afternoons we had the parades, and showing the flag, and then presenting the flag to the commanding officer [13:00]. That was a nice afternoon. We enjoyed it and we were in dress uniform, obviously. And --

INT: Any drilling while you were there or did you not really receive any drill training or anything like that?

WM: Casually.

INT: Okay.

WM: Casually, not very grisly.

INT: At 1142 [13:25], as we may have mentioned earlier, there was -- were a series of gun batteries and bunkers because, of course, it was a much older fort. It was built well

before World War II [13:37], before World War I [13:38]. Do you remember what -- if at all those gun batteries were used for, those big concrete bunkers?

WM: When I was there?

INT: While you were there.

WM: That they would use for anything?

INT: Yeah.

WM: I don't think so.

INT: Okay.

WM: I mean, I -- no, I would -- I think I would have known that.

INT: Okay.

WM: What -- these were [14:00] -- this -- they were practically dismantled.

INT: Yeah, there were no guns in them or anything like that.

WM: Yeah.

INT: They were just kind of open underground bunkers, hollowed out spaces.

WM: Who knows? They might have stored stuff in there, but I don't -- I'm not aware of it.

INT: Okay.

WM: I don't -- as far as I'm concerned, they weren't used for anything.

INT: Okay. All right. And I apologize because I'm jumping around and trying to cover a lot of things --

WM: That's okay. You don't have to apologize.

INT: -- [unintelligible] just wrapping some things up. So I apologize to your memory for jumping everywhere.

WM: That's okay.

INT: We never quite finished up chronologically yesterday. We got to the point where you had -- you mentioned some of your interrogations that you did in Europe, some of those kind of three really lucky instances. And then do you remember about when it was that you came back from Europe to the United States?

WM: Oh, yeah. I came back [15:00] -- I can look that up. I don't have my wallet with me.

INT: Well, it's not critical.

WM: I think I came back in December of '45.

INT: Okay.

WM: Not discharged, just came back. And we were sent to Fort -- to Camp Upton [15:15] again and were told to wait for our discharges but it took too long and they let us go home from time to time. The first time, the first night I was at Camp Upton [15:32], I actually went AWOL [15:35] to go home and see my wife and got away with it. It was nothing -- there was nothing to do. We played volleyball most of the time. We were processed. We were processed, but we were not discharged. I wasn't discharged till the following February or March of '46. We got out a little bit of money that they owed us [16:00] and honorable discharge and saluted us and, "Thank you," and, "Great service for your country," and that was about it. It was a great lucky -- then we had to go back to Camp Upton [16:11] to do this. In other words, they let us out at some point completely -
-

INT: Right.

WM: -- and said, "Come back in February."

INT: At what point after the war -- presumably after the war, but at what point did you find out what had happened to your family?

WM: At what point?

INT: At -- or how did you come about finding out? Or did you just assume?

WM: Well, I had -- I assumed -- I assumed quite a bit, yeah, because I couldn't get them out and read it in our daily papers Jews were transported to Poland [16:49], to Auschwitz [16:50], to Dachau [16:51], Buchenwald [16:53] and were literally cooked. They were given the famous showers [17:00] and never came back from the shower. Does that answer your question?

INT: Well, it -- you had mentioned yesterday that -- for example, that you know that your mother and your sister were both killed at one camp and you weren't sure -- you had a brother as well that was just never heard of.

WM: I've never been able to find how he even was transported or that he was transported. We know he was transported out of Frankfurt [17:25]. And my sister had been shipped to a -- earlier had been sent to a prisoner camp that held only women. And they, in turn, only did -- sewed up uniforms or patched up uniforms for the German Army [17:47]. And then she came back -- the thing -- then she came back home to visit her mother, our mother, and stayed with her [18:00]. We know we were told that she hid in different houses, people who were friendly toward us, because she didn't want to go back to that place near Berlin [18:11] where she was held. And eventually they were both shipped. She was caught. She was found and my mother was shipped, and I have the evidence here now. I can show it to you. I even printed it out. But I -- but I -- but, they're still not giving out these papers in sufficient numbers or clarity. Now, I -- you want me to find it, I mean, it might take me a while.

INT: It's not necessary.

WM: Yeah, but I never found my little brother. I did hear from a person that supposedly got out of that camp that they were held in and killed, that my brother didn't want to separate from his mother [19:00]. He was -- how old was he at the time, maybe 14 or 15, carrying on. They got angry at him. They pulled her -- pulled him away from her and god knows what -- they might have killed him right there. That's the kind of situation it was in Germany [19:20], but I have not been able to find him. Now, my mother and daughter -- my sister, I found. That they -- I mean, the fact that they would not even find them, that they were transported to this camp and that's where they were.

INT: And what about -- you haven't mentioned your father.

WM: My father died of natural causes.

INT: Did he? Okay.

WM: Yeah, he died in 19 -- well, that's an interesting story, too, because he was in the First World War [19:44], fighting for --

INT: Right, we had started to talk about that.

WM: -- fighting for the Kaiser [19:47], okay? And he was wounded and went back to the -- to his unit. But when he was discharged [20:00], they found he had a slight case of TB. Couldn't trace it. And, as time went on, it didn't get any worse, so they let it go by. He ended up getting married to my mother, for example. It turned out to be in my mother and so on. But in 1925, he suddenly got very sick and they found a piece of shrapnel lodged in his lung --

INT: Wow.

WM: -- and that's where the TB came from. And the technology then was not such that they could save him. My mother fed him for a while. She got rid of us children. She pawned

us off to relatives where we stayed. And she didn't want us to catch TB. And in 1920 [21:00] -- and eventually she had to get him out of the house and she had him -- she had him -- she found a bed for him in a -- at a good hospital in Hanau [21:09] about 20 miles from where we lived. And that's where he died. And he died -- he was 38 years old. That's the story. And I used that many times with the Nazis [21:29]. I said, "This is the way you treat my family, now? Is this the thanks for my father getting injured during the First World War [21:40] and now you act the way you do toward me and my family?" It didn't make any difference to them.

INT: Do you -- do you know or recall what camp you were in when they took you into custody or when you were still over in Germany [21:58]?

WM: When I was over there the second time [22:00]?

INT: Yes.

WM: When that happened, that thing in Paris [22:04]?

INT: Yeah.

WM: Oh, yeah, I remember, Buchenwald [22:06].

INT: Oh, okay.

WM: Buchenwald.

INT: Was your family there as well?

WM: No.

INT: Just you?

WM: Just I.

INT: So you were already isolated from them?

WM: Oh, yeah. I had no idea where my family was.

INT: But you eventually got processed --

WM: No, my family was still in Frankfurt [22:19], excuse me. That's why I came back. I came back to convince them. My mother was -- my mother thought that this Hitler [22:27] era wouldn't last very long, a lot of Jews did. She said, "It'll be over soon," but it wasn't. It didn't. It lasted 12 years or longer -- 12 years. And she paid the price for it. My uncle who was my sponsor to get me to England [22:50] in the first place -- he begged her to leave with my sister and my brother [23:00]. She would not entertain it. And then I got a letter from her where it seemed like she was ready to entertain it. So that's when I went to Germany [23:09] on the worst day I could have gone. And you know the rest of that story, right? You want me to tell it again or -- you have it recorded?

INT: The Streicher [23:16] story we have recorded.

WM: No, not the Streicher story.

INT: No, when we went to Buchenwald [23:20].

INT: Oh, you --

WM: No, when I went to Germany [23:22] and it was that very day that the German [23:25] diplomat was killed in Paris [23:26] --

INT: Oh, right, right, right. Yes.

WM: -- and the Kristallnacht [23:28]. You know what that is?

INT: Yes. I wasn't sure if that's what you were referring to.

WM: Yeah, that was the Kristallnacht. It was started -- everything -- all the synagogues were set on fire. All the German [23:40] stores were destroyed.

INT: Right.

WM: And that's where they cashed me in. They didn't know who I was. And I had English

papers -- travel papers, but they transported me to Buchenwald [23:50], treated me like everybody else for about a month. And I could go tell you the story, how I got out luckily, also. I would have gotten out anyway [24:00], but I don't want to take up too much of your time. You might have more questions.

INT: Just -- if it doesn't take too long, it might be interesting to hear what it was like to be in Buchenwald [24:09], how you were treated, [inaudible].

WM: Terrible, terrible. I wouldn't know where to start. The nights were especially harrowing because they also had gays there. Gays were a no-no for the Nazis [24:26], and gypsies. At night, they would let the gays out and pick a Jew to rape him. Every night. And if he wasn't very cooperative, they would go to the nearest tree and hang him from the tree just three, four inches off the ground so he would try to touch his feet to the ground but couldn't and, in the process, he would actually kill himself by -- I mean --

INT: Would the Germans [24:55] do that or the gays do that?

WM: Germans did that.

INT: The Germans did that?

WM: The Nazis [24:58] did the -- the SS [25:00] did that. Yeah. And, incidentally, this was also the camp where the wife of the commander of the camp made lampshades out of Jewish skin, lampshades out of the skin of the Jews. This was a terrible, terrible --

INT: Was this men and women --

WM: It's all been reported.

INT: -- or was it all men?

WM: That's all been reported over time and time again in the papers. It's nothing new.

INT: The camp you were in, was it all men or was it men and women?

WM: No, it was all men. I didn't see any women.

INT: Children as well or --

WM: No children.

INT: And as an aside --

WM: Well, 18 years up -- no, 15 years up, something.

INT: Norman Graver [25:46] was also held at Buchenwald [25:48] --

WM: Is that right?

INT: -- probably about the same time.

WM: Well, but there were a lot of people at Buchenwald [25:53].

INT: Right. In wrapping up, but on this subject, while you were at 1142 [26:00] and listening in on room conversations, did the topic of the Holocaust [26:06] and the German [26:07] murdering of the Jews, did that ever come up in any room conversations?

WM: Not really, only in the sense that -- one would say -- and I heard that -- one actually complained to the other that, "This -- the way -- the way they take the Jews and put them on these cattle cars and send them up north is really awful. I mean, it's something to see. And some of the SS [26:36] killing them is awful to see." And that's about the extent of it. But we knew -- we found that out later anyway.

INT: But nothing specific about camp locations or what they were doing or anything like that?

WM: No. No, I mean, some of the names -- locations that they mentioned, we already knew. It -- they were just mentioned casually [27:00]. And Jews were -- Jews were treated and talked off as animals. And I did not get complete closure with the subject, although I was in a position to fire and hopefully kill some Germans [27:29]. But I have this strong desire in me someday to go back to Germany [27:34] and just kill some Germans

randomly. And it's a terrible thing to think, but that's the way I feel. And it's 60 years after the fact, but 60 years after the fact, I still haven't seen my mother and my sister and my brother. So that's the way I feel. And I was back in Germany [27:51] in '68 and '69 on business.

INT: Really?

WM: Yeah.

INT: I can't imagine.

WM: '68, I didn't like it. '69, I had to go because I just had to go, business purposes [28:00]. But I didn't enjoy doing business with them. In fact, I never bought anything from the Germans [28:07]. And we haven't bought any German [28:10] -- we -- my wife and I haven't bought anything German-made consciously to this day. I wouldn't buy a Mercedes or a BMW. That's just the way I feel. And I shouldn't because the second and third generations now are altogether different, I'm told. To me, a German [28:34] will always be a German, always be a follower, never be happy. Germans [28:40] will never be happy. They always look at others -- countries as being better off than they are and that they are the neglected country of Europe, as you know. You know that, don't you? But now that the French [28:59] and the Germans [29:00] have settled down in peaceful ways, hopefully all of Europe will change. But the German -- the Jewish question will never go away. To most -- to the Arabs [29:14], we're one kind of animal because we support Israel [29:19], American Jews, German Jews, whatever. And to the -- I forgot my thought. But to the Christians [29:35], we will always be remembered as having killed Jesus [29:39]. All -- with all the preaching that comes from the top and from the pope to forget about that hundreds of years later, it still goes down that a Jew is a Jew. It

is better, but antisemitism [29:53] is still very prevalent in America. Don't kid yourself.

But you asked me the question [30:01], I had to follow up.

INT: That's good. That's good. We are out of tape, essentially.

WM: Okay.

INT: If there is a closing 30 seconds or a minute of anything that you'd like to say --

WM: Well, I'd just like --

INT: -- specific about 1142 [30:16] or anything like that, that we glossed over --

WM: No, I just -- thank you guys for coming and making this trip, giving me a chance to speak to you, tell you what I hopefully, probably remember and vented some of my anger. But 1142 [30:31] was a great experience. I really liked it there very much. At times, I didn't because the work was very, very hard, but it was a great experience for me and I've been forever thankful that I was at 1142 [30:46]. And then, going to -- the only thing I regretted about going to Ritchie [30:53] from there is that I did not apply myself to become an officer and I had to beg somebody to get me a commission [31:00] -- a field commission which I was promised and never received. I really don't know what else to say. You guys were terrific, very professional, really.

INT: Well, thank you. This has been --

WM: I don't know if that's going to be on the tape, but --

INT: Well, we've had to -- we -- I think it just made it on, but it's been -- it's been fantastic for us and we really, really appreciate it, and I'm sure we'll be chatting again over the phone and --

[end of transcript]

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