

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
Interview with John Kluge  
by Brandon Bies, Matthew Virta and Vince Santucci  
May 16, 2008

BRANDON BIES: Okay, we're on and recording. John, why don't you come up?

[inaudible commentary]

MALE SPEAKER: Is that your camera or --

[inaudible commentary]

BB: Certainly, Colonel, we can take or email the photos to you or --

JOHN KLUGE: Okay, that would be good.

[inaudible commentary]

BB: [01:00] John was kind enough to extend an invitation. And as part of the recognition of the 1142 veterans, it's my honor and privilege, on the behalf of the secretary of the army, the chief of staff of the army, to present you with this certificate of appreciation for your outstanding service to the nation as a U.S. Army soldier. And you're being recognized for your patriotism and continued support to the Army family. Your legacy is today's Army. And the values that you showed are exhibited by the soldiers of today. So, again, sir, thank you very much for your service.

JK: Thank you very much.

BB: You-- and-- I'm honored, humbled to be in your presence. I hope you can display this somewhere proudly. There's also a letter in here from the secretary of the army chief of staff.

JK: Thank you very much.

BB: I'll put this here. Let's see, we can [unintelligible] codes here for you [02:01].

JK: Thank you.

BB: And, also, sir, we have -- if you don't mind, I have a small Army pin to present you. We

find many of our veterans are wearing these now. If you go through the Pentagon [02:17] and the halls of the Pentagon you'll see this. But this is the U.S. -- the current U.S. Army pin.

JK: Thank you.

BB: And, John, for your help and support, I'd like to present you with the [unintelligible] coin. I know -- don't know if you know about the history of the coins. But these are the commanders that present those for recognition. It's sort of a medal. But-- thank you again.

MS: Thank you.

BB: And it's my pleasure to be here.

MS: Thanks.

BB: For both of you.

JK: Thank you.

MS: Thank you sir.

JK: Thank you.

[applause]

MS: Thank you very much. What took them so long huh?

JK: Yeah [03:00].

[laughter]

MS: Ready for your interrogation?

JK: Yeah.

[inaudible commentary]

BB: Okay. This is the start of an oral history interview for the Fort Hunt Oral History Project-

- for the National Park Service. This is an interview with Mr. John W. Kluge at his home in Charlottesville, Virginia. Today is May 16th, 2008. This is Brandon Bies from the National Park Service. I'm also joined by Matthew Virta and Vincent Santucci of the National Park Service. We're also joined today by a number of guests, including Colonel Bob Duffy of the U.S. Army and John Kluge Junior. And, sir, I'm -- I didn't -- I didn't get your guest's name. To get started, Mr. Kluge, would you mind just telling us [04:00] when and where you were born and a little bit about life growing up in Germany.

JK: When I was born in Chemnitz, Germany [04:14], which is in Saxony. And I came to the United States at the age of 8. I went to Ellis Island [04:30]. And I think I'm one of the oldest still living who went through Ellis Island. I went to Detroit [04:49]. I went through the high school in Detroit. Public school. [05:00] And from there, I went to Columbia [05:05] on a scholarship.

BB: Why did your family decide to leave Germany?

JK: Well, my mother married again. My father was killed in World War I. And he lived in Detroit [05:24]; he was of German descent but lived in the United States. And he was a painting contractor in Detroit. That's why I went to Detroit. But when I was 8 years old I told my mother I would never live in Detroit.

[laughter]

I -- [06:00] when I came to the states, I was in the Taft Hotel off Times Square and the fire engines, and the noise, and the whole thing. As a matter of fact, I didn't want to go to Columbia [06:27] as much as I wanted to go to New York.

BB: And when you went to Columbia, what did you study?

JK: Economics.

BB: Okay. And quick question to back up, when you came to the United States, at age 8, did you speak any English?

JK: No.

BB: No English whatsoever?

JK: No.

BB: And so you just picked that up on your own?

JK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Did you still -- when -- once you were attending Columbia, were [07:00] you still able to speak German?

JK: Oh yes.

BB: Okay.

JK: But of course, I didn't want to be German.

BB: Sure.

JK: I wanted to be like other people.

BB: And so you studied economics at Columbia University?

JK: Yes.

BB: And when did you graduate?

JK: 1937.

BB: Okay. And what did you do after that?

JK: Oh, I -- jobs are very hard to get. I became a shipping clerk. And, from there, I -- in that company, I became a vice president of sales. So you know it was a very small company.  
[laughter]

BB: And [08:00] were you still working for them when war broke out? Or had you already

gone into the service?

JK: Well, I worked for them and I volunteered in the Army. Because if you volunteered, supposedly, you would be in the Army for one year. Well, then war broke out. And the rest is history. I was in the service about four and a half years.

BB: So you were actually -- you had volunteered prior to December 7th?

JK: Yes.

BB: Do you remember where you were on December 7th? Do you remember hearing about America's entry into the war?

JK: Yes. I was in Los Angeles. I was in air [09:00] defense unit [09:09].

BB: Were -- did you immediately begin war preparations? Were there any scares at that time?

JK: Yeah. But, you know, they always thought the Japanese would attack. And from California, I went to the Aleutians [09:37]; it's better weather there. And the Aleutians, they one of the worst places you could go to. The Army snowed [spelled phonetically] [10:00] this way.

[laughter]

They used to call it the Willy Waas [spelled phonetically]. I was at that [unintelligible].

BB: Were you an officer at this time?

JK: Yes, I was.

BB: Did you enlist and become an officer right away? Or did you have to go to OCS [10:24]?

JK: OCS, I went.

BB: Okay.

JK: And when I went to OCS, the first sergeant said, "You know, why you go to OCS? You would make a great first sergeant." I said, "Why?" "Because you're the laziest son of a

bitch on the” --

[laughter]

-- “on the property.”

BB: But despite that [11:00], you went on and were commissioned to fresh second lieutenant?

JK: Yes.

BB: Okay. And so you then went up to the Aleutians [11:08]. And about how long did you say you were stationed in the Aleutians?

JK: About eight months.

BB: Okay.

JK: One great winter.

[laughter]

BB: Pretty much winter the entire time?

JK: And I said to the quartermaster, colonel, "Wasn't it too bad that the Japanese attacked the quarter master -- [unintelligible] had." He said, "That was the luckiest thing that ever happened. Because everything we lost was in that building [12:00]."

BB: And so what sort of rules did you have? What was your duty?

JK: I was assistant transportation officer for the -- for Dutch Harbor [12:22]. And --

BB: And, coincidentally, that area today is also administered by the National Park Service. They call it Unalaska [12:33]. The Dutch Harbor is being preserved just like other National Park Services area are to help to tell the World War II story in the Aleutian Islands [12:42].

JK: Oh yes.

BB: So did you -- on a scale of one to 10, how would you rate your experience in Alaska?

JK: 00:12:30:00 Cold.

[laughter]

[13:00] The -- not the general, but the man, the deputy -- when I had my first convoy, shipping in 15,000 soldiers, coming to Dutch Harbor [13:32] to be shipped onto [unintelligible] Adak. And I tried to get a hold of the -- of the vessel that I could help guide the troop ships in and couldn't get hold of the vessel [14:00]. Because the second in command always loved to fish. And he was out fishing. I told the telephone operator, "Cut everybody off." And she cut the deputy off. He called me back. He said, "You're first lieutenant?" "Yes sir." "How would you like to be a private, no class?" I said, "Sir, yes sir. Yes sir." What was I going to say? And when I got to [15:00] Sikadores [spelled phonetically] by the sixth day of war, he called me in his office. He said, "Who do you know in Washington?" Well, I said, "Sir, I know the president." Of course, I didn't know the president at all, who was Roosevelt [15:28]. And when I was standing at attention he gave me the command to be at ease. I said, "Sir, I've got a lot -- I've had my orders. I have a lot to tell the president about this post [16:00]."

[laughter]

And I stood at attention, saluted him, turned around, and walked out.

[laughter]

Now, a couple years later, I was on the dance floor of the Shoreham Hotel the Blue Room. And who did I bump into? This same man. And I said, "Sir, I'm going to see the president tomorrow morning" --

[laughter]

-- "because I'm in agreement with him that you should never leave the Aleutian [16:55]."

[laughter]

And went on -- went on dancing [17:00]. I wanted to worry him a little.

[laughter]

BB: So after you left the Aleutians, where did you go from there?

JK: Washington, D.C.

BB: Okay.

JK: The Pentagon [17:17]. And from the Pentagon I went to 1142 [17:22]. I never talked about 1142. And it wasn't until the Freedom Act that you contacted. Or you contacted me.

BB: Right. Right. And when you went to 1142 [17:54], had you -- before that, had you heard of a place named Camp Ritchie [17:57]?

JK: Yes [18:00]. I trained at Camp Ritchie [18:06] for the military intelligence. And I remember Camp Ritchie very well. Because at night maneuvers I sat on a nest of snakes during the night. And, of course, they were copperheads.

[laughter]

And Maryland was loaded with copperheads. And the men who get the most respect of all the people out there was the man from West Virginia. And he would swing the copperhead around [19:00]. And then he did this and snapped his head. And I tell you, I thought he walked on clouds.

[laughter]

BB: So did you receive training at Camp Ritchie [19:18] --

JK: Yes, I did.

BB: -- prior to going to 1142 [19:21]?



JK: Yes.

BB: What was that -- what was that training in? Was it in military intelligence?

JK: Yes, it was. And I met there he's been a longtime friend, David Rockefeller [19:46], who was also training. Actually [20:00], it's a long story. But I left home when I was 14 and lived at the home of a school teacher. She had a friend who had a niece in Memphis, Tennessee. And I had just come from Europe. And the last stop at Germany. And I told her that I was going to join the Army, volunteer. And she got it in her head that I was a German spy. So that's why I was sent to the Aleutians [20:48], to isolate me. And then, of course, they found out it wasn't so. She sent a letter to the War Department [21:00]. And they had a whole investigation, which I didn't know anything about.

BB: All because of this one woman?

JK: Yes. Yeah.

BB: Question regarding citizenship. When did you become an American citizen?

JK: 1937.

BB: 1937, when you graduated college?

JK: Yes.

BB: And so you-- what sort of training did you receive at Camp Ritchie [21:44]? Do you remember any of the specifics?

JK: Yes, I had [22:00] -- a great memory, of course. I used to know everything about the German army. The 88 Howitzer [22:17], the German tank, which was a very, very respected vehicle. So then I was [23:00] -- I was temporary sent to the Aleutians [23:09] because supposedly I was a spy. But when they found out otherwise, then I was brought back to the Pentagon [23:20] and 1142 [23:24].

BB: So then you actually received your training at Camp Ritchie [23:28], then detoured to the Aleutians [23:31].

JK: Yes. Yes.

BB: And then came back.

JK: Right.

BB: Okay. Okay.

JK: Yeah.

BB: When you were at Camp Ritchie [23:38], did they teach you about -- did you learn specifically about German order of battle?

JK: Yes. And at Camp Ritchie [23:52] I was the officer [24:00] that worked from documents and defeat [spelled phonetically] the order of battle. You know, we captured many documents. And there was one document that was done by a German colonel. It was -- and it was taken from me by somebody. But this guy must have been a nutcase. But he would -- who -- he would [25:00] have the location, the person, the positions. He had making love to various women. And this guy must have been very proactive.

[laughter]

The -- he even had hair of the -- of the girl in this document. And this was a whole book.

[laughter]

BB: Was this of great intelligence value or just humor?

JK: Just humor.

[laughter]

But [26:00] it was -- you know, there were many sources. For example, an interview he -  
- Rommel's [26:14] daughter was married in a small town. And, of course, in that small

town, the newspaper had the whole thing, pictures of the German generals who came to Rommel's daughter's wedding. Now we had the newspaper go underground to various people to -- it was in England and then we would bring it to the United [27:00] States.

And I would say to a German general, "Look, we saw you there. We saw you there."

[laughter]

That was very-- uncomfortable for them. And, "How did you see?" "Well, we had somebody there." My God, he had a spy there. And, "We saw you talking to General so and so. He was there, too." Of course, we didn't see him and talk to him, but we [28:00] surmised that he was talking to him. Then, of course, we stole the directory in Reichstag [28:15]. So we'd say, "We know you had called so and so on -- we heard your conversation on the line 36."

[laughter]

This was very, very unsettling. We would -- we would, for example [29:00], have a German sergeant who mapped out the route to Italy of the 10th Panzer Division [29:19]. And this sergeant would go to houses of prostitution. And we had all these [unintelligible] wired in. So they'd get the sergeant drunk, and he'd spill his beans. So we knew exactly what route the 10th Panzer Division was taking so that our airplanes could drop bombs in the area where these [30:00] -- where these Panzers were located.

BB: Was this intelligence that was coming in to 1142 [30:15]?

JK: Yeah, we -- you -- we'd get some of that information.

BB: Okay. Could you describe for us what -- when you came to 1142 [30:31], were you -- were you a captain at this point? Had you been promoted captain?

JK: Yes. Yes.

BB: What was your role upon entering P.O. Box 1142 [30:42]?

JK: Well, I was the captain in charge of this unit, which were primarily young [31:00], very intelligent German Jews who, because of their work there, were -- got citizenship of -- which [Paul] Fairbrook [31:21] was one. I think he was maybe 20 at that time or at least the youngsters were 19, 20, 21. And you had to really be on the ball to be in charge of them because they [32:00] just absorbed knowledge like sponge and had a great memory, which helped because you would be going over thousands of documents.

(End of Tape 1A)

(Beginning of Tape 1B)

BB: You were mentioning that at 1142 [00:08] you were in charge of this unit that was looking at captured --

JK: Yeah. There were other units there.

BB: About how many men were you in command of?

JK: I don't know the exact number, but probably it was around 20.

BB: And you were the highest officer? You were the commanding officer?

JK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Did you know before coming to 1142, what you would be doing at 1142 [00:47]?

JK: No.

BB: You didn't have any idea, when you were at Camp Ritchie [00:51] about 1142?

JK: No.

BB: Okay. What were you told upon entering PO Box 1142 [01:00]? Did they brief you that this place was top secret, or was that just understood?

JK: Well, that was understood. I don't think they had to brief you. You just -- I remember

going to a cocktail party in Washington. And this was when I first came. And I was in the Pentagon [01:37]. I said, you know, the Pentagon is a terrible place, really, to work. And the man said, "I'm John McShain [01:53]. I built the Pentagon."

[laughter]

BB: And so, speaking [02:00] of the Pentagon, did -- was most of your work at 1142 [02:05]? Or did you also work in the Pentagon?

JK: I -- in the beginning I was in the Pentagon [02:12]. And then I went to 1142.

BB: Okay.

JK: That's my wife.

BB: How are you?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Hi.

BB: Hi there.

FS: Hi.

JK: That's our grandson.

BB: And so, again, at 1142 [02:35], you commanded this unit that was looking at captured German documents. Could you take us through what a typical day might be like at 1142? What sort of work you would be engaged in?

JK: Well, we were all engaged in reading the documents. And when a special document [03:00] that would have some real meaning, they would bring it to me and I would look at it. The typical day was, of course, looking at the documents, tens of thousands of them. And we would also interview some generals who I played bridge with to kind of soften them up. Drive them around Washington [04:00]. Give them believable misinformation and -- such as, as I told you, this is the Pentagon [04:20]. They pointed

out, "That's the Pentagon." And I pointed out that that's the Annex. The real Pentagon is underground, much larger. The -- but at the Pentagon, I was very much impressed with the -- one [05:00] cafeteria that served nothing but generals.

[laughter]

And we used to say, the only time they knew what they were doing is when they went to the bathroom.

[laughter]

BB: So at 1142 [05:27], you mentioned you worked with some of the German prisoners. You were -- you would occasionally interview them. Was that part of the research --

JK: Yes. Yes.

BB: -- for the documents that you were doing?

JK: Yes, it -- yes. And, as I told you before, the German generals only gave their rank, serial number, and their [06:00] name. That's it, according to the Geneva Convention [06:08]. But we would dress up, actually, a Russian, East Russian. He looked Russian. And he had sort of an accent of a Russian. So, you know, we would talk, just banter like, so that the general would know he's Russian. And as I told you, they -- we spotted [07:00] the general who could understand English. And we would say to the Russian, "Captain" -- I know captain -- "you do you things different than we do. I've been trying to get information from the generals. But I can't. So next week, I will turn them over to you. I know you take them to Russia, to Russia and to Siberia. And then you have methods where you get the information. Because you don't -- your country doesn't observe the Geneva Convention [08:00]." Well, the following week things got a lot better.

BB: And this took place, this conversation took place at 1142 [08:16]?

JK: Yes. And we would have devices in the trees and Germans and generals said, "Come on out here on a tree because I feel they observe us." And, of course, we had the recording in the trees.

BB: Did you communicate almost every day with the interrogation section? Or was that more sporadic? I mean, where did you concentrate your efforts, with the documents or with the prisoners [09:00]?

JK: Well, when the -- when the prisoners who were of high rank were there, I might spend time with the prisoners. Otherwise it was with the documents.

BB: Okay. But your -- was your assignment to both? Or was it primarily to the documents?

JK: Well, it was primary to the documents. But I did the other.

BB: Okay. I want to talk for a couple minutes about the organization of the documents section. We know that as MIRS [09:46], Military Intelligence Research Section.

JK: Yes.

BB: Is that what you recall it being called?

JK: Yes.

BB: You were the head of MIRS [09:56] at 1142 [09:58].

JK: Yes [10:00].

BB: Who did you report to above that? Was that at the Pentagon [10:06]?

JK: Yes. And it was a civilian who never cut his fingernails.

BB: Couldn't --

[laughter]

JK: He was a weirdo, but he was a tremendous brain.

BB: Do you recall his name?

JK: No, I don't.

BB: Okay. There were some other names we've come across of some of the higher-ranking folks. I was wondering if I mentioned a couple of them if you might remember their names. One was a Colonel John Lovell [spelled phonetically] [10:46].

JK: Yes. I remember Colonel Lovell. I think he was at [11:00] the Pentagon.

BB: Okay. There was also a gentleman, and this person may have been British, a Major Eric Burley [spelled phonetically] [11:14].

JK: Yes. He was a representative of the MI6 and MI5 [11:28].

BB: Oh really?

JK: Yeah. And we would pass information on. But then we got suspicious. And that's when [Guy] Burgess [11:46] was discovered as the leak. You know, and then he escaped and went to Russia, to Moscow.

BB: Can you talk a little [12:00] bit more about that. That -- is this somebody who worked in the Pentagon?

JK: No, no, he worked at MI6 [12:06].

BB: Oh the -- okay.

JK: Yeah. And we always felt that he was somewhat pink.

BB: Was he a liaison -- was he a liaison between MI6 [12:24] and 1142 [12:26]?

JK: Yes, Burley [12:27]. Yes.

BB: Yes, okay. And you said Burley was found out to be communicating with the Russians?

JK: No.

BB: Oh.

JK: Burgess [12:40].



BB: Oh, Burgess.

JK: Yeah. In the MI6 [12:44].

BB: In -- got you. Okay.

MALE SPEAKER: So Burley [12:47] was the Liaison?

JK: Yeah.

MS: But Burgess [12:50] was the spy?

JK: Yes.

MS: Bur -- did Burgess ever come to 1142 [12:56]?

JK: No.

MS: Only Burley.

JK: Not -- yeah [13:00].

MS: Okay. Were you there from the beginning of MIRS [13:04] at 1142? Or was there somebody who preceded you as the senior officer for MRIS?

JK: No, I think I was the first one.

MS: So you helped to set up its organization?

JK: Yeah.

MS: Or did somebody tell you, "This is how you need to be organized?"

JK: No, I had to set it up.

MS: And when you set it up, did you work with the British in terms of trying to match their program?

JK: The British were early on, because they were in the war before we were. The [14:00] -- but I know I had set it up because I actually stole light fixtures that were in the basement at the Pentagon [14:22] and took them to 1142 [14:24].

BB: [laughs] That's similar, I think we heard a story, and it may have been Paul Fairbrook [14:29], mentioned it one day, a bunch of the men commandeered a truck or something and stole a bunch of desks out of the Pentagon [14:37].

JK: Yes. Yes. We did that, too.

[laughter]

We -- you know, we, yeah, had to start from scratch.

BB: Do you remember much about where you were stationed? Were you all stationed within one building [15:00] at 1142?

JK: Yes.

BB: So you had your own -- you had your own separate --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- area that was just for MIRS [15:10]?

JK: And I didn't know what some of the other people did. And they didn't -- I don't think they knew what exactly we did. There was the colonel, head of this whole area. And he loved the horses. And when he got drunk he'd let all the horses out.

BB: [laughs] Did this happen frequently?

JK: A bunch of times --

[laughter]

-- but he's a very likable guy.

BB: Was that Colonel Walker [15:49]?

JK: Yeah.

BB: Okay.

JK: Yeah.

VINCE SANTUCCI: We are in contact with Colonel Walker's children and grandchildren.

JK: Yeah. Because he's dead.

BB: Yes [16:00]. He passed away not too long after the war, in the 1950s.

JK: Yeah.

BB: He died fairly young. But as Vince said, his son and his grandson actually came and spoke at the reunion that we had in October.

JK: Oh, yeah.

BB: But we didn't tell that story.

JK: No. [laughs]

BB: [laughs] So did you report to Colonel Walker [16:27]? Or did you --

JK: No.

BB: -- report to the folks at the Pentagon [16:30]?

JK: At -- folks at the Pentagon.

BB: Okay.

JK: Lovell [16:34].

BB: Did you get the sense that Walker, Colonel Walker [16:38], knew what was going on at 11? Was he aware of everything going on at 1142 [16:45]?

JK: I don't know. He -- we had no direct line to him. He was more or less the [17:00] housekeeper of the -- 1142 [17:05]. He wasn't involved in the actual work.

BB: You mentioned earlier that you -- there were other programs at 1142.

JK: Yeah.

BB: Can you tell us what your recollection was of some of these other programs?

JK: No, I don't know.

BB: Okay.

JK: And I actually didn't want to know. And they discouraged us to, you know -- we worked on the assumption of the need to [18:00] know.

BB: But you were aware that there were other intelligence --

JK: Yeah.

BB: -- programs --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- at 1142 [18:11]?

JK: Yes.

BB: Did you have any association with -- let's see -- John Star [18:18], was it? Yeah, Star is MIS-X [18:21]. Do you know the name Star?

JK: No.

BB: Or Winfrey?

JK: No.

BB: Now, those are gentlemen who worked in a program that was just as secretive as MIRS [18:36]. It was an escape and evasion [18:39] program where they were writing code, coded letters, to American soldiers. And -- that who were held prisoner. And they were even sending them escape devices disguised in packages. Do you remember hearing anything about them?

JK: No.

BB: No?

JK: You see [19:00], I didn't know any of the other things. And they didn't know what we were doing. That was one of the methods of military intelligence to isolate things, you

know.

BB: It sounds like there was overlap with the interrogation program, however, because you would be monitoring. And you said that there were monitors in trees. And the interrogation program were doing monitoring. So there was a -- there was a room where the monitors sat, and they listened and recorded conversations by the -- by the prisoners.

JK: Yeah.

BB: Were you aware of that facility?

JK: No. I knew [20:00] we were monitoring, but I didn't know the facility.

BB: Okay. So you don't -- do you remember at all seeing where the prisoners were kept? Seeing the -- like a barbed wire compound or anything like that?

JK: Yeah. I remember the mini yard.

BB: Okay.

JK: Which was opened. But it was -- it was a barbed wire yard.

BB: How would you describe the security of 1142 [20:43]? Were there lots of MP's and guards or --

JK: I never saw them. There must have been somewhere. But I didn't see them.

BB: Okay [21:00]. Did you live at 1142? Or did you live in Washington or in Alexandria?

JK: I live -- I lived in Washington.

BB: Okay. So you would just work at 1142 [21:15] during the day and live in a -- in housing somewhere else?

JK: Yeah.

VS: As you came and went in and out of 1142, did you have to pass through guards or security? Or how did you --

JK: Oh, yes.

VS: Okay.

JK: I think he always had security there. After a while they knew me, you know, because there weren't that many people. Now I think the enlisted men lived there.

BB: Yes.

JK: Yeah.

BB: By and -- by and large, with some exceptions [22:00]. But by and large, many of the enlisted men did live on post.

JK: Yeah. Yeah.

BB: I guess to get back a little bit and to -- and just to talk a little bit more about MIRS [22:19] and what you all did, do you remember what sort of documents you all were looking at? Could you categorize or describe what types of documents they were?

JK: Well, they were all kinds. They were captured in the field. When we overtook a unit, we took all their documents. So we had to sort them out, you know [23:00]. There were lots of documents had no meaning at all. But the documents were part of the information that went in the red book [23:26], which was the order of battle of the German army. And before Eisenhower [23:34] landed on --

BB: D-Day [23:43].

JK: Yeah. On --

BB: Normandy.

JK: -- Omaha beach, we delivered the red book [23:51] to him. And we kept updating it as we got more information [24:00]. We got to know what kind of leader they had and the firepower they had and how many men in the unit. Some of that we got from capturing

soldiers in the field. We didn't bring the soldiers over. We brought top generals. And we did same thing with Japanese.

BB: So you remember there being Japanese --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- at 1142 [24:50]?

JK: Yes.

BB: Did you have Japanese staff on your --

JK: No [25:00].

BB: Who would review the Japanese documents?

JK: I don't know. Somebody else.

BB: Okay. Do you know -- was that review of Japanese documents happening at 1142 [25:13]? Or was that something totally separate somewhere else?

JK: I really don't know.

BB: Okay. But your section just looked at German --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- documents, and how about Italian documents captured from Italian military?

JK: We had -- we're nothing to do with Italian.

BB: So of the documents that were captured, you mentioned that they were all captured, you know, from German units and what-not that were being overrun. How often would you at 1142 receive captured documents [26:00]?

JK: Oh, constantly. Big mail bags. We were overwhelmed with the documents.

BB: Would documents include maps and photographs?

JK: Yes, yes. Yes.

BB: And how would you sort them? Was there a way that you would sort them?

JK: Well, when they -- we thought they were important we put them aside. The others we just put them in bags. But, you know, didn't work with documents. But when there was what we thought an important document [27:00] that's -- we sat that aside. And the whole idea was that we would get information which amounted to we -- which amounted to the development of a -- of a unit, you know, and where the unit belonged, in what army group. And [28:00], of course, all information in the army was to go out by other information, other sources. And, for example, spies were all over Germany.

BB: American spies?

JK: Yes. Well, and even German spies. There weren't more German spies, because, for example, the Nazis [28:48], if somebody was too fat, too [29:00] great in health they would become suspicious, you know. Everybody in Germany was spying on everybody else: children against their parents. It was awful. You know, East Germany after the war, the -- many of the -- of the Nazis [29:51] spies were -- that became taxicab drivers [30:00]. And Ms. Muller [spelled phonetically] would call up and want a taxi. And she said, "Give me her address." Taxi driver said, "Never mind, Ms. Muller. We know where you live."

BB: Did you have any MIRS [30:22] staff that were in Europe that were coordinating the capturing of documents?

JK: No. No.

BB: Did you -- did your communication go back such that you said, "If you were finding these kinds of documents, try to capture them and send them back to us?"

JK: We -- I think we did some of that. We didn't do it ourselves. But someone in the



Pentagon [30:48] did. Actually 1142 [30:56] was the [31:00] workers.

BB: I think we'll go ahead. Our tapes are about ready to run out. So we're going to just -- we'll stop and take a little break right now, so we can switch our tapes.

JK: Okay.

(End of Tape 1B)

(Beginning of Tape 2A)

BB: -- is the beginning of a second tape in a series of interviews for the Fort Hunt Oral History Project for P.O. Box 1142, being recorded by the National Park Service. We are here interviewing Mr. John W. Kluge, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142, at his home in Charlottesville, Virginia. Today is May 16th, 2008. This is Brandon Bies of the National Park Service. Also asking questions today are Vincent Santucci and Matthew Virta. And with that, Mr. Kluge, we'd like to keep on the same subject of what we were talking about. During the break, I was showing you copy of the red book [00:48]. Do you recall how often those were produced? You mentioned that you updated that a few times.

JK: Yeah [01:00]. The red book [01:07] was updated, you know, on a daily basis.

BB: Really?

JK: And the -- when there were enough changes then we'd publish a book. The reason it was called the red book [01:36], the cover was red.

BB: Right. And do you recall who the red book would be issued to? Who would get copies of the red book?

JK: The general who would be leading a [02:00] division and of course in the case of your General Eisenhower [02:10]. General Marshall [02:16] would see it also. It was the latest intelligence of the -- for the commanders in the field. So they knew what they were

up against. And whenever there're changes, the -- you know [03:00], we were primarily involved in the European theatre where the fighting was most intense. As you know, we kept pretty much information on [Hermann] Goering [03:52], Hitler [03:54] and his staff [04:00] and of course the Russians. We could never understand why the Russians were able to move so fast. Well they would have a railroad car, tank. And whatever they saw in the countryside. But they -- just cabbage, rhubarb, anything would go in this tank.

And that was the soup. You know? And it would constantly move toward Berlin. And if you asked a Russian soldier where he was going, he was [05:00] going to Berlin to kill Germans. That's it.

BB: We were talking a little bit about the red book [05:14] and what went into that. Was that just from captured documents, or was that also from information that you got from interrogations?

JK: Yes, and we would take any information we could get to make the red book [05:39] more meaningful. And you had to update it because we would be getting new information. We never -- we didn't know what the firepower was [06:00]. When we got that, it got in there.

BB: Was most of the writing for the red book [06:17] done at 1142 [06:19] by your staff?

JK: No, the writing was done in the Pentagon [06:24]. Yeah.

BB: So the information was gathered at 1142?

JK: Yes.

BB: But there were separate people at the Pentagon who actually wrote everything and put it together?

JK: Yeah, yeah.

BB: And the goal was to have the first version available for D-Day [06:43]?

JK: Yes.

BB: For Eisenhower [06:43]?

JK: Yes.

BB: And so you didn't deliver that to Eisenhower did you?

JK: No.

BB: Got you.

JK: And later on I got to know Eisenhower [06:56].

BB: Later [07:00] in the war or after the war?

JK: After the war. You know, he became president of Columbia [07:07].

BB: Oh, was he really? President of Columbia. Oh, okay.

JK: Yeah.

BB: We've heard about and read a little bit about other books; you were talking about the red book [07:22]. But apparently there was --

JK: Green book [07:24].

BB: Yes, could you talk about that?

JK: Well, we had nothing to do with the green book [07:30]. But I knew of the green book.

BB: Do you remember what the purpose of the green book was?

JK: I believe it was order of battle of the Japanese -- of [unintelligible].

BB: Oh really? Okay. Did you ever review captured German [08:00] naval documents and records?

JK: Probably, yeah.

BB: Did you work with the United States Navy at all with that intelligence?

JK: No. I don't think so.

BB: Because what we've heard is early on, before D-Day [08:19], a lot of the prisoners that came to 1142 [08:23] were coming off of U-boats.

JK: Yeah.

BB: Did you work with any captured documents off of the U-boats [08:30]?

JK: I read over it all.

BB: We were talking about the red book [08:44] and the green book [08:45]. We also believe there may have been even other books like the yellow book and the pink book. All sorts of other things. Do you remember anything else that was being produced specifically by MIRS [09:00] other than the red book [09:02]?

JK: No.

BB: Okay. Was the -- was the red book your primary goal? To publish that? Or were you --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- also -- did you also get information that was maybe not relevant to the red book [09:19], but relevant to some other intelligence operation?

JK: Well, we might have done that. But that was secondary. Our main purpose was the red book [09:37] and the identification of material of the German army.

BB: Okay. Was there ever a case where you would find -- come across some documents that were extremely important and you immediately notified the Pentagon [09:58] that you had found some very important [10:00] document?

JK: Yeah, we would regularly send information up to the Pentagon. We -- I don't recall running up to the Pentagon [10:23] to get one document. We would just send a whole group of documents that might be important but not related to the German army.

BB: Would you ever deliver those yourself? Or would you -- did you have a car or something that -- a courier that went every day between the Pentagon [10:51]? How did that communication work?

JK: I think we had a courier. Because, you know [11:00], it wasted a lot of time. We'd be in telephone connection. But the -- I do know intelligence is made up of a lot of diverse items of information. And you're always looking for redundancy.

BB: You mentioned that you had a -- that you had a telephone that you would call [12:00] the Pentagon. Did you have a direct telephone connection from 1142 [12:05] to the --

JK: Yeah.

BB: -- Pentagon.

JK: I think so.

BB: Do you remember if this was a secure line, per se?

JK: I -- I don't.

BB: Okay.

JK: I presume it was.

BB: So your -- you -- the person you reported to, do you remember who your immediate commanding officer was?

JK: Well, I think it was Colonel Lovell [12:38], is one person. And there was also a civilian.

BB: Right, the fellow with the fingernails.

JK: Yes.

BB: Okay.

JK: Yeah, Fairbrook [12:52] might remember him too.

BB: Okay. And they were stationed at [13:00] the Pentagon?

JK: Yes.

BB: Okay. And there were also British liaisons at the Pentagon?

JK: Yes.

BB: Did the British military personnel ever come to 1142 [13:17]?

JK: That's a good question. I don't think we had them come. I remember meeting them.

You know, they broke the code. The British broke the code.

BB: The German code?

JK: Yeah. And the [14:00] head of MI-6 [14:03] moved to Bermuda. And I remember going by his house to look at it.

BB: Speaking of the British, were -- do you recall that there was a London branch of MIRS [14:29]?

JK: Well, they had a similar kind of thing in London. But we had nothing to do with that.

BB: Okay. We've spoken with Paul Fairbrook [14:48] and Dieter Kober [14:49] and they both, at some point, were temporarily transferred from the Washington branch of MIRS [14:58] to the London branch. They actually [15:00] were stationed in London for about four months and then came back to 1142. Do you remember other soldiers that did -- went to London temporarily?

JK: No.

BB: Okay.

JK: I've forgotten even they -- I didn't realize that they went to London four months. So that was a U.S. operation? Yeah.

BB: Yes, that was a U.S. -- it was a U.S. operation. Again, this is our understanding, is that it was similar to what you were doing at 1142 [15:41]. But it was -- it was closer to the --

where the action was going on. It was maybe where -- the first stop where some of the documents went there that may have been more pertinent to the immediate battle operations. And then everything else that was more overall strategy [16:00] or order of battle, for example, would go to 1142 [16:06].

VS: Charles Winick [16:08] said that he was in London for a short time as well. Now I don't know if you know this, but was the -- the red book [16:17] that you produced, it was given to Eisenhower [16:21]. Did Eisenhower share that with the British? Or did the British have a similar order of battle document?

JK: I really don't know. I know one thing. Eisenhower [16:39] would -- you know, he was busy all day. Churchill [16:44] would stay in bed all day. So when Eisenhower would come to 10 Downing Street, he was all tuckered out. And even though Winston [17:00] Churchill was older, the fact that he stayed in bed all day, he was able to impose his will over Eisenhower [17:12].

VS: Did you hear that from Eisenhower directly? Or how did you know that?

JK: Well, I know because I was head of a foundation that showed certain results. And I know Eisenhower [17:37] would come late at night. And Churchill [17:45] would be in bed all day. So he was pretty fresh at night.

BB: Speaking of higher level folks like Eisenhower and Churchill [18:00], did any very high ranking American military personnel ever come and visit your operations at 1142 [18:10]?

JK: No.

BB: No, okay. So it was so secretive even the American generals didn't know about it?

JK: Yeah.

VS: Were you aware of any OSS [18:23] operations linked to 1142?

JK: Well, we were aware of OSS. But actually, it was so damn secretive because, you know, we housed some very high ranking German generals [19:00] who, you know, might be attacked by Americans. So we had to be secretive.

BB: But you don't recall with the OSS [19:21] -- did you ever send documents to the OSS or anything? Or did they just go to the Pentagon or other places? Did you --

JK: Eisenhower [19:33] [unintelligible]. We'd send stuff to the Pentagon [19:36]. And they would -- we would never contact them directly that I can remember.

VS: Is there any possibility that the civilian at the Pentagon [19:48] was an OSS [19:50]?

JK: Frankly I don't know whether he was [20:00]. He was -- he was pretty secretive and slow as hell.

[laughter]

BB: Can you think off the top of your head of any specific examples of finds, discoveries that MIRS [20:26] made that you remember as being very critical or very important? Any specific examples.

JK: Well, there was so many documents that had some import that none really stands out. There were just -- every day there was something [21:00]. For example, as someone of importance was killed, you know, where we actually had a document that showed he was killed. You know? I applied some of the knowledge in my own business later on that I'd learned in the military intelligence. For [22:00] example, you know, even today, there are moles. Ford would have a mole in General Motors. And General Motors would have, probably, a mole in Ford. Now you can't deal with a mole directly. You have to gather a number of people. But the message is actually for the mole. He doesn't know



that. He doesn't know that you know that he's the mole. And that's very important. For example, I give you [23:00] [unintelligible]. Channel Five in New York was a competitor of Channel 11. Channel 11 was owned by the Chicago Tribune. I would say to a whole group of people, which the mole was there, that we were going to bid together for a syndicated show. We were going to bet the house on it. And of course the mole would report back to Chicago. And of course the Chicago [24:00] Tribune gave an okay to the management in New York that they could raise -- I would say that that one program would definitely set us apart from any of our competitors. So they bid and bid. And we didn't bid at all. We knew there were two shows coming afterwards. And I -- I just knew Chicago would say to management in New York, "You can't bid on this next two shows." "They -- you said to us that that show [25:00] would set you apart. Well go ahead, and now I'm setting you apart." And we bid on those two shows, not bidding on that other show. And they were just as good, but didn't have the pizzazz. That's the kind of thing.

BB: So you can attribute that to your -- some of your years --

JK: Yes.

BB: -- of military intelligence?

JK: Absolutely. The -- if you want -- how to identify mole takes a lot of work. For example, you pass out different pieces of information. And then you wait for that information to come back. And you know who was the [unintelligible] mole [26:00]. You would say to the mole some piece of information. Somebody else another piece. Somebody else another. You have maybe, the three, four people you might think is the mole. But when that information comes back, you then can identify the mole.

BB: So did you use moles at 1142 [26:35]?

JK: No.

BB: No. You just learned that in military intelligence?

JK: Yeah.

BB: Are you familiar -- speaking of the moles, since you worked a little bit in -- with the interrogation of folks at 1142 [27:00], these German generals. Are you familiar at all with the use of what were called stoolpigeons [27:06]?

JK: Yeah, but, you know, the electronics were so well developed, you don't need a school -- stoolpigeon. And a stoolpigeon [27:31] is quickly -- very quickly identified.

BB: So in your opinion, stoolpigeons were not as effective as just monitoring and listening in?

JK: Yeah, yeah.

BB: Okay.

MS: Do you remember the names of any German generals that you may have [28:00] interrogated?

JK: I -- you know, I really don't remember. But they were very important or we wouldn't have flown them over. They weren't [Wilhelm] Keitel [28:32] or -- yeah, but they were just below him.

BB: You mentioned -- so some of the generals, you recall, they were actually flown directly in?

JK: Yes, yes. Directly from the theatre to the -- to the [29:00] -- to 1142.

BB: Okay. Do you know what would happen to these German generals after they left 1142 [29:11]?

JK: No. It -- you know, the Army worked very much, even military intelligence on a theory

of the need to know. So we didn't know whether they -- you see, we weren't very long in the war. So [30:00] I think some of these people released, we knew where they lived.

That was the important thing, to know where they lived, because we could get information from them, their neighbors. I mean after the war.

BB: Getting back [31:00] a little bit to the documents that you were looking at, did you ever look at the documents --

JK: Sure.

BB: -- yourself? So it wasn't just the -- it wasn't just people like Fairbrook [31:13] and Kober, you would look at these as well?

JK: Sure.

BB: Would they look at them first and then pass the documents, the important ones to you? Or how would you decide what you would look at?

JK: Yeah, yeah. I think they would pass the important ones to me.

BB: Okay. Did you still have a good command of your German at that time?

JK: Yes, yes.

BB: Okay, so you were able to understand these documents --

JK: Oh yes.

BB: -- very well?

JK: Yeah.

MS: And you had mentioned early on today, I don't think we were recording, about you worked for a lot of smart young men [32:00] and how you had to stay late behind closed doors to keep up with them.

JK: Yes.

MS: Can you repeat that?

(End of Tape 2A)

(Beginning of Tape 2B)

MS: Earlier today when we first arrived, you had talked about the fact that you worked with a lot of bright young men and that you stayed up late behind closed doors studying to try to keep up with them.

JK: Yes with the -- this was at Camp Ritchie [00:21] when I was actually -- was in class with the enlisted men that I later on was head of. I looked like I, you know [01:00], didn't really care, but I did. I would lie on the grass, look up at the sky, and go over this material. Or on the weekend, I would lock myself up, stay in that room Saturday and Sunday going over the material. They thought I was in town somewhere. I had to appear like a genius, which I was not [02:00].

MS: Just like you had to do with the prisoners to pretend like you knew more than you actually did to get them to speak.

JK: Yes, yes.

BB: What was it like for you to speak with a -- with a German prisoner? Was this -- you were still -- you know, you were a captain at the time. And you were interviewing a German general. I -- to me I imagine that would leave a little bit of an impression.

JK: Well, I felt like an equal. But I didn't act like an equal because I wanted him to think he was a [03:00] god up here. And I was just a run of the mill captain. I would argue with them, so they knew I was for real. I would laugh with them. Joke with them. And I was -- I wanted them to feel I was on their side because I was born in Germany. And [04:00] you know, that maybe I leaned toward Germans. I acted as if I might have. But I was

trying to soften them up. But when they heard they were going to Siberia, that changed the mood. The Germans were, including the generals, were deathly afraid of the Russians because they knew and they heard that they would go to any means [05:00] to get information from the prisoners. We wouldn't do that.

BB: How often would you perform this ruse, per se, of the -- someone dressing or acting like a Russian? Did that happen all the time? Or just a couple of times?

JK: Oh just one time.

BB: Oh, just once?

JK: Yeah.

BB: But it sounds like it worked quite well.

JK: It does. It does. And immediately.

BB: When you spoke with these German generals, you mentioned you wanted them to feel that they were higher than you, better than you. Maybe knew more than you. Did you wear your captain's uniform? Or did you [06:00] --

JK: Oh yeah.

BB: So you interrogated them as a captain? You didn't --

JK: Yeah.

BB: -- put on a different --

JK: No.

BB: -- uniform or anything?

JK: No, no.

BB: Okay. And were you -- you were able to conduct the entire discussion in German?

JK: German.

BB: So none of them really spoke any English or any -- or any English? Not enough to communicate with you?

JK: Well you know, they understood, or one or two of them understood. But it's difficult for them to speak.

BB: Did you receive any specific interrogation training? How did you learn to interrogate these people?

JK: No I didn't -- I didn't get any training [07:00]. I had to do a lot of the things, you know, on the spur of the moment.

BB: Do you remember in 1945 interrogating a U-boat [07:23] crew?

JK: I might have. I might have.

MS: Anything specific that might --  
[inaudible commentary]

MS: Did you request the German prisoners to come to you to be interrogated? Or did someone suggest that they needed to see you? Or how did you arrange to meet with --

JK: Well [08:00] when they were captured and brought to 1142 [08:05] I was told to interrogate them.

MS: Okay, so they'd inform you that a new general had been captured and suggested that --

JK: Yeah.

MS: -- you come interrogate him?

JK: Yeah.

BB: And do you mostly recall just interrogating generals? High ranking people? Did you ever talk to lower level?

JK: Well they weren't flown over.

BB: They weren't flown over. Okay.

MS: Were you interrogating them specifically to try to confirm order of battle information?

JK: Yeah, we -- if -- yeah, we always looked for that. And [09:00] when they talked the following week, I took that information. We would get as much information and I'd say we didn't send them to the Russians. I think they willingly wanted to give us information. That was better than being sent to Siberia.

BB: Towards the -- towards the end of the war, did your mission change whatsoever? Or did you have -- at MIRS [10:00], did your goals stay the same throughout your entire time there?

JK: It stayed the same.

MS: Were you going to ask any questions regarding buildings?

BB: Sure, we can do that. In fact, if we want to, we can pause things, and we can get out a map --

MS: Okay.

BB: We might ask you --

[inaudible commentary]

BB: What I -- we'd like to do is -- I'm not sure if John has told you. But today, 1142 [10:42], there's very little left. Much of it was bulldozed immediately after the war. There's only a few buildings that are left. And so we have a very difficult time trying to figure out where certain operations were stationed. If we [11:00] pulled out -- if we paused things here and pulled out a map, do you think you might remember where you were stationed on the post?

JK: Yeah. I -- let's see.

BB: Super. Great. Well, we'll pause things real quick. Once you get your glasses I can orient you. The main entrance to the post would've been over here. Over here is where the Potomac River was. So we're kind of upside down. Washington would have been in this direction. You would have entered the post in this area here. This was the parade ground. The large open parade ground. There would have been a flagpole here. The old -- I don't know if you remember the old concrete gun batteries that used to be there. They're these large rectangular items on the map. These are where the prisoners [12:00] were held. These two compounds are where most of the generals and other high ranking prisoners were. So I don't know if any of this looks familiar to you whatsoever.

JK: Show me a building. Are these buildings?

BB: Yeah, everything that is a kind of the gray boxes are buildings. The circles are labels. Those are just labels attached to each building. But each of these gray boxes is a building. Some of the long skinny ones are barracks where the -- where the -- so you know, people like Paul Fairbrook [12:42], they would have lived in these long barracks.

JK: It seems to me that this was the entrance [13:00]. We were not far from the entrance.

BB: The post command offices where some of the higher ranking, you know, the post commander or what not, he would have lived kind of in this general vicinity here. These were listed as officer's quarters and what not.

JK: Where are the stables?

BB: The stables were back -- not sure if it shows on this specific map. But I believe these are the stables right here.

JK: I see.

BB: Was MIRS [13:47] close to the stables?



JK: We -- yeah, we weren't that far [14:00]. What was this?

BB: This building right here? Let's see. It's -- I'm not sure. That -- can you pull that map?

MS: Sure. Do you remember, was -- the building you worked out of, did it have the appearance more of an office or did it have the appearance that it might have been a residence at one time?

JK: No.

MS: More like an office type building.

JK: [unintelligible] was just a building.

MS: Supply [unintelligible], like one big room with desks in it? Or --

JK: Yeah, but it -- go ahead.

BB: This is just -- on our maps, is just listed as a supply room. But again we don't have to tell you that things at 1142 [15:00] are not always what they appear. So just because the map says it's a supply room doesn't mean that's exactly what it was. But this building here is listed as a supply room. And then building right here, on number 118 right next to it, that is one of the only buildings that is still left on the post. That's a dwelling where we actually think people may have lived in that building there who were stationed on post. But the main entrance, you would have come right in this road right in here.

MS: Now I don't know if you'll recognize this. We're going to give you a copy of this. This is a historic study of Fort Hunt [15:49]. But those are the prisoner compounds. I don't know if you were able to see those well enough to recognize those in the photographs [16:00].

JK: These were the guards.

BB: The guard towers, exactly.

JK: We were somewhere in the front here.

BB: In the front? Okay.

JK: In here somewhere. Do you have any other pictures?

BB: Yes, there's several other pictures. In fact we're going to give you some other things that have lots of pictures in them. But I thought this would be of interest. Do you ever remember seeing those buses?

JK: Yeah.

MS: What were they used for?

JK: They transported prisoners.

MS: Yes, exactly [17:00].

[inaudible commentary]

MS: One of the things that we've been very fortunate is though -- although the staff at 1142 were not supposed to be taking pictures, many of them did. And so we have -- we have now copies of several hundred photographs that have been donated that show people, that show buildings and things like that.

BB: Since we're talking about locations. This is supposedly a map of the floor plan of your building at 1142 [17:40].

JK: Yeah.

BB: Does that -- does that look familiar?

JK: Sure. Yeah.

BB: And we'll get you -- we can get you a copy of this. In fact this whole report here was a post war report written on the history and operation of MIRS [18:00]. And we've copied -- we've copied some sections to give to you. We don't have the whole thing copied. So

we'll send you or send via John a complete copy of this report. And this is enclosed in there. This shows the document handling desk and the conference room and the reference desks.

[inaudible commentary]

JK: The main building?

BB: Yeah I'm assuming they mean it's the main building for the Washington branch of MIRS [18:43].

JK: Well where's that on the map?

BB: Well and that's what we were hoping maybe you could figure out for us. We're not -- we're not sure which building this is on this map. It looks obviously like it was kind of a [19:00] longer rectangular building.

JK: Yeah, what's this building?

BB: This one right here?

JK: Yeah.

BB: That was the one that -- it's simply listed as a supply building. But again, just because that's what it's listed as doesn't mean that it very well could be your building. If this -- if this is the building that you keep coming back to --

JK: It's near the --

BB: Yeah the main entrance was right here.

JK: Yeah. And this would be the building.

MS: So that's the building that would be right next to the current NCO quarters.

BB: Okay, that's [unintelligible] -- I mean obviously [unintelligible] building out there anymore. Right next to the NCO quarters.

MS: Is there any possibility too that you may have used a different gate from some of the other people? Because remember there were like other gates.

BB: Do you remember if there were other entrances to 1142 [19:54]? Or just the one gate?

JK: I think just the one gate [20:00].

BB: Okay, and was that the gate that was fairly close to the Potomac River? Not right up against it, but --

JK: Well, the Potomac River's at -- over here.

BB: Yeah, exactly. The Potomac River's right around in this direction here.

MS: It would be part of 1142 that was closest to the river.

JK: Yeah, well, I'll tell you, this would be my choice right here.

BB: Okay, well that's the best description we've ever gotten. So that's very useful information.

JK: Yeah it -- I don't remember a supply building.

BB: Okay, well and that could have just been the code. We for example have seen maps at the National Archives that, rather than saying, "Interrogation Center, P.O. Box 1142 [21:00]," they say, "Officer Training School."

JK: I see.

BB: And we know that's not exactly what it was. So it could have been more of the secrecy.

JK: [affirmative]

BB: Well, we have -- what do we have for tape left?

[inaudible commentary]

BB: Maybe we'll go ahead and just ask you a few more questions. And again we'll leave you copies or send you copies of all of these documents so that you can have them. I'm going

to just slide this back into here.

MS: And you can keep this. I was going to look for one more photo to show you in here.

JK: Well this is taking a lot of work.

BB: We -- we're very excited about telling this story. And it's -- again it's tough for us. And that's why these interviews are so important because a lot of this information [22:00] wasn't written down.

MS: Of course, that's an aerial view. But this is one of the old batteries that was there. And some say -- talk about the underground facilities where they took folks and were thinking maybe they took them down into some of the lower portions of that battery. They were designed during the Spanish/American war to defend Washington from any -- anything coming up the Potomac River. So does that look, at all, familiar to you?

JK: No.

MS: Okay.

MS: And here was the flagpole for 1142. And so it was set closer to the Potomac River.

JK: Oh yeah.

BB: Well we've got about five or 10 minutes left of tape. And then I know you've got a lunchtime appointment. So we'll get out of your hair [23:00] in a few minutes. But just to follow up with a few last minute questions. What do you recall about the end of the war? Were you at 1142 [23:11] when you found out that the war in Europe had ended?

JK: Yeah. I was walking right at 106 -- at 16th Street in front of the University Club when I heard the war was ended.

BB: Did you keep working at 1142 after that for a little while? Or did your job end the day the war ended?

JK: No, no, I still -- I [24:00] continued working at 1142 [24:06], and they wanted to give me a majorship. But I was ready to go and get out after four and a half years.

BB: At one point at the end of the war, the -- we believe MIRS [24:33] was closed and sent back to Camp Richie [24:37] and became the German military document section. Are -- does that ring a bell? That title?

JK: No, I was out.

BB: You were out by then. Okay. And I think that confirms some of what's in this report that we found. It mentions that you left, I think it says maybe around July of 1945 was when it records you as leaving [25:00].

JK: Yeah, I think that's probably right. The war ended -- when was it? In May or June? May.

BB: May, yeah, that could be possible.

JK: So I worked two more months. Yeah.

MS: A couple of questions: if that building that you point out was where MIRS [25:34] was located, directly across from it was a building that we refer to as the non-commissioned officers' quarters. An NCO quarters. And we understand that there was at least one woman or a couple of women that lived there. All right, do you remember any women at 1142?

JK: No [26:00].

BB: We think, if there were, they may have been WACs.

JK: Yeah.

BB: In the Women Auxiliary Corps [26:09]. And just not a lot, just maybe two or three who would have been there.

JK: Yeah.

MS: I have a letter I can show you guys that someone wrote him. In a photo that Paul Fairbrook [26:21] sent you of the MIRS [26:23], there's a -- one woman. And I have a letter from her to him that she wrote in the early '90s, just asking if it was the same Captain Kluge that she served with.

MS: So you have her name and --

MS: I have all that.

MS: Oh that's great. So there may have been one woman that worked with you in MIRS [26:46]?

JK: Well, there were two women.  
[inaudible commentary]

JK: The picture that Fairbrook sent [27:00], there were two women there.

MS: Do you remember the NCO quarters at all across from where you worked?

JK: Well I knew there was a NCO quarters. I don't know exactly where it was.

BB: It probably would not have been known by that name during the -- it would have just been a single family sort of dwelling. A house that maybe some staff lived in. That -- if what you're pointing at is correct, that would have been next door to MIRS [27:37]. But we'll definitely do some more research and look into that. So in wrapping up, what did you do? Did you muster out as a captain right there from in Washington?

JK: Yeah.

BB: Okay. Were you called back up at all --

JK: No.

BB: -- during Korea?

JK: No.

BB: So that was your only--

JK: Well I was [28:00] older, you know. When I was in, I was 26. Let's see, yeah.

BB: Okay. Do you have any closing thoughts or anything that you think that maybe we haven't covered? Something we might have skipped on the importance of MIRS [28:30]?

JK: Well, the place was very secret. And I think it was because German generals came there because [29:00] it wouldn't have been research on the documents. And although we also had some high ranking Japanese, these German generals were very tall, all of them, see. And they always had their shoes polished. You know? They were very military. I played bridge with them [30:00]. And actually they were a likeable bunch. But I always kept my distance from them.

BB: Would you consider them -- many of them to have been hardcore Nazis [30:28]?

JK: Well if they were, they hid it pretty well. I think most of them were military men who didn't like the Nazis [30:50]. You know? Hitler [30:54] forced that onto them. And [31:00] they never felt the Nazis were very military. They're more political.

MS: Just one final question. Were you aware of a similar prisoner of war camp in California called Camp Tracy [31:46] that was designed for the Japanese?

JK: I heard of it. And we got a few Japanese [32:00] at 1142. Not many, but a few. And I never interviewed them.

[end of transcript]



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