

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
Interview with Bill Hess by Brandon Bies  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
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INTERVIEWER: This is an oral history interview on Fort Hunt with the National Park Service. We're here with Bill Hess at his home in Leisure World in Silver Spring, Maryland. This is Brandon Bies with the National Park Service, as well as Matthew Virda [phonetic] and Samuel Swersky. And we're going to talk a little bit about your experiences with Fort Hunt today.

BILL HESS: Okay.

INT: And so, if we could just get started a little bit about yourself, about where and when you were born and a little bit about your family's background.

BH: Okay. I was born in 1921 in Stuttgart [00:36], which is in Southern Germany. And I lived in the same house with my parents for almost 16 years, until I immigrated to the United States. My parents were what they call in Germany, "middle class." My father had a [01:00] textile, wholesale business, a very small operation, only he and two employees. And my mother came from a rather prominent family in central Germany. Her maiden name was Simson [01:16] [phonetic]. Simson had established the -- before the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 [01:28], an arms factory in a town -- Suhl [01:33], which was sort of the center for the small arms industry. And he was a rather esteemed citizen of the -- of the city. And that was my mother's family. I went to elementary public school, and to a secondary school for total of nine years. Well, when the Nazis [02:00] came to power, in the beginning it looked like just another unpleasant period that would go over fast. But, by the time the Nuremberg [02:12] laws were enacted in 1935, it became evident that young people had no future. And so, my father and my mother became very worried about me. She contacted an uncle she had in New York [02:28].

And he said that when I'm 16 and old enough to work I could come to this country. And they had farmed me out to a friend of the uncle who lived in a small town in Illinois.

INT: [affirmative] And were you an only child?

BH: I was an only child, yes. Now, while I -- Stuttgart [02:54] was a -- was a relatively benign place [03:00] for Jews to live. In fact, many of the Jewish families in small towns and villages who felt the Nazis' [03:09] discrimination and abuse much earlier moved into Stuttgart. And so, I never -- I never really ever suffered. I got along well with my fellow students. And I was allowed to stay in public school because my father --

FEMALE SPEAKER: That was -- excuse me. That was before Kristallnacht [03:32].

BH: Oh, yes.

FS: That's why you weren't --

BH: That was in '34, '35. My father was a combat veteran of World War I.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And Hindenburg [03:46], right at the beginning when he was still alive, made it clear that his soldiers were not to be abused in any way.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Later on, of course, that all went down the drain. My parents, like many other people [04:00], thought since my father was a small business man -- he had no big stores or factories, that he could stay. And that almost turned out to be fatal because they were there doing the Kristallnacht [04:20]. And my father was arrested and sent to Dachau [04:22] for five weeks. My mother got her uncle to send counsel with more affidavits of responsibility -- sponsorship. And so, in 1939, with -- just the months before World War II broke out, my parents were able to come here. And so, we started with nothing. It was

very difficult for them. My father started a little business, and [05:00] it was very hard for him to get started. And, of course, I was the main support in the family.

INT: So, but you -- so, you came here before your parents?

BH: Oh, yeah. Two years.

INT: Okay.

BH: I missed it by a little over a year. If I hadn't left I may not be alive today.

INT: [affirmative] And so, you left in 1937?

BH: In '37.

INT: And how, specifically, did you -- I know you said -- so, you turned 16.

BH: Yeah.

INT: And then were you sponsored by family or relatives, or --

BH: An uncle.

INT: Okay.

BH: My mother's uncle was responsible for me. But, I felt I was responsible for myself.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, it was very hard. I was living with total strangers, who were very nice, treated me very well. I paid them room and board, of course. And my boss's son thought I had to get rid of my heavy accent. And so, he provided a tutor, a very fine lady [06:00] -- teacher, who was -- had to leave her job because here, during the Depression [06:04], if a woman got married, she had to give up her teaching job for a man who needed to support his family. After I paid room and board, and paid for the -- for the English lessons, I had a disposable income of 7 cents.

[laughter]

INT: Wow. And so, what city were you in when you came here?

BH: When I came here, I lived in Danville, Illinois [06:34].

INT: Okay.

BH: A town of about 35,000.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And people were very, very nice to me. I can't complain. But it was a -- still a hard life.

You know, you live in a big city and then you come to a small town. You don't know anybody at all. And, of course, I had no dealings with young people, because when they went to high school I went to work.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But [07:00] it was better than going to Auschwitz [07:03]. You know?

INT: And so, what -- did you have any English before you came to this country?

BH: Yes. I had nine years of school -- sounds like nothing here. Our schools were much faster than English schools.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: I had four or five years of French and two years of English.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So, I didn't come here completely helpless.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But, of course, I -- as I said, I had this accent. And this was during the Depression [07:37], which actually did not leave its shadow in a small town in Illinois [07:46] until World War II got underway.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Jobs were extremely scarce. They had coal mines, and the miners were well paid. But they only worked two or three days a week [08:00]. So it was very difficult, you know, to advance or anything like that. And I had no formal training. And they just put me on the floor and you learned -- picked up what you had to.

INT: And so, what exactly were you doing for your job at that time?

BH: Well, first I helped unpacking things and sorting deliveries, and taking care of supplies. And then I worked in a dry goods department. I was just a sales clerk.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: That's not a very good job for a man, because there were two women who were also there. And most of the people who shop would be women for piece goods and stuff like that, and they'd rather have somebody like that wait on them.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And yet, you know, you were the -- they looked at your sales books every day, whether you earned your keep, which I didn't. But they paid me anyhow [09:00], because they were more or less friends of one [unintelligible] my --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- uncle.

INT: And so, when your parents came -- actually, let me back up. When you came, I assume you came over on a ship?

BH: Well, that was the only way --

INT: That was pretty much the only way to do it. So --

BH: Unless you wanted to swim.

[laughter]

INT: And so, did you come in through New York [09:23], then?

BH: Yes. That was pretty much the big ships -- it was an American ship, the Manhattan [09:29] that I came over on. And that was a very pleasant experience, except for one day on a violent -- we had a very rough sea, and I had finally found out what it was like to be seasick.

[laughter]

INT: And so, were -- you were traveling by yourself, correct?

BH: Yes.

INT: Did -- you didn't know anybody else on the ship?

BH: No. The relatives who met me, the uncle, and aunt -- they were pretty well to do. They were in Maine for the summer.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: It was August -- they had [10:00] a very nice apartment next to the Plaza Hotel where I was allowed to stay until the people in Danville [10:07] were ready for me, which was about two weeks. And it was wonderful, you know, being in New York [10:13] -- a prime location. They had a maid there. They weren't -- you know, they were in Maine for the summer. And the maid cooked and did the laundry and all that sort of thing. And there were a number of other relatives, including relatives of my mother Simson [10:32], who had been put through the mill because the Nazis [10:37] wanted their arms factory --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- which, of course, they got. And they locked up these people and sweated all their money out of them, as far as they could. And they came to -- were able to come to New York [10:51]. And they sort of took care of me for the first two weeks. And, as I say, we

went to Jones Beach [10:58], which was brand new at the time -- I'd never [11:00] been to a beach before, you know. We saw all the movies, and the Radio City Music Hall. And so, that was two weeks. Then they put me on the train, and sent me out. And that's when life --

[laughter]

-- the real world of Illinois began.

INT: And so, did your parents then join you in Illinois [11:23] in 1939?

BH: Yes. They came. They were able to bring belongings with them.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But no money. I think a total of -- I don't remember. Was it couple hundred dollars or so? Our father was 55 at the time. And that's all they had. And, of course, he had no job. Well, he found something for a while as a janitor, but he couldn't do it at his age.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, of course, all my earnings, except for a couple dollars or so would go to my parents.

INT: [affirmative] And so, were they also [12:00] living with your uncle and their family? Or did they have --

BH: Well, no. We lived in Illinois. My uncle lived in New York [12:06].

INT: Oh, okay. Okay.

BH: My uncle lived in New York.

INT: So, did you -- did you share a home, though, or did you -- your family, once your parents came --

BH: Oh, no. They -- we rented -- they rented an apartment.

INT: Okay.

BH: And, at that time, fortunately, that was very affordable.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: It was not in the best area. The street wasn't paved.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But it was spacious, and it was adequate. But that was no problem -- the place they lived.

Getting enough -- earning enough money to feed yourself and take care of your need -- there was no medical insurance or anything.

INT: Sure.

BH: So, that was the main problem.

INT: [affirmative] And so, how long did you work this job that you had, that you started in '37?

BH: I worked there until I was liberated by the U.S. Army [13:00] --  
[laughter]

BH: -- and I went into service exactly one year after Pearl Harbor Day [13:05].

INT: Okay.

BH: They tried to draft me a few weeks earlier -- months earlier, but they found out that they couldn't because I was an enemy alien.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So they had first had to get -- the draft board had to send out a form -- for a form. And I waited there for weeks. I said, "Oh, my god. It must be awfully hard to get that form." You know, they probably just forgot it there. But I, at that time, had a lot of respect for government. I thought, "If they, you know, sent for it immediately it wasn't [unintelligible]." Apparently, I was the only enemy alien in town, so they had no other

experience. But I went in in December of 1942.

INT: [affirmative] And what was your reaction a year earlier to Pearl Harbor [13:57] and the United States entering the war? Did that -- [14:00] anything resonate with you?

BH: Well, I've always been the news hound. And my father and I used to fight for the newspaper. And I was always very interested in foreign news especially. So, I was very well aware of what was going on. And, of course, when my mother wrote and said my father couldn't write to me right now, he was away, I figured they must have arrested him, but I didn't know whether he was still alive or not. And it was terrible for my mother until he came back. Well, he suffered from the treatment there. I mean, they didn't beat him up, but when you are sent to a cold place -- and Dachau [14:43] is on a plateau in Bavaria [14:45]. At night, in November, it gets pretty cold, and they had to stand for roll call for hours without moving.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And he caught bronchitis, which he had the rest of his life. And my mother got [15:00] -- as a result of it, eventually, she had to be operated on for bleeding in her stomach ulcer in her worry about my father.

INT: [affirmative] And so, when you heard, though, that the war had started -- you know, December 7 -- you know, and America had been bombed, did you have any particular reaction, even though you weren't a citizen of this country yet? Or did that -- or did you see this as the writing on the wall?

BH: Well, I lived there -- I lived there -- well, it was, you know, there in our lives there are days that you remember. I don't know -- you may remember when you heard Kennedy [15:38] had been assassinated. No?

INT: Not me. No. Not me.

BH: Well, that was one of those days. But you certainly remember when you heard about 9/11 [15:49].

INT: Absolutely. Yeah. Sure.

BH: Well, that's what Pearl Harbor [15:50] was. You knew that there were negotiations going on. The Japanese had sent a special ambassador to Washington [16:00]. And he had had a meeting at the State Department [16:05] in the morning of -- let's see. The 7th was -- I think that even though it was Sunday, I think, they had a meeting. And so, nobody figured that, while he was still there, you know, that anything would break. And I remember it was a Sunday afternoon. And we were having dinner. And I was listening to the New York Philharmonic [16:27] concert, when they interrupted the program with a bulletin of, an unidentified foreign aircraft had bombed Pearl Harbor [16:36]. Well, unidentified -- you knew what happened.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the -- and the area where we lived was very isolationist. The Chicago Tribune was a big newspaper in Chicago, [unintelligible] paper. And, they were very anti-Roosevelt [16:59], and very [17:00] anti-helping the British. I always felt I had to watch myself because I felt what the British were doing -- how, you know, that finally they came to the realization that the -- you can't -- you can't deal with the Nazis [17:25] again and force Poland to give up the territory. So, I always felt that this war was a serious threat. But the Nazis -- and then, of course, at the same time the Japanese on the other side. And, in the beginning we weren't doing so well.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: You know, everything you heard -- and that a lot of ships were sunk. You had the day 15 ships, with so many 100,000 tons were sunk [18:00]. You figured, "My god. You know, if they sink all the ships, they're going to run out of ammunition." And so, it was -- I felt -- I felt very threatened. Yes.

INT: Did you have any urge to volunteer? Or did you figure you would be drafted at some point? Or --

BH: Well, I couldn't have.

INT: Okay.

BH: I couldn't have volunteered. And I figured, you know, sooner or later -- in fact, I was, at that time the draft I think didn't start until you were 21. And I was -- my birthday is in August, the 8th. And I was supposed to report on the 26th.

FS: And you were very happy.

BH: And I wasn't -- well, I felt, you know, at that time we didn't feel like, "This isn't our war. We should have stayed out." Although there were many people who felt that Roosevelt [18:50] got us into this war. But I felt that this was my, you know, campaign [19:00].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And so, I was in -- as I said, I felt I was being liberated, because when I was in the army [19:12] at least you had Saturday afternoon off during basic training.

[laughter]

BH: That was the day I had to work from 9:00 in the morning until 9:00 at night.

[laughter]

INT: And so, you found out you were drafted December 7th of '42. Did the two of you know each other at that point? Or did you meet --

BH: Oh, no.

INT: -- so, you didn't meet until --

BH: She was a kid. I would have been arrested.

[laughter]

No. She lived in Pittsburgh.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And I lived in Danville [19:41]. I'd never been in Pittsburgh.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Never even passed through Pittsburgh. Yeah.

INT: And so, you didn't meet then until you were down in Alexandria [19:53].

BH: No. Not until I was here.

INT: Okay. Got you. So, you were drafted in 1942. What [20:00] did you go to? Just basic infantry training at that point?

BH: Well, no. It's a strange thing, you know. I found out later what my path would have been -- somebody had a view once of my record. No. I was sent to the reception center - - was Ford Air Force Space [20:21], Ford Field. Not Ford -- Scott Field [20:24].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Near St. Louis [20:27].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And after two or three days they put us on a troop train and sent to Camp Robinson [20:37] in Little Rock, Arkansas [20:39], where we were not expected. They had no room for us. I think we were supposed to have either medical or our infantry training. They put us in the reception center.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Tents with stoves in them. And it got cold at night, but it [21:00] wasn't like Illinois [21:02]. And I got sick while I was there. They sent me to the hospital. I had flu I think, but you go to the hospital. And they gave me antibiotics, which made me sicker on the stomach. And -- oh, I was supposed to be shipped out to -- we never knew where we were going, but somebody who I met up with in Ritchie [21:29], again --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- who was also sent to Scott Army Base [21:34] -- Air Force base, told me I would have been sent to Fort Benning [21:40], I think -- armored.

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: Yeah. I missed that. And, when I got well again -- a dozen of us in the reception center - - I don't know how they picked the names out, but a dozen of us were sent to Atlantic City [22:00]. And we traveled by ordinary train, open section Pullman.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And we -- they sent us to Atlantic City Air Force base. I've got the picture someplace of [unintelligible]. And, while I was there -- well, I had applied for my -- for my declaration of intentions, the so called first paper toward citizenship.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, because I was drafted, my eligibility was delayed, you know, until I was sent from - - but, anyway, in Atlantic City [22:44] they wouldn't let you go until you got your citizenship.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But, one day I just happened to find out casually. In the orderly room I saw a paper on

the desk that [23:00] I was supposed to be shipped to Camp Ritchie [23:03] the next day. And, knowing from experience what they do, I packed all my stuff in the evening, and I got ready, and went to bed. Sure enough, at 4:00 in the morning, they came in -- "You're shipping out tonight. You have to get up."

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So, I was all prepared, and I guess I left about 8:00 or 9:00.

INT: And so, you mentioned that you knew about Fort Ritchie, what the reputation at Fort Ritchie was?

BH: I -- my uncle in New York [23:32] had a son. And, before I was drafted, I went to New York. I had a friend in New York. And I hadn't been there since I had arrived. And I spent several days in New York.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And my uncle -- I see there was a package sitting on the table to his grandson, "Camp Ritchie [23:52], Maryland." Never heard of Camp Ritchie, you know? Well, that's where he was being sent. And, here, when I'm being sent to Camp [24:00] Ritchie -- I think it said military intelligence training center.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So, I knew there was such a place in Maryland. Nobody had ever told me that that was a secret --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- or not to talk about it, which I have heard from a number of other people. And that was in March of 1943.

INT: Okay.

BH: I had finished my basic training, and I went to Ritchie [24:31], and I had the normal two month training as a interrogator -- tactical --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: You know, to be employed with the division in the team. There were six men to a team, two officers and three enlisted men. You know, two officers and four enlisted men. And they were divided into the two [25:00] regiments that were on the line. The third regiment would be in reserve. And we were trained. And so, we had to learn, at that time, the American order of battle [25:13], the Italian order of battle, and the -- of course, the German. Infantry, armored, and so on.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, in addition to that, also intelligence duties, what an intelligence NCO [25:32] would have to know in the field. And it was a two month course, and we had practical exercises, where they -- at night they would load us in a truck and send us out some place, gave us a map and say, "At 12:00 we want you to meet at such and such a place." They didn't tell us where we were. We had to figure that out.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, not to take the road, but to [26:00] go across country with a compass, which was somewhat difficult because you had to climb over fences and wade creeks and so on. And, after a while, you figure, "Well, the next street, we've had enough of this thing." And if you're not there by a certain time they left you behind. One guy came back once on the bus the next day. God love us -- near Gettysburg some place.

[laughter]

INT: So, when you -- when you found out you were going to Ritchie [26:32], were you excited

about this?

BH: Yeah.

INT: So, you probably -- did you have an additional preference when you found out that you were getting intelligence training --

BH: Well, actually, my English tutor had a friend who was an intelligence officer. I didn't -- I knew him, but I didn't know him very well. And, apparently, one time he said to her that they were having a problem having German speaking people for [27:00] intelligence purposes. And this women said, "Well, I have a good friend who speaks fluent English and fluent German." So, they asked me to come up to Chicago [27:14] to be interviewed. And they interviewed me, and I answered them, and I remember they told me, "What do I expect to do when I get in?" I said, "Well, I don't have the slightest idea. I was told that I could be useful. And I know certain areas very well. And so, I'll do whatever -- I'll do whatever they tell me to do." He says, "Well, we just want you to make sure that you understand. You're not going to be sitting behind the desk in Washington or anything like that. You'll be in the field interrogating" -- or words to that extent, you know?

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And I said, "Well, if that's what they assign me, that's what I'll do." And [28:00] then, when nothing happened I figured, "Well, you know, there was just a routine sort of thing." But I have a feeling that probably -- as a matter of fact, a lot of people who lived in small towns and so would never heard of Ritchie [28:14]. And so -- including Bill Warfield [28:19], you know, the black singer. I understand that they would stick a pin through the IBM cards, you know, which they had at the time that -- what did they call it? Something press -- I forgot the name of it now. But, they had a very -- a very elementary

system --

INT: Punch cards?

BH: Punch card operator. I never knew what's a punch card. You know, what does that do?

But, anyway. If they -- if they punched in the name of -- or the field that you have [29:00], the cards would fall out. And, whether you -- if you were a black singer who went to Eastman School of music, and you had the ear of German birth -- he speaks German? You send them to interrogator school. So, a lot of people who lived in small towns, or wherever, who had the knowledge, came out. And so, I assume that that's what happened. And so, that's I how I came to Ritchie [29:28].

INT: [affirmative] And so, while you were at Ritchie, did everyone receive the exact same type of training or were people initially weeded out for certain aspects of intelligence or interrogation?

BH: I really don't know. I know they had a photo interpreter's class. And I guess they must have had an order of battle [29:50] class. I knew there were other fields there too, because there was a huge camp, and they were still expanding while I was there.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And [30:00] we were involved only with IPW [30:05], interrogation of prisoners of war [30:08]. There was a two month course. And I was very impressed, you know. In the beginning, the first day when they threw all these handouts at us, and told us we had to memorize all of them, my god! They do that every day, how are you going to absorb all this? But, you know, it became routine after a few days. You knew what you had to do. And we had tests for just about every day.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: They called them quickies, you know, where you were being asked, "True or false," or whatever. We had to do situation maps, you know, do exit -- they took us out in the field and taught us how to draw contour maps by just observation and very primitive tools of a triangle, or a compass, and a pencil and a clipboard. Or you had to [31:00] walk a circular route and map it, you know. Side along there, the angle, and then have it meet up again. I never did --

[laughter]

BH: -- worry about the idea of what you -- the course -- the instructors were excellent. And the two month course, I thought, was very well done. Then they had demonstrations. They had actors who were acting prisoners.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, also, situations when they had the tactical exercises to which the big shots in Washington were invited. I remember one of -- where they had the army [31:42] in advance and they had a house there that was set up to be used in this. And it was booby trapped, and it showed what you should and shouldn't do. So, it was a -- it was a very -- a very thorough, and very good cause.

INT: So, you remember [32:00] the folks that were dressing up as German soldiers?

BH: Oh, yeah. They were -- some of them were actors from New York [32:09].

INT: And did they speak German? Or did you --

BH: Well, yes. Because they also played the prisoners.

INT: Right.

[End of Tape 1A]

[Beginning of Tape 1B]

BH: -- if you would like some tea, we've got --

INT: All righty. And so, I'm sorry for the interruption. We were talking about some of the folks that were dressed as German prisoners and whatnot.

BH: Well, they had a tent set up, and one of the instructors would sit there. And he'd sit in front of a table. And one of -- and played the sergeant. Then they would tell -- the sergeant would come in and say, "I have a prisoner." "Bring him in," you know. And we'd ask him his name, his rank, his serial number and so on. And they were instructed that if we asked them correct -- the correct questions, they would have to answer. But, if you didn't know your stuff they could tell you anything they wanted to. And they had a ball. You know, the first thing we asked them their name. My name Klaus Todomeyer, or some -- you know, some really odd name to try to get you to laugh and throw you off. And then you would have to ask them the name [01:00], rank, and serial number. And what unit was in -- what company. And, if they would tell you they were in one company, you would ask them if they had such and such weapon which this company wouldn't have. If you would say, "Why yes. We had several of those," you know. But, if you ask them -- if you would then go back and say, "You're lying," you know. "We know that that's not what you have" -- then they would have to give you the answer. So, it was done so realistically that, at that one point, there was one guy, an officer, who was interrogating a prisoner who was very obstreperous. And, of course, we could threaten them, you know. "If you don't do this, we'll do such and such." And this guy got so involved in interrogating this guy who was obstreperous, he hauls off [02:00] and slapped him in the face.

[laughter and talking simultaneously]

INT: So, they made it clear to you that you were not to touch prisoners, or handle them, or anything like that.

BH: We had -- and I want to put this on the record. We had at least one, and possibly several days on the Geneva Conventions [02:28]. We had to know the Geneva Conventions, what you could and couldn't do. And, when you read today of this business about a contractor not knowing the -- not even knowing and being sent to interrogate somebody, I think, you know, that's -- you wouldn't think that we lose that much experience, you know, that we can -- we can do anything like that.

INT: [affirmative] And so, were there any other tactics that you recall that they taught you at Ritchie [03:01] --

BH: Oh, yes.

INT: -- in terms of either intimidation, or ways to get information?

BH: Kill or be killed. We had to see these films, you know. "Kill or be killed." There was an Army [03:11] training film. And it showed us, you know, what you should and shouldn't do. And one of -- and what we learned was how to disarm somebody. For example, if he holds the rifle close to you, you hit his arm, you know, and he'll fire in the air. Or how to sneak up to a -- to a guard, and put a wire around his neck, and choke him. We learned that.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: We learned that other -- how to punch somebody to put them out, and which way to do it would kill and not make him mad.

[laughter]

BH: Yeah. The training was, as I say -- the training was very thorough. It was excellent.

And the [04:00] person who set this all up was an Air Corps, played -- an Air Force Colonel Banfield [04:12].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: He later became a general and the head of Air Force intelligence. He was the son-in-law of the Army [04:22] Assistant Chief of Staff for intelligence, G2 at the time. And he sold his father-in-law on setting up -- this is what I was told -- Camp Ritchie [04:35].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, very often times, generals -- you'd oftentimes find the last war over, and say, "We don't need these newfangled things. We do it the old way."

INT: [affirmative]

BH: He was receptive to it, and so, he was commissioned to set up Ritchie. And he got involved, I understand, when we had some of these field exercises. He [05:00] would fly overhead in a light plane, you know, and sometimes shout down to people when they did something wrong. But we had these field exercises there.

INT: And, in terms of the actual interrogation training, did they teach you particular tactics? I know you said they taught you at the Geneva Convention [05:19] -- certainly you couldn't strike anyone or hit anyone. But they -- did you -- did they teach you other tactics of trickery or, you know -- or any other ways to get information out of prisoners that you learned there at Camp Ritchie [05:31]?

BH: I don't recall that they specifically -- they probably did tell us certain experiences that they had. But, you know, this whole thing was a two month course.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, eventually, you have to get your experience in the field.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, possibly, you know, you have a chance to meet some people there who've already had some real life experience. Now, maybe later on, you know -- we were being trained in [06:00] '43. That was pretty early for our troops to be -- when -- while I was there, that was coming to the end of the African [06:11] campaign. I mean, our troops had been sent into Africa, I think, in November of '42.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the fighting in Tunisia [06:25], especially -- the Kasserine Pass [06:28] disaster. Did you see the film -- what's his name? Patton [06:34]?

INT: Oh, sure.

BH: Yeah. It starts out with -- at the very first scene the disaster at the Kasserine Pass. We were very easy going, and Patton started, you know, putting his fire and fist to train people that this is not just an excursion. These guys mean business.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So [07:00], the campaign was over the end of May, just as our class finished. Now, the next classes that were coming in, you know, and subsequently -- they may have had feedback, you know, about the fighting in Italy, especially which started in the summer of '43.

INT: [affirmative] So, when you were finishing up there at Ritchie [07:29], were you under the impression that you would then be going overseas somewhere?

BH: Well, that's what the idea was. But, one day, several of us were pulled out and sort of segregated. We were going to be sent in to some special assignment.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: We had no idea where we were going, or what. And then, after a while, they disbanded us and we went on maneuvers in Louisiana [07:58]. And then, when I came back [08:00], I was just hanging around there. I don't really remember what we were doing at that time.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But then, one day, I look at the bulletin board and I see my name is there. I've been promoted to Corporal, and I was to be shipped out the same day to Fort Hunt [08:22].

INT: [affirmative] And so, do you have any sense of why you were separated from everybody else? If it was for certain test scores or anything like that?

BH: I have no idea. There were several other people who were in the same class with me.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And they weren't all shipped together. One guy went first. And, of course, I knew from him.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And I wondered whether I would be going there too. And he briefed me. You know, the first day he came up to me, and says, "This was absolutely fascinating." You hear these guys, you know, talking about their experience, and the [09:00] Navy -- you know, the Navy had -- they didn't run the camp, but they used the facilities.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: You know, there was a naval detachment. The -- in fact, when I arrived there they had the names of the prisoners on the board, what room they were in. And one of them was a very famous German submarine commander, [Friedreich] Guggenberger [09:27], who had been on the Battleship Graf Spee, and was interned in Argentina [09:34], and fled,

and made his way back. And they gave him a submarine. And they sank the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal [09:42].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And then, he was sunk.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: He came so I never. I never saw him. I just saw his -- saw his name on the board. But he was one of the people who led the [unintelligible] escape team.

INT: Oh.

BH: Yeah.

INT: Okay. And so [10:00], you find out that you're going to this location. You -- prior to this, you had never heard of Fort Hunt [10:08], or 1142, or anything like that?

BH: No. We knew, you know, there was OSS [10:13], and all that. And they had -- around Washington there were a lot of installations that were classified.

INT: Do you remember any of the names of any of the other individuals from your class at Ritchie [10:25] who were in the same class as you that went to 1142?

BH: Yeah. There was one guy by the name of -- let's see. Florsheim [10:35] [phonetic].

INT: Florsheim? [affirmative]

BH: Yeah.

INT: I think his name may be on the roster.

BH: He was the one who came up to me the first day. He has his bunk almost next to mine.

INT: Okay.

BH: And he was up there. And Milroy [10:51] [phonetic].

INT: Okay.

BH: I told you about him.

INT: [affirmative] But if you want to -- you'd like to talk more about him now or later, that would be -- that would be good [11:00].

BH: Yeah. He was Hungarian. Apparently, he came from a rather aristocratic family. And I think he went to work for the State Department [11:09] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- eventually. He was one of them. And another guy by the name of William Chester [11:16].

INT: Okay.

BH: I think he was Romanian. And I don't know what his background was. It was sort of mysterious. But, he was one of those people who went. There's one other guy -- kind of an old fellow. I guess he was in his -- maybe his late 30s or 40s, which, at that time was old.

[laughter]

BH: To be a private that long. I don't remember his name.

INT: Sure. Well, that's no problem.

INT: How old were you at this time?

BH: I was about 23 by that time -- 22 [12:00], 23.

INT: And, again. So, this would have been around May of '43 or so?

BH: No. We were out there on the 17th of September.

INT: Oh, September. Okay. So, could -- okay. That's right, because you -- I know you said you arrived in Ritchie [12:15] in March.

BH: In March.

INT: But it was two months. But then you went on maneuvers in Louisiana [12:15].

BH: Yeah. I was there from March until September.

INT: Oh, okay. Okay. And so, you got your initial orders on the bulletin board that you were going to this place called 1142 [12:32].

BH: Yes. Yeah. It wasn't in [unintelligible] report for shipment to a part -- I have it someplace in my -- I think Heinz Schlitzenheim [12:44] [phonetic] has it too.

INT: Yes. He has a copy as well.

BH: Yeah. Reporting from the railway station in Alexandria [12:53], to telephone number TE, something or other. And [13:00] so, I took the train from Ritchie [13:05] to Baltimore, or they took me by bus. I don't remember. And then, Baltimore -- from Baltimore -- the train to Washington.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And then I had to wait an hour at the station for a train that stopped in Alexandria [13:21].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So, it took a whole lot --

[laughter]

And I called. And Army [13:30] vehicle came.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the driver. And I had no idea where he was taking me.

INT: Did the driver tell you where he was taking you?

BH: Oh, I think he said, you know, "Memorial Washington Parkway." But I had never -- I had been in Washington once before, while I was in Ritchie [13:43].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But I had never been in Virginia before.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So --

INT: So, did you had to describe, you know, that trip and your arriving at 1142 [13:53] for the first time, and what your initial impressions were, and what they told you as you walked [14:00] in the gate there for the first time, what your job was going to be?

BH: Yeah. Well, that was what Florsheim [14:06] was telling me about --

INT: Oh, so, he -- right.

BH: -- interesting it was. And then, the next day, I had to go to the post commander, Colonel Walker [14:15].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And he talked to me. And I had to sign an affidavit that I would never disclose what we did here, because after World War II, British officers were -- their life, you know, experiences -- and the Nazis [14:37] could make use of that. So, we were not to talk about what was going on there.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And I don't know what else, but I'll just remember this. And then I was -- at that time, there was only one building. The second building was put up a year later --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- where they had [15:00] prisoners and interrogators.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And they, you know, explained it, you know, to us, what we were supposed to do.

INT: And what was that that they explain that your role was going to be?

BH: Well, we would be either monitors -- but we would listen to the records that were made, or we were transcribers, were --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- when you hear something when you've started the machine -- and it could be very boring. You know, they were -- they'd be sleeping. They usually gave you a couple of rooms, you know, and you switched from one to the --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- to the other, if it was slow. And they also had the -- a system of -- I mentioned to you, stoolpigeons [15:52].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the very first ones we got came from North Africa [15:59]. The [16:00] Nazis had saw the -- when they were, you know, starting to hurt, that maybe they could use some of the political prisoners. Or they would let them go if they would agree to fight, which they did. And they sent them to a special school, I guess, on the Heuberg [16:28]. The Heuberg -- that's an interesting thing. That was a pre-World War I maneuver area --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- of the troops from Rettenberg [16:37], where I lived. And that the Versailles Treaty [16:43] prohibited the staging of military personnel within 50 miles of the Rhine River [16:50]. And the Heuberg [16:51] fell within this -- the militarized zone. And so, they made that into a [17:00] youth camp for schools, or for the children in general. And my whole class, twice while I went to elementary school, was sent to the Heuberg. And we lived in the old Army barrack, you know, in two dormitories, and straw ticks -- no

running water.

[laughter]

And you had KPs who had to go into the kitchen and bring the food. And there was classrooms. And we had a ball there, you know?

INT: [affirmative]

BH: There's very nice -- I went twice to the Heuberg [17:33]. And, when the Nazis [17:34] came in, they turned it into one of the first concentration camps. And so, they assembled a division of these political prisoners -- homosexuals, communists, other asocial elements.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: The soldiers were all privates [18:00].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the officers were good Nazis [18:03]. And, it's in there -- the 999th infantry division [18:08] -- when they put them into action in North Africa [18:10], a lot of them immediately disserted.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And -- well, others too, you know, who were willing to do that --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- they would be put into a room with another prisoner. And they were fed, you know, what to -- what to ask them.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, of course, they got sort of beneficial priority treatment.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Once they were released, I don't know what happened to them. There was one guy who was there quite long. And I think they had hoped to use him in postwar Germany. But I don't know what happened to him. I don't want to mention any names because there might be a survivor who might suffer [19:00] for --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- yeah. But, anyway --

INT: I'd like to talk some more a little bit later about the stoolpigeons [19:08], and the monitoring, and those -- and those techniques you were use -- but, again, focusing on your initial few days there at Fort Hunt [19:18], were -- you then were assigned a place in the barracks. You stayed there in the enlistment barracks at 1142?

BH: Yeah. I was in one of the barracks. Now, if you were married, like Heinz [19:32], you were allowed to live off campus -- off post.

INT: [affirmative] And so, did -- what were your initial impressions of the post? Was it very military like? Or was it relaxed?

BH: No. It was fairly -- generally fairly relaxed.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: We did have -- I don't think we had a lot of drill or anything like that. There was one officer [20:00] we had, a Captain Hoag [20:03] [phonetic].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: He came in. He says, "Well, this is a military installation." And he wanted windows opened at night in the wintertime, and so on. And it was pretty cold in the barracks, you know. You had only three coal stoves. And, if you had windows opened -- I think he wanted every window, or every other window open.

[laughter]

BH: He didn't last very long. He was -- most of them, you know, the -- were not very GI.

INT: [affirmative] And so, did --

[phone rings]

Oh, take your time. That's no problem. Did -- I'm trying to think, for 1142 [20:45], for your day to day duties, did you have, you know, parade inspection in the morning? Was it -- was it a 9:00 to 5:00 sort of schedule, or were there folks working around the clock?

BH: No. There was, around this [21:00] 24/7 presence.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: You had -- you had duty on Sunday now. And some people lived in New York [21:09], you know, and they liked to go home.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So, they had to -- those people who weren't from that area, like myself -- to me it didn't make any difference whether I was Sunday or Monday, or Tuesday off.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And so, I usually worked Saturdays. And that -- people until -- oh, I don't know, 7:00 or 8:00 in the evening, or --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- you didn't have people at night. Maybe if there was somebody who was in the habit of talking late, you know.

INT: Okay.

BH: I don't remember that. But we -- I think we had to be there at 8:00.

INT: Okay.

BH: Because they -- that's [22:00] when they had breakfast, you know, and --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- you worked -- I don't remember how long. But we worked six days with -- I mean five and a half or six days.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: I think Saturday afternoon may have been loose.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But there was always somebody on duty there, yet.

INT: [affirmative] Okay.

BH: And monitoring too.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: During those hours.

INT: [affirmative] Getting back to the -- to the barracks, was it a large barracks? Did you share it with a large number of people? I mean, was it -- was it standard military bunk beds?

BH: It was a standard; it was a CCC [22:44] kind, single story.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: There were three stoves in it. I don't remember how many people we had in there.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But it wasn't very -- it wasn't -- it was a -- and the latrine were across the way.

INT: [affirmative] [23:00]

BH: Showers and latrines and so on.

INT: [affirmative] And were there -- did each barracks building have its own showers and

latrines, or -- attached to it? Or, you know, assigned to it?

BH: You know, I don't remember. There were two of whom -- T-8, you know --

INT: Yeah. [affirmative]

BH: And there was, I think, one latrine complex. I don't remember too much about the others.

INT: [affirmative] Do you remember how many barracks there were total for enlisted men?

BH: No. I don't.

INT: Okay. Were -- was everyone in your barracks -- were they all with your same program?

Were they all either monitors or interrogators?

BH: No. Spivey [23:37] [phonetic] was in our barrack.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And Welsher [23:40] [phonetic] was in our barrack. And I don't remember.

INT: Do you know if anybody from the other program was in there? The X [23:50] program?

BH: We may have talked to them. But, if we did, it was very superficially [24:00].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And, of course, we had been told never to ask them anything of what they did. And we didn't. And if we had, they wouldn't have told us anyway.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But, when we were told not to -- not to ask them for my part that was it, you know. And we were also instructed never to try to get into the building. And so, we didn't.

INT: [affirmative] And which building was that? Do you remember?

BH: Well, that was the Sugar Mill [24:36], and the Creamery [24:37], and the -- I forgot what the -- what the other -- those two just come to mind.

INT: [affirmative] And do you remember the Sugar Mill as also being a building that was off

limits, as well, or just the Creamery?

BH: I think so.

INT: Okay.

BH: I think that all the -- just -- as far as I can remember we were told not to go into any of these -- into these buildings [25:00].

INT: [affirmative] And so, you didn't really know what they were doing whatsoever?

BH: No.

INT: And, did they know -- was it -- was it more obvious what you were doing? I mean, obviously the prisoner compounds were there.

BH: Oh, yeah. Well, I think they knew what we were doing, because, you know, we had the prisoners there. And they had -- you mentioned evaluation --

INT: Yeah. Evaluation section.

BH: Yeah. I know there were people who were working with material and --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- well, it was captured material, and personnel branch, was the name of the organization.

INT: [affirmative] Do you remember the names of the different branches? I know there was evaluation section, and do you remember there being a documents section, or anything along those lines?

BH: Could be. It could be. That I don't remember. No.

INT: Okay. We've got a couple more minutes of tape left, and then we'll have to wrap up this tape, and then take a little break. Let's see [26:00] here. In terms of anything else. You mentioned that they were -- there were stoves in the barracks. They were heated with stoves; certainly, obviously, no air conditioning that time of year, so I can imagine it

wasn't that fun in the summer time, but you did have the swimming pool, though, right?

BH: Yeah. Well, if you have, in those two minutes, time for another little episode --

INT: Go for it. Sure.

BH: I don't think we had a rigid assignment for keeping the furnaces going -- the stoves going during the night.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And one day I came home -- I came back to the barrack from being out, and it was kind of chilly. And I saw that all the stoves were out. So, there was near my bunk, once, there was a table where they kept newspapers --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and so on. And sometimes there were pieces of wood. And I guess there was coal too. So, I come in and I see the stove [27:00] -- all the stoves were out. I said, "Well, we can't get up in the morning" -- it was wintertime. And so, I started the fire. I took the newspapers, you know, and put the wood in there. And it was dark, of course. It was 11:00 or so. And I started the -- I started the -- got the stove going. It was nice and warm. I put the coal on it. But the next day I get a call from the Sergeant Oakes [27:32] [phonetic], that says, "The barracks was nice and warm last night." I said, "Yes." He says, "You built the fire, didn't you?" And I said, "Well, yes. I did." He says, "Well, I want you to know, one of the papers you took was the payroll that we have sent in [inaudible]" --

[laughter]

BH: He said, "So, this afternoon, when you're off, you will come to orderly [28:00] room and type the payroll."

[laughter]

And he said, "I have to tell you, you cannot have any errors, and it has to be 100 percent correct. And if it isn't, has to be done over again. And I can let you guess what happens if they don't get paid."

[laughter]

INT: Tell them it's your fault.

[laughter]

INT: And so, that was Sergeant Oakes [28:27] was your --

BH: That was Sergeant Oakes. Yeah.

INT: Okay. All right. All righty. We'll call it quits for now then.

[End of Tape 1B]

[Beginning of Tape 2A]

INT: This is a new tape. And then we'll go.

BH: Well, what I was saying is one saying that doesn't fit in right now was when I went at Fort Hunt [00:12] had nothing to do with intelligence, but had something to do with Fort Collins.

INT: Okay. And this is a --

BH: Wait until the --

INT: Oh, sure. We can tell that just one second. Let me give the little tape introduction since we put a new tape in. This is the second series of interviews, the second tape with Bill Hess, a veteran on Fort Hunt [00:35] of War World II. Again, this is National Parks Service Cultural Resource Specialist Brandon Bies as well as Matthew Virda and Sam Swersky. It's the afternoon of November 21st, 2006. And if you want to go ahead and

tell that story while it's on your mind, go right ahead.

INT: Surely ask Bill's wife.

INT: Chime in any time. Absolutely.

BH: Well, one day [01:00] it must have been in '44. It must have been '44. I think had been on leave just before then. We all had to file out and walk over to the fence near Fort Hunt [01:17] because a woman who lived across the street in one of those houses claimed that she had been raped by somebody from Fort Hunt [01:28].

INT: Wow.

BH: And so we had all had to line up and walk past it, and she was standing outside of a big house, and I don't think she picked out anybody at that time. And there wasn't much more after that, but that was one of the incidents that happened. Whether it really happened or not, I don't know. But anyway [02:00] --

INT: You said this was sometime in 1945?

BH: It must have been about '44, I guess. I know it was in the fall of the year.

INT: And so could you see houses along Fort Hunt [02:16] Road there?

BH: Yes. About a year or so ago when "The Post" had an article about someone who had visited the military cemetery near Fort Meade [02:29] where Werner Henke [02:31], the submarine commander was buried, who was shot trying to escape. Someone who lived there had something in the Letters to the Editor [02:49] that she could see the enclosure where the prisoners exercised. And at the time I was going to contact [03:00] her and say, "I don't see how that was possible because I think there was three other buildings in the way, and the enclosure was not directly near the fence," but I never did. And possibly she could. But yes, there were houses. There was a fire department, too. They had

dances on Saturday night, and some of the people from Fort Hunt [03:26] I think mostly the MPs [03:28], who were stationed went over. I never did.

INT: And the fire station was there?

BH: The fire station was there. Fort Hunt Road is probably a big highway now, but at that time it was a narrow, maybe two lanes, maybe wasn't even paved. I don't remember. It wasn't the main street.

INT: But you could actually see the houses, though across there. Did you get the sense that those people had some idea of what was going on there or they just thought it was a military post [04:00]?

BH: I really don't know. It's quite possible. The soldiers from there, I'm sure they were happy -- the women, when they had a dance, had somebody to dance with because everybody was in the army at that time. I'm sure somebody must have said something about prisoners while they were there, but said more I have no knowledge of. I never heard of any leaks or so, but I imagine that something probably had been dropped that there were prisoners in there.

INT: But from your recollection the actual compound and later compounds, the two buildings for prisoners, they were fairly screened. You couldn't really see them very well?

BH: Well, they were towards the center. They were outer buildings, and they were trees, too. And the second one was built [05:00] behind the gun -- behind the gun storage in the wooded area. That you couldn't see.

INT: So could you take a few minutes then and try to describe for us the two enclosures. I guess, first starting with the one that was the only one there when you were first there, if you can remember about where it was, and how big was, how many prisoners might have

been kept in it at any given time, and anything else you might remember of where the prisoners were kept.

BH: Well, I think was in one of the rooms when I -- I must have been in the interrogation room. I don't think interrogated in there. I did very little, as I told you, interrogating. And I know there were two beds I've seen in the publication. There were [06:00] two beds. I knew there was a table. I must have looked into there, but I had very little to do. I hardly ever went to that part of the building. That was on the right hand side of the building, and we made a left turn. There were no windows. The windows where we were were boarded up, so it was always dark in there, only artificial light. So most of the time there were a couple people in the room because we did want them to talk. And of course there were also -- they also took care of Nazis and anti-Nazis [06:48]. Now I don't know whether they -- I don't remember exactly what they did. On the one hand you wanted them to talk, and one the other hand you didn't want [07:00] them to ever fight and maybe hurt each other. And if you didn't hear anything, bust in, and make them wonder how we knew they were --

INT: Right.

BH: I understand that the prisoners, especially the Navy [07:20] people, knew that they were being listened to. I forget where I had read that. It may have been in the Escape Factory. One of the sailors wrote back in some kind of a code that the sailors had and that was apparently never discovered, wrote back that Fort Hunt [03:37] wherever it was called, near Washington, was what they called quvtschmuehle, squeezing -- no, quvtschmuehle [07:58], they called it. Whatever they called [08:00].

INT: Could you spell that? Do you know how to spell that?

BH: Q-U-V-T-S-C-H-M-U-E-H-L-E.

INT: Great.

BH: Yeah. In fact, I think I heard one of them say "do you know where you are?" The one asked "What is this, a quvtschmuehle?" And the other one said, "A big one." But the way they found out was that they saw that the perforated ceiling. One was lying on the bunk and says, "You know, it's a funny thing. It's clean around most -- dirty around most of them, but around the circle there it's clean." So they put the chair on the table and pulled down, and the microphone came out. And [09:00] they had the facility in a code that was apparently never discovered to get back to them: "if you go to an area near Washington be careful what you say because you're being listened to." And I already heard that I think when I was still there --

INT: While you were there.

BH: -- that they had known it.

INT: What do you remember, speaking of the microphones and the bugs, were they all in the same place in each room? Were all the bugs essentially in --

BH: I would imagine. I don't know. It was around where the light was where they had to open it, where they put the microphone up there.

INT: And do you know if there were other locations that were bugged or just the rooms? Were the interrogation rooms bugged as well?

BH: I don't [10:00] remember that. I don't remember that.

INT: Okay. Now in terms of where you were doing your monitoring, that was in the same building as the prisoners were they kept, just a different wing or a different side of it?

BH: There was one wing. There were rooms, and each room had one of these machines where

you put the record on and then earphones to listen.

INT: So there were headphones?

BH: Headphones, yeah, yeah, that you listened to. And sometimes you had to play it over and over again because the voices dropped. It was fairly strenuous because -- and most of it was, you know, just hard. You learned to lay the strokes, and you learned who had been having sex with women and how they did [11:00] it. And you learned dirty songs.

INT: Did you enter the compound the same way the prisoners did or did you have a separate entrance to get to the building?

BH: I don't remember that.

INT: Okay.

BH: I don't remember that.

INT: Sir, I'm a little confused. Were you doing transcriptions of recordings?

BH: I did that for a while and I did monitoring, where you would sit in a room, again with headphones, and you would listen to them to talk, and then if they come to a subject, one of them would say, "I have a [speaks German]. I have a colleague who's near 61 [unintelligible]." You punched -- you hit the button, and then they would talk. Maybe he had a [12:00] real good prostitute in that town, and she lived in such and such. You didn't have to record. But the Navy [12:10], of course, was very interested in -- and in a way the Navy had it easier because one of the main objects of interest was the submarines. So other ships -- there were other German ships, destroyers, the battleships after one foray early on was hidden because I think they didn't want to lose them and they didn't need them anyway except against the British ships. But the Tirpitz [12:53], the two big ones, the Tirpitz [12:55] and the Bismarck [12:58]. The Bismarck [12:59] was sunk,

and I think the Tirpitz [13:01] was hit too while it was being hidden someplace in a Norwegian fjord. But the submarines, that was the number one priority, and the Germans had bases in the Baltic and also along the French Coast were a lot of submarine bases.

INT: You mentioned about making the recordings. Were the transcriptions done in the same room as the monitoring was done or was there a separate location where you would take the records and then type them out?

BH: No, the monitoring was done in individual cubby holes.

INT: Okay.

BH: And the transcriptions where they were played, where the transcriptions were played -- no, the monitoring was done in a big common room.

INT: Okay.

BH: There were [14:00] desks, and I guess you had a drawer and a safe where you kept your things. And there you did the monitoring, and that was in one big room. And the transcriptions, they were done in a hallway. They were individual little rooms where you played them.

INT: And was that all in the same facility?

BH: The same facility.

INT: So again, this is the same building where the prisoners were kept, the other side of the building

BH: Yeah. They were completely away from the --

INT: And was this a wooden structure or was it cinderblock? Do you remember what it was made of? Was it above ground? Was it below ground?

BH: It was above ground. I think it was single story building. I would say it was a temporary

type structure. It may have had some shingle or whatever they used, but it wasn't as substantial [15:00] as I remember it. Now the other one that they set up in the woods there, I think it was concrete structure. It was a little different. You had -- I don't remember too much about it. I think the monitoring rooms were in there, but the transcriptions -- the monitoring was done, I think was done in one room. I don't think there was a facility like the other building. I'm a little vague on this, but the transcription rooms were in that building like in the other one. I think the monitoring may have been done in just one building, the A building [16:00].

INT: And so was this entire complex, this entire building then surrounded by barb wire fence? Did the prisoners had an area -- did they have an area where they could go outside and exercise?

BH: Yeah, they had -- the exercise area was outside. I think it was outside the compound. It may have been in the compound, but it had a double fence which you saw in some of the pictures with, I don't know, nine or ten feet in between, and there were guard towers.

INT: I assumed there were always -- were there guards? Did they have spotlights in the towers at night or anything like that?

BH: Could be, could be. I don't remember. Probably did. I don't know.

INT: Okay. How did you -- so for [17:00] you then to get to where you were going to be doing the monitoring, did you have to have an MP [17:06] or someone let you into the compound?

BH: Yeah. There was a [unintelligible] you have to --

INT: Did you have to show some sort of ID or did they just figure when you were in an American uniform you worked there, they knew you by face or something?

BH: I don't remember, but I don't recall having a special card.

INT: Was there anything else, again speaking about Compound A [17:31], the first one that was built --

BH: When you came into Fort Hunt [17:35] there was an MP [17:36] post. You couldn't just drive in there.

INT: Sure. Okay. In terms of Compound A, the first prisoner compound where you had the monitoring and then the transcribing, and the prisoners on one side, do you remember anything else inside that compound? Any other offices or other sections who had offices there [18:00] or was everything else outside of that compound?

BH: I think it was outside of the compound. I know there was one place where these guys, they -- this was a separate building. It looked very temporary. It was a one story building. There were several of these buildings.

INT: Okay.

BH: And then there was an officers' bunk and a noncommissioned officers' bunk, and then the supply sergeant. The laundry, I think they did it on post. I don't think they send it out to -- maybe. It wasn't very far. In this building where this picture was taken, there was a sort of [19:00] an auditorium. It was just a big room, and I think once a week or twice a week they showed movies for 15 cents. And you could volunteer to take prisoners, two prisoners at a time, people who had been helpful, you could take them to the movies and get in free.

INT: Were the movies in English or German?

BH: Oh, these were American movies, first or second run movies.

INT: Really?

BH: And they were [unintelligible], and if they wanted to go and if you volunteered. I did that I few times.

INT: Could you describe more, then, about that building, where you said that that's the building where that photograph was taken?

BH: I think so [20:00], yeah. It was a different building on post.

INT: And do you know what -- was it just a general purpose building? Do you recall? It wasn't the mess hall or anything?

BH: No, no. The mess hall was separate. It was on the other side. As you come into from the C over towards the right, the mess hall was --

INT: Over there to the right?

BH: Yeah.

INT: The mess hall was to the right? Okay. Okay. And what do you remember about the mess hall? Was it a standard army mess hall? Enlisted men eat with the officers or --

BH: No, no, the officers had their own -- they always had their own mess. I don't think they would have eaten at ours. The food most of the time was terrible. The station complement, I think I mentioned it to you once, they were National Guard [21:00] from Philadelphia. One time a new cook came and suddenly the food improved. And after a while it went downhill again, and we think he was told that "we don't serve delicacies here. Let them eat in town." And Saturday evening was almost impossible. We felt that Saturday evening they figured, "Well, if we just feed them bad, they'll eat in town, and we'll get out a little earlier."

[laughter]

But the food was, most of the time, was pretty bad. Now, of course, some of it couldn't

be helped. I don't know what it was, but at one time we served something, and I guess, maybe I was wrong, but I guess it must have been pork liver [22:00]. It was liver. You could smell it a block from the mess hall. I wouldn't even go near the mess hall, and they had that way off, and I'd think meat was rationed, and pork was relatively easy to get. And so it shouldn't have been bad, but whatever it was, I thought it wasn't pork liver, maybe it was something else, but it had a very strong, unpleasant smell.

INT: Let me ask you, this may seem like a silly question, but were there -- at 1142 [22:39], obviously, a lot of the people there, especially the interrogators and monitors, a lot of folks were of Jewish descent like yourself. Did they -- the mess hall didn't cater to that or anything, did it?

BH: I don't think -- I don't know if we had any of them who kept the dietary laws [23:00]. I don't recall anybody ever saying they had to have special food or they can't stay here because of it. I think most of them were not that religious. We weren't. We didn't keep - - my family, my parents, I think my grandparents still kept the dietary laws. In our house, we didn't.

INT: Did they have any post chapel or any place for religious services on post where if you wanted to go some sort of religious service you have to go into town or something?

BH: I don't really remember. I don't really remember. They must have had some facility there because a lot of the compound and MPs [24:00], I'm sure they would have. You have to make a facility, if you have a military facility, you have to have a facility for a religion. The only other way would have been that they had a bus that would take them to town, which was only, I guess, five to 10 minutes away from there.

INT: What about other buildings on post? You mentioned there was a PX.

BH: I think there must have been a PX. I'm very hazy on that, but there must have been a PX [24:41].

INT: Did they allow alcohol on post? Could you buy a beer or anything like that?

BH: I think you could -- oh, yeah, you could get -- during World War II for military facilities, they had what I think was called I think three point four beer, no alcohol in three point four [25:00] beer, and that was allowed. And that would be the only alcohol and that would be available for purchase. Yeah, there was a PX [25:11] now. I remember there was. I don't remember too much about it. Not a very extensive one.

INT: And also I'm just going around in my mind some of the other buildings and structures that were there. We know from the photos there's a swimming pool.

BH: Yes.

INT: And so --

BH: You have a picture, even.

INT: Right, right, the swimming pool. Do you recall who could use the pool or if there were certain hours for certain folks?

BH: I don't remember. They may have had some schedule or so. I know we went a number of times. I never saw more than a few people at a time using it. It was very nice on a hot day if you could walk to the swimming [26:00] pool. That was very nice.

INT: I realized as we were talking about the prisoner enclosures, and we kind of skipped over - - we talked a little bit about, but not very much about the second enclosure, the one that was near the gun battery. You said that one was built more towards the end of the war?

BH: I know in '44, I know when the invasion came in '44, it seems to me I was on my way to the monitoring building that they had got in place. So that would have been in '44.

INT: And so, again, was that one that -- was the monitoring building for the other compound, for B, was that part of where the prisoners were or was that separate?

BH: The monitoring room [27:00] I think for both buildings was in the A building. I think so. I may be wrong on that, but that was part of the A building. Now the prisoners were on this side and the monitoring area was on that side.

INT: Okay.

BH: And the prisoners didn't come in the same -- I'm sure they didn't come in the same door.

INT: And so, again, if that was the case then even the prisoners over in B, there just would have been underground lines or something over to A and that's how you would have monitored them.

BH: The A building was some distance away from the monitoring building. I don't think you could even see it. It was over a wooded hill where the monitoring station was, and the barracks for the prisoners was [28:00] a few hundred feet away from there.

INT: Do you have any sense from where the prisoners were -- did the prisoner rooms have windows or things? Do you know? I'm curious what they could see. Could they see the rest of the post? Did they ever leave the compounds? Obviously you took them to the movies every once in a while, but --

BH: I'm sure they -- I'm sure they had windows, but there wasn't very much to see. You would be looking towards the enclosure and maybe the exercise area and maybe the PX [28:43] could be seen or the mess hall. There wasn't anything interesting to be seen there.

INT: Okay. We got a two minute warning again before I flip this tape. Can you think [29:00] of anything else about the description of the fort's layout or any other special stories

about a particular buildings or --

INT: Can I ask the old gun batteries that were there, were they used for any purpose to your knowledge?

BH: No. You just saw the emplacements. Now I'm not sure whether the metal -- I think they were called mortars, were something that fired at a steep trajectory where you could hit the river from there. I'm not sure whether any of the guns were still there. It seems to me they did have the guns, the emplacement, the concrete aprons and so, and the bunker where the underground -- where the munitions were being stored. I think I may have been in there one time in this bunker. Yeah, I think [30:00] I was in there one time. I think the archives were in there. I think even during the war it seems to me they used to come periodically; I guess they had escorts come in. That was located there. And then in front of that was the parade ground. We used to have, occasionally, the three parades, and you saluted the flag and so on.

INT: And did you have those every day?

BH: No. I don't think we had them very often. I don't recall now, but we didn't have that very often.

INT: I'm going to go ahead and pause this.

[End of Tape 2A]

[Beginning of Tape 2B]

INT: Any other questions either from Matt or Sam about physical descriptions about things I might be forgetting about before we move on to something else? Is there anything else --

BH: There was nothing outstanding about the buildings. There were pretty standard.

INT: Could you just run through real quick your daily routine? You'd get up, go to the mess

hall, come back. What would your day consist of visiting the different buildings?

BH: Well, after breakfast, if you were on duty, you sat either in the monitoring cubby hole or you went to the monitoring section. And there were five or six or seven other people there, and somebody Sergeant Vogt [00:57] very oftentimes, Graber, Norman Graber, [01:00]. You've talked to him?

INT: Not only talk to him. I may be going to visit him in January.

BH: Well, he very often times said that this control console where they switched -- where he plugged you into a certain room. And I guess he kept track of who did what for how long and so on. He was sort of the, I don't know what they call them, but he was one of those who would have that duty of the control panel. And you'd work, and of course you could get up and go to the bathroom, and people were sleeping, just bullshitting and so on, you could talk to somebody else. But you'd always have to be ready to catch what was being said. And I think [02:00] probably from just listening day in, day out, probably not too terribly much would come out of that. It may have triggered questions they could be asked about or they could be talking. Occasionally they would talk about certain military things, and that's when you make your recording, which would then be transcribed.

INT: Do you know what happened to the information, to the notes that you were taking and the transcriptions? When you were done with it, did you hand that to someone? Do you know what happened?

BH: Whoever was in charge I probably would put it on his desk or put it in a folder. And if I listened to him for more than one day, I don't remember [03:00] exactly how, but that would be one -- the person who was responsible, he would then take charge of whatever you had done. And you did that in the morning, and you would break for lunch, and I

guess the POWs [03:18] were fed about the same time. I don't know whether there was an overlap that was covered while they were eating. Like I said, the food there was ooh. I don't remember that now, but very probably they had an overlap of -- so that you could cover this. And then they worked in the afternoon until five or whatever, and somebody would come and have to cover in the evening [04:00]. I don't remember too much. I don't remember how long, but what you think -- what they did is they let you monitor more than one room at a time, and you would switch to see if they talk.

INT: So just listening to a few seconds on each room?

BH: I don't remember too much about it. I know that you covered it during a considerable part of the day but not at night.

INT: And so did you get the sense that information that you were taking down from these room conversations, was that going in and being used to help with questioning in the interrogations or was the just going into some intelligence file and going to the Pentagon [04:51]?

BH: Well, it depends. It all depends what they were talking about. Somebody, the evaluation people, I think, would probably [05:00] have to look at that and decide what they wanted to do with it.

INT: And so do you remember with the prisoners, you mentioned earlier that they were some who had figured out that they were being monitored. Was that an isolated incident or do you remember there were other incidents where you suspected that prisoners might have figured out there were bugs in the room and were either saying sarcastic things or trying to give misinformation?

BH: I don't have any recollection about that.

INT: Okay. Did you -- in the position that you were in, did you get any sense how long -- what the average stay may have been for German prisoner, or did it vary depending on the time of war?

BH: Very much in the different locations sometimes. Guggenberger [05:54] was one of them who came twice. He was there when I first arrived for [06:00] two weeks maybe, and then after a while they brought him back. Now I don't remember if there was a particular -- there must have been a reason, but I don't remember what it was. And some of them were there for quite a while, but it was generally a short, relatively short stay.

INT: We'd also mentioned earlier about how there were U.S. Naval personnel there that were very interested in what was going on. Did they have their own monitoring or did the Army [06:33] provide all the monitoring and they just interrogated?

BH: We did. The monitoring was done by us, and they did the interrogation, the Navy. Of course the Navy [06:45], in a way, had it a little easier because there were only a limited number of submarines. What else would they be responsible for? Well, any other ship or any other harbor installation [07:00] would be described. And they would figure out where the harbors were. Then where a lot of the submarines were. This gave them an edge to interrogate, and knew that particular boat comes from such and such a place and had such and such experiences. So it made it a little bit easier. And anything that the Navy, that these Naval people could say would be of great interest. I know there were two things, which we found out. I think we were the ones. And when I say we, the monitors and the people in Fort Hunt [07:45]. One of them was the acoustic torpedo. This was very important. When they first [08:00] came out with it, acoustic torpedoes, they sent a submarine to fire one of these things to see how it worked, and it went out and

then turned around and started chasing the submarine. That was important to us. You have to do something to keep them from homing in on their own ships. And the other things was the snorkel. The first snorkel [08:28] the Germans put on their boat didn't allow for wave action, I guess. So it didn't have good automatic closure, and when the ship hit a wave, it came into there, in no time it sucked all the air out of the inside of the submarine. And so they had to come up with a closure. I think that was two things I know we learned [09:00] from them now. There was another thing they were very interested in general, but especially the Navy [09:08], the electronic gear, the [speaks German], the radars.

INT: Okay.

BH: There was at a time a race for the highest frequency. If you had higher frequency than the other you could get more feedback on things, hear more things. I'm not an electronics man, but I know that's one of the big things, the radar, the sensing equipment, and also the anti-radar equipment. I know the Germans, one of the things we were very interested in, the Germans were [10:00] building, trying to build aircraft and especially boats that would absorb the radar. And I think one of the things they came up with some sort of rubber like hull, which I think worked pretty well, except that it adds so much weight that it was not feasible. It didn't work. But those were some of the things that we were very hot to get. And, of course, the certain German secret weapons, the guided missiles. We knew whenever somebody used the word Peenemunde [10:50], which is where the rockets were first built. We were told to watch particularly [11:00] if they ever mentioned Peenemunde or V-2 [11:04] or anything like that, make sure to catch what they say. And come back to this [speaks German]. At the time, I think they were zoning

in not on [speaks German] but on [speaks German], which was near where the [speaks German] castle is located. So that's where they were doing experiments with nuclear material.

INT: So, again, a lot of this information you're talking about, did you get the sense that it came out of interrogations or room monitoring or a little bit of both?

BH: I really don't know. I really don't know.

INT: Okay. We've been on this subject of the Navy for a little bit there, and you said the Navy [11:56] men, they were just interrogating. They weren't doing the room monitoring or [12:00] anything?

BH: No, that was our job. They come out, they didn't stay at --

INT: That was going to my next question.

BH: That's why we were so near Washington so if anything comes up you can readily get it there. The Navy [12:18], they exploited the prisoners first. They had them first. They were meant to be interrogated by the Navy, and then they were turned over to the Army [12:29] if we wanted to ask them additional things, then our people could interrogate them.

INT: But that was obviously just for German Navy prisoners. If it was a Luftwaffe prisoner or something like that, would our Navy still ask them questions or --

BH: No.

INT: Okay. So then --

BH: They were only interested in --

INT: The U-boat.

BH: If it was Luftwaffe [12:53], they'd be our -- well, there was no air force at the time. It

was Army Air Corps [13:01].

INT: Oh, sure. Sure.

BH: There was no separate air force interrogators.

INT: Could you get any sense at any given time how many U.S. Navy [13:13] personnel might have been coming and going through Fort Hunt [13:16]? Was there just a small number of --

BH: There was a small number, a relatively small number.

INT: Do you know if there were officers or enlisted men?

BH: They were mostly officers. There were a few enlisted men.

INT: Do you have any -- do you recall any names of any of the naval interrogators or naval officers who were coming and going?

BH: I can't remember any of their names, no.

INT: Okay. So did you associate with them much or just kind of informally, you didn't --

BH: We hardly ever saw them. They came in and interrogated, and we were on the outside of the whole thing. We saw them [14:00]. We knew who they were, of course. I don't think there was more than -- oh, just half -- [water pouring] thank you. Thank you, that's enough.

INT: And so were the interrogation rooms, they were not -- the interrogations weren't done in the prisoners' cells. They were separate rooms strictly for interrogation?

BH: I believe so. Well, if there were two people in the room, you wouldn't have somebody listening in on it.

INT: From what you recall, although I know you probably didn't do interrogations, was it typically one on one or would they send in two interrogators or three interrogators?

BH: Usually one. I don't know whether they ever had more than one.

INT: Do any particular German prisoners [15:00] stand out in your mind? Any famous characters or any particular -- you already mentioned a number of technologies that we learned about, but any particular prisoners really stick out in your mind?

BH: Well, only those who had cooperated with us. There was one of them who was allowed the run of the town, and this was after the war was over, I think, who had fought in the Russian front and was then transferred to the West. He worked with us. He was allowed to go into town. In fact, after we were married, Shirley and I were married, I invited him for dinner one time.

INT: Really?

BH: Yeah.

INT: And [16:00] do you recall his name or would you rather not talk about that?

BH: I would rather not talk about it, but I don't remember his name.

[laughter]

INT: Okay. And so do you recall, and again, any other prisoners? You mentioned Werner Henke [16:17]. He had been shot. Had that happened while you were there or was that before you were there?

BH: It was happened, and I remember the day it was. It was Saturday evening, and I had duty in the B building, in the B monitoring room, and I had just come back from supper. I think it was Kaye [phonetic] who said to me, "There's a commotion here. Somebody was shot." "Oh, what happened?" Well, when it came out a commando had climbed over one fence, and I think there was some discrepancies. Lately, I think when this [17:00] article was in the paper when this woman found this tombstone with his name and started

making inquiries, where exactly was he? And I think he had managed to climb one fence, and he was in the area in between. And the question came up, where did he die? Did he die there or on the way to the hospital or in the hospital? And this is something I think -- as I recollect, it never been able to completely establish because it had some significance for something or other. I only recently, after we started getting together on this, heard that he was wanted by the British as a possible war criminal. That I hadn't heard [18:00] before. I hadn't heard before. I guess his crew had shot shipwrecked sailors.

INT: Yeah, I think that was either -- I'm not sure if that has been confirmed or not if they did that, but that is -- our understanding is one of the reasons why he tried to either escape or commit suicide was because he thought he was going to be --

BH: I read it in here. I was surprised to know that he was -- I didn't know much about him at all. He was a rather wild captain. He was said there to be a [speaks German] and I was under the impression that he was a [speaks German], but I may be wrong in that. Some of the commanders had rather lower ranks compared to ours. [speaks German] is what we had as lieutenants, and they were [19:00] typically they were submarine commanders. Submarines, at that time, were much smaller. I think the typical German submarine had 750 tons compared to, what is it, 5,000 some for our military?

INT: I know the typical crew, though, at the times were about 50 or so people, 50 or so --

BH: I don't remember how many. Did you ever see the movie "Das Boot?"

INT: I have seen it.

BH: It showed sort of the interior of it, and it must have been very cramped.

INT: So with Werner Henke [19:41], do you recall had you monitored any of his room

conversations or any of that?

BH: That I don't remember.

INT: Okay. Do you recall any other incidents like that, though? Any other escape attempts?

BH: I don't think there were any others, not that I know of [20:00]. I'm sure I would remember that. But this escape attempt, Guggenberger [20:11], he might have been -- no, I think he was a little too smart to try it here in the Washington area, but he tried it from - - what's the name of that campus? It's part of the city of Phoenix now.

INT: Oh, right.

BH: What's the name?

INT: From the [unintelligible]? Yeah, I can't remember the name.

BH: Anyway, they actually dug a long tunnel and brought the dirt out while they were playing volleyball, and spread it so no one saw it. How they did this, a pocketful at a time, I guess, dug this long tunnel, but he [21:00] miscalculated. He thought it was not far to Mexico [21:03] when they ran out of food and water after wandering around in the desert, and they gave up. But I think he was the leader of that. He was a high ranking officer.

INT: Do you know of any other escape attempts while you --

BH: I'm sure there are none of them. I would have heard about.

INT: This is jumping around a little bit, but we talked a bit about you. When you were at Fort Hunt [21:39], your rank was a corporal.

BH: I was a corporal. I was promoted twice, but I was discharged as a staff sergeant.

INT: Okay. And both promotions took place while you were at 1142 [21:51]?

BH: Yes.

INT: Do you remember who your commanding officer was or did you have multiple

commanding officers or did you report to a sergeant [22:00]?

BH: Well, I don't remember Captain Holt [22:04] [phonetic] was very short but he was -- and I don't know who -- there wasn't very great structure. Colonel Walker [22:15] was the camp commander. And sometime in '44 or so he was replaced by a Colonel Seamus Bliss [22:25] [phonetic]. He was there for a relatively short time, and Walker [22:31] came back again, I think, after that. And the guy who was responsible for us in the doing work was Captain, I think, Adolf Wolff [22:41]. He was a -- I think when he came in he was a first lieutenant, and he was a captain, and he was promoted to a major before he left. Once when I was working as a civilian for the Corps of Engineers [22:59], I saw his name on an [23:00] interrogation report from Oberursel [23:04] from the Army [23:06] interrogation center in Germany. At that time I guess he was a lieutenant colonel maybe. He signed "Adolf A. Wolff" [23:10], was his name.

INT: And so he was who you reported to? He was in charge of all monitoring?

BH: Yeah, he was in charge of the working end of it.

INT: Okay. So monitoring and interrogating or just the monitoring?

BH: Well, we didn't do that much interrogating. We were -- sometimes once or twice I was asked to interrogate somebody. And a couple of times somebody was from Stuttgart [23:50], or from an area I knew. I said, "We'd like to go in and I can ask him about local conditions," and they told me to go ahead [24:00] and do it, but other than that that wasn't my job. Now later on there was a Lieutenant Calmus [24:08] [phonetic], who took Wolff's [24:11]. His name in your --

INT: Okay.

BH: He wasn't there very long.

INT: And in terms of the interrogations, were they mostly done by the officers or were there other enlisted men? Not yourself, but other enlisted men?

BH: The officers.

INT: Okay.

BH: It was the officers.

INT: And you said the couple of times you were doing interrogations that was only in that special situation where it was someone from you --

BH: I was being -- I was asked -- I can only remember two occasions that they send me in. They were sort of strange cases. One guy, he was in the German Army. He was [25:00] part English and part something else, and I remember he lived in the Georgian Soviet Republic [25:13], and I don't remember, and it was very weird. His name, he had a double name, and I think his mother was English or something. It was a very strange story, and I guess they sent me in. They had different people interrogate him and see if whether he would say the same things to everybody or whether there were different stories. I don't even remember his name, but at the time I had never talked to anybody. I knew where Georgia [25:53] was because one of my hobbies was when I was kid in Germany [26:00], cigarettes had premiums in them, which was usually pictures, which you could collect, and then you could buy an album. And my father one time had a customer who smoked a certain cigarette, and that premium was heraldry, coats of arms of cities and countries. So I still have the collection. I was going to find out from Germany whether that's an antique. There were 1,000 of these coats of arms and you pasted them into an album, and there was no description. For Germany it was states and cities, and then the rest of the world was counties and so on. And one of them was the

Georgian Soviet Republic [27:00], and that's how I knew about such a place. He was telling me about it. It was fascinating. And the other one was one who became a friend of Rudy Pins [27:17], and he may have talked you about Hilger [27:21].

INT: [affirmative] Gustav Hilger.

BH: I think when he was brought and they asked me to interrogate him.

INT: Really?

BH: His name was given as General, and so when I questioned him, he said, "No, no, I'm not a general. I'm a foreign service person. They give me for purposes of transporting me here the equivalent rank of a general for purpose" --

INT: For transporting.

BH: I never heard of this thing. Later one when I worked for the government I found out that my [28:00] GS rating had a -- I don't know whether you knew that or not --

INT: The equivalent rating? I know they do. I had no idea. Mine's probably a buck private.

[laughter]

BH: If you're, let's say, a GS-11, that's equivalent I think to captain.

INT: Really?

BH: A colonel is a 15. A general is 16 and up. When I left I was a 14, and that's an equivalent to a commander in the Navy [28:35] or lieutenant colonel. So that's for ranking. They send you on a trip, the military transport, your rank and you get priority if there's bumping to be done.

INT: [affirmative] Well, that's interesting.

BH: So this Hilger [28:58], they gave him the equivalent rank of [29:00] general. That's about all I remember about him.

INT: Okay. Unfortunately, we've got about a minute and half left of tape, and I got all sorts of other questions I'd like to ask you about, a little bit about Hilger and some of the other folks.

BH: I don't remember too much about him. I just talked to him at the time. But monitoring, an interesting one was Oshima [29:27]. He was the Japanese Ambassador to Germany, who was very cagey. You never got anything out of him except "It's very difficult to say what happened there." We didn't get much out of him.

INT: Well, Matt or Sam, do either of you have a 30 second question or anything that you're dying to ask?

INT: More than 30 seconds [30:00].

INT: Okay.

INT: Just to clarify one thing, in your mind, the difference as far as people who were actually interrogating prisoners and those who were just either monitoring or doing transcriptions, you mentioned it seemed like the officers were mainly doing the interrogation?

BH: Yes.

INT: Okay, and they maybe, perhaps, received a different level of training as far as being able to one on one interrogate prisoners?

BH: Well, that may be. I really don't know. I really don't know. Some of the interrogators -- some of the monitors -- what's his name? A friend who died. Russian.

INT: Alexander Dallin.

BH: Dallin [30:45]. Yeah. Dallin was maybe 21, 22, highly intelligent and very well educated. And furthermore, his father was a Menshevik [30:59] politician, I think, who had left Russia [31:00] when the Bolsheviks [31:01], you know, gave up on the

Mensheviks [31:04], and Dallin, later on he worked for Stanford, and for I think the Hudson Institute in New York [31:12] with all this high powered -- these people would be -- I don't remember whether they did any or much interrogating at the time, but I guess they felt that since a lot of us were foreign born that -- I don't really know. I can't say with certainty. I would have to guess at it.

INT: Sure. All right, well, with that we'll go ahead and call it quits. We've got about 15 seconds left. That worked out perfectly. So that's the end of this tape.

(End of Tape 2B)

(Beginning of Tape 3A)

INT: Today is March 9, 2007. It is -- this is an interview of part of the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. We're here at the home of Bill Hess, a veteran of Fort Hunt. So this is National Park Service cultural research specialist Brandon Bies as well as Vince Santucci from the National Parks Service and we're also joined by Colonel Steve Kleinman of the U.S. Air Force; he's going to be here speaking with Bill. So with that we'll go ahead and get started and, Bill, we spoke a good bit the last time at a great level of detail about the physical structures that were there --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- at Fort Hunt and whatnot and you would like to recap a little bit about that, but then we've got some more specific questions --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- to talk about and again, I guess to summarize from before: your responsibility at 1142 [00:54] was primarily room-monitoring, correct?

BH: Room monitor, yes, yes.

INT: Okay, and [01:00] with that you were there for approximately how long?

BH: I was there from September of '43 until late December or early January '46 --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- and I came back in April as a civilian when they were more or less cleaning out.

INT: Great.

BH: There were no more prisoners after that time of course.

INT: Great, and then that's definitely something I would like to talk about --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- as we go through, towards later on this afternoon and so you were primarily -- you described last time a lot about the details of the monitoring that you were doing and we'll probably get into that a little bit more because Colonel Kleinman might have some additional questions about some of that, but in terms of interrogating prisoners, how often did you actually yourself question prisoners?

BH: I really wouldn't know; it was not very often.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: I remember two or three specific times that I was asked and maybe once or twice where I volunteered [02:00] to talk to somebody because I thought I might be able to get something that was not the reason for his being there, but on which he might have knowledge --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- that might be useful.

INT: [affirmative] And those folks that you were asked to speak with, were you just told "Go and speak with this individual," or were you given a list of information or questions they

wanted you to get for them?

BH: I don't think there was -- they might have given me verbal instructions, you know, about what he was there for, but no, no detailed questionnaires, not that I can remember.

INT: [affirmative] Last time I think you might have mentioned that sometimes, if you were ever asked to speak with someone, that they were -- they might have been somebody who was from the same area of Germany?

BH: Yeah, that could have been that I said. You know, there are some factories that I know; maybe we can find out whether there was any damage [03:00] when --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- they were bombed.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Incidentally, when I was working at the Army Map Service [03:10] we were doing -- I was talking to the colonel -- they were doing MIS [03:15] studies and one of the subjects was urban areas because of space development, whether there were facilities for storage and medical facilities and so on and there was a big series of [unintelligible] like photos taken in 1947 of various places including Stuttgart [03:44] and there was a great big one. They were -- they were at the time classified, restricted, and it was declassified of course and I took it home and it shows where we were living [04:00] and other photos, I don't have those. While it shows where I was living, our house was gutted --

INT: Oh, really?

BH: -- and we were living not too terribly far from one of the main plants of Robert Bosch [04:15], you know, the electronics --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- firm that made automobiles and of course they're still in existence and I know [speaking German] was one of the main plants and I would imagine that that was probably one of the targets at the time, so I would, you know, question them and say "Well, was that plant hit?" and to what extent.

INT: [affirmative] So just out of curiosity since you brought it up: you said you saw where your house had been in one of these photos.

BH: Oh, yeah, yeah. If you want to see it I have that with me.

INT: [laughs] That'd be phenomenal.

BH: Right.

INT: And so are -- would you assume that the house that you grew up in then in Germany had been struck by bombs [05:00] then, during the bombing then?

BH: Oh, yeah. Oh yes, yes, the houses -- most of the houses in that old block were very badly damaged.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And the first time I was back in Germany on business for the Army Map Service [05:16], I went past the house. By that time there were only the foundations and the last time I was there, there were new buildings, completely different.

INT: Oh, really?

BH: Now, yeah.

INT: Wow, wow.

INT: Did you speak to them in German then?

BH: The prisoners?

INT: Yes.

BH: Oh, sure.

INT: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, yeah, most of them didn't know any English.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: That's the main reason why we were picked, you know, because A, we spoke the language fluently and completely and some of the people we had there were rather young. One name you may recognize was [laughs] [06:00] -- think of his name, I can -- oh, Alexander Dallin [06:06].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: You may -- you may have seen the name because I think for a while he taught in California.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: At Stanford [06:16], I think. His father was a prominent Menshevik [06:20], you know, the arch-enemies of the Bolsheviks [06:25] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and he had to leave Russia when Stalin [06:29] came in because they became the main enemies and he came to this country and he wrote a number of books on the Soviet Union [06:38] and Alex was at the time maybe 21 or so, very bright and he's written books now, too, you know, at a -- he died very recently --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- as I understand. You know, so we did have some people who were not only good speakers, but also [07:00] had some background that was useful.

INT: [affirmative] Did folks like Dallin [07:08] and others -- he spoke Russian?

BH: Oh, yeah.

INT: And did he speak German as well?

BH: Oh, yeah.

INT: Okay.

BH: I think he was born in Berlin [07:16], if I'm not --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- mistaken, because a lot of the people got out while it was still good and many of them went first to Germany and then later on they came to the United States.

INT: And we were -- you were talking just now about -- Colonel Kleinman asked about it, about if the conversations were in German or not. Were there ever instances where an American would come in and question someone and that American did not speak German? Would they question in English and there might be translator there or was all the questioning done directly in German?

BH: As far as I know, everybody who was there --

INT: Officers and enlisted men?

BH: -- as far as I remember they all spoke German more or less. Now [08:00] we had one guy who was a captain, who was there because he had a prominent -- and I won't mention names -- I do remember who did it, but anyway they got him a job and he spoke some German. There was a very funny episode, you know, where he was questioning a German prisoner about something -- do you speak German?

INT: [speaks German]

BH: Well, anyway, he asked him where he did it and the guy answered him in a montage factory; [speaks German] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- so he did M-O-N-T-A-G-E and he says "Ah, montage. They only work on Mondays."

[laughter]

INT: That was good.

BH: Yeah, and so we had episodes --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- you know? We had [09:00] one young American guy too who was questioning somebody once and I don't remember what it was about, where his family lives or so -- or this prisoner's family, who said Poughkeepsie [09:16], you know? "I'd never heard of Poughkeepsie before but the German prisoner knew where it was at."

[laughter]

Yeah, so we had some incidents, but generally the people who were there spoke it well and had some, you know, degree of education, too.

INT: Would you -- did you get a sense -- speaking of education, were most of the officers -- we spoke before; I believe you relayed that in terms of the interrogating you believe it was the officers who were doing most of the actual --

BH: Oh, yes, yes. I would say probably at least 90 percent --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and we had one [10:00] case where we had a prisoner -- this is World War II stuff; there was a division, the 999th infantry division [10:17] I think it was, that was made of concentration camp prisoners who had been at Heuberg [10:27]; I don't know whether you're familiar with that. After World War II there was a demilitarized zone --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- where no German military personnel could come within 50 kilometers of their land and this was --

INT: After World War I, or?

BH: After World War I, yeah.

INT: Okay, got you.

BH: After the treaty of -- did I say World War II?

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Well, I meant World War I of course and Heuberg [10:51] became a sort of a youth camp and I was up there and we lived like we were in the Army, you know, dormitories [11:00] with straw tick sacks and we had the hall -- there were K.P. -- you had the hall, had food in the big buckets through the barracks and so on, no running water and so on and that became a concentration camp --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- when the Nazis [11:16] came in and later I guess it became -- maybe the Army -- I don't know if it's still there, but these people were around the Heuberg [11:25] and they were told if they volunteered they could be freed from --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- being in the camp and a lot of people did and there were a lot of them who were Marxists [11:39], maybe not Marxists, but Freemasons [11:45], homosexuals, some of them were petty criminals and so on. They volunteered and they sent them to North Africa [11:53] I think in April, just at the beginning of the end of the fighting in North Africa [12:00] and they were deployed and a lot of them immediately came over to the Americans and they were really the first big bunch of people who were willing to talk.

There was one guy who -- very highly educated and I don't know what his political -- he was an opponent of the whole thing. They used him -- they gave him an American uniform and they used him to interrogate prisoners --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and he eventually was repatriated and we never heard of him and I wouldn't mention his name because if he or anybody, his family is still alive, you know -- might do him harm, so I wouldn't -- I wouldn't give his name.

INT: And so this -- and this was at 1142 [12:54]?

BH: That was at 1142.

INT: So the --

BH: There weren't too many of them, but a lot of the prisoners, you know, were anti-Nazis [13:00]. We usually questioned them, you know, so that they knew -- so they have CFO categories at the end: pro-Nazi, anti-Nazi, neutral leaning Nazi, neutral leaning anti-Nazi and so on --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and there was of course important that they were sent to a camp that was anti-Nazi [13:30] and one time they made a mistake and you probably know about that case, where they put somebody who was an anti-Nazi in a Nazi camp and they held a kangaroo court and they killed him.

INT: [affirmative]

INT: Did you know about that first -- at the specific incident, did you know about that when you were at 1142 [13:50]?

BH: I think I might have heard about that. I think I might have heard about that.

INT: [affirmative]

INT: And so were these folks that were used for this purpose [14:00] -- did you refer to them at the time as "stoolpigeons [14:02]?"

BH: Yeah, we knew who they were.

INT: Okay, but they were commonly referred to as "stoolpigeons," that's the term --

BH: Oh, yeah.

INT: -- that was used.

BH: Yeah, yeah, mainly what they would do is they would put them into the room with someone else and of course we monitored what the conversation was. From my own experience, I don't think it was too successful; now I wouldn't be -- you know, I wouldn't say that with certainty, but a lot of them seemed to know. You read this book, I'm sure, "The Escape Factory" [14:38].

INT: Yes.

BH: That the Navy people -- the Navy [14:42] prisoners had a code that they discovered the funny holes around the lamp and one of them put a chair on the table and went up and pulled and comes the microphone, falls down.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So they knew -- they knew [15:00] about it, that it got around, but that was the Navy [15:06] people of course; I don't know to what extent they would notify others because, you know, you protect your turf and I think that's good anywhere, so I don't know whether it was generally known --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- but some of them were very cautious about what they would say.

INT: But before we leave the subject of stoolpigeons [15:33], did you have any real sense of how many Germans were convinced to work for the Americans or on the behalf of the Americans, whether it was as a stoolpigeon or even assisting with looking at maps or documents?

BH: No, I wouldn't have any idea about that. I know that progressively as the war went against them, it became [16:00] a little bit easier to get information, but even the -- even in '44, I remember one interrogation: somebody was asked, "Well, do you think you can still win the war?" and he said yes. "Why do you believe that?" "Because we have the way" --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- the answer, but I mean I wouldn't say that was typical, that was just one incident that I remember --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- at that time.

INT: Who handled the stoolpigeons [16:36]? Was it the monitoring people or the interrogators?

BH: No, it -- well, the monitoring people were all enlisted.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: The interrogators -- although we did sometimes, but it was mostly, overwhelmingly the interrogating officers --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- who did that.

INT: They would select or they would recruit the person to be the stoolpigeon [17:00] and

work with them and teach them what they should do?

BH: No, I don't think it worked that way; I think it was an ad-hoc sort of thing.

INT: Okay, and did you ever have meetings for instance with the interrogator and a stoolpigeon prior to the stoolpigeon going into --

BH: I never did, no.

INT: [unintelligible]

BH: I never did. In fact I never -- I don't recall, maybe at the end there was one guy -- forget what rank he had, whether he was an officer -- who became very friendly, you know? He was even at the end of the war allowed to go into town. He had been on the Russian front and had been transferred to the west and first, you never knew, a lot of times, you know, once they were prisoners a lot of them probably figured, well, if we tell [18:00] them we were fighting the Americans, that we would take it out on them, so they tended to say maybe "Well, I was really only fighting the Polish invasion."

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So there was some degree of looking out for yourself, you know, rather being totally upfront, but this guy was very useful and he was allowed to go -- now, this was in -- after the war in Europe was already over and we -- my wife Shirley [18:40] [phonetic] and I got married in October of 1945 --

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: -- and we lived in Alexandria [18:44] and I remember one time I invited him to our house for supper and he came on his own and went back on his own.

INT: Wow, and so -- and this was an actual prisoner per se?

BH: Yeah.

INT: Wow.

BH: Yeah [19:00] [unintelligible] --

INT: So you touched upon it, but were the stoolpigeons [19:03] treated differently? Were they given other privileges? Was there any reward?

BH: I don't know specifics about it. We did -- at the time in Fort Hunt [19:15] they were showing movies, you know, in one of the buildings there and those people who cooperated were allowed to go to the movies and we could volunteer to take them and I did a few times, for one or two people who would be allowed to go with me and see the movie, but that was on Post.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: That wasn't off the Post and I guess they probably appreciated the chance of seeing an American movie.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: That's about the only thing that I was aware of. Possibly people [20:00] who were really valuable, who were maybe officers, might have gotten more than that, but I mean there was a war -- there was a war going on at the time and they were after all, you know, prisoners, so --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and this was at the time of the secret installation, so they had to be cautious and most did.

INT: [affirmative]

INT: It's just -- it's fascinating to me that a prisoner was able to just -- free and eat; he was unescorted and everything to go to your --

BH: Well, the war was over at that time.

INT: [affirmative] Okay.

BH: I mean the war with Germany and I guess they probably must have made sure, you know, that he wouldn't cause any embarrassment.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: The location of the camp, right here in Washington --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and the fact that it was not a registered [21:00] camp that the Red Cross [21:01] could come in required that we do nothing that would attract attention and I told you this one story, with the interrogation where they had a navy [21:15] man and they took him into the underground storage area --

INT: Right.

BH: -- there and they set up a fan in another room and they interrogated him and he didn't want to talk and the guy who interrogated him pretended to be a Russian liaison officer or something and he spoke in a Russian accent and he called the other guy, "Evon, the gas," you know, and the guy turns on the fan and sprays some [unintelligible] which was an insecticide, you know, which had a strong smell and you shouldn't really breathe it, but it was -- at that time, you know, it was very widely [22:00] used if you had mosquitoes and this guy got scared and he was told later on to lay off doing that sort of thing because we were right here in the Washington area and you don't want to do anything that will attract attention that we're doing something illegal. So that's about the only possibly questionable thing that -- I mean rough stuff --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- there never was any of that because at that time, I was -- have you seen the movie "The Ritchie Boys" [22:40]?

INT: I just saw part of it last night.

BH: Oh, you did?

INT: Yes.

INT: We lent him our copy of it last night and --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- he's already gone ahead and ordered his own copy.

BH: Yeah. Well, I am a graduate of Camp Ritchie [22:52].

INT: Of Camp Ritchie, are you, really?

BH: And we were -- had extensive, I don't know how much, lectures [23:00] on kill or be killed, you know --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and of course you were taught how to do this when you're in enemy action, but we also had several hours at least on the Geneva Convention [23:16] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and that was always hammered very hard, that we go by the Geneva Conventions --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and I guess anyone who did interrogating was -- I don't remember whether we had any indoctrination in Fort Hunt [23:37] or not, but from my own training I knew that the Geneva Convention [23:43] would be scrupulously applied, no rough stuff.

INT: [affirmative] And so do you feel that most folks at 1142 [23:51] did take that seriously?

BH: I would think so, I would think so. I mean if you -- you knew what you were [24:00]

doing, you know, wasn't your own thing --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and you could -- I'm not aware of any case that -- while I was there, I was not aware of anybody ever having done something that was out of line, no. Whether it was or not -- if it was, it certainly wasn't pervasive --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- but I personally am not aware of anything being done that would violate the Geneva Convention [24:31].

INT: [affirmative]

INT: That's a good question.

INT: Where -- this incident, it was in one of the gun batteries you described. It was -- it would -- through your recollection, is that a one-time thing or did it happen --

BH: As far as I know, that's the only one --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- I have ever heard of.

INT: Were you present when that happened or did you just hear?

BH: Oh, no, no.

INT: Okay.

BH: I wasn't present; I heard about it because we were --

[laughter]

-- we thought, of course, it was funny.

[laughter]

INT: [affirmative]

BH: I did anyhow, but [25:00] they said, "Cut that out."

INT: [affirmative]

INT: Did you get -- were there other times where the Russian factor per se was used as intimidation?

BH: Possibly yes. We had a camp newspaper that was put out. What was it called? The P.O. Boxer [25:17], it was; we had a contest, what should we name it.

INT: Really?

BH: It came out, I don't know, maybe every other week, maybe once a month and it was just camp news and every once in a while they would put a little article in there. It would go something like -- I don't think it was classified much, I don't think they classified that. "The M.S. Vladivostok took off from Boston Harbor [25:49] today and included a group of German prisoners on their way to the Soviet Union [25:56]." That -- apparently it was not [26:00] considered to be a kind of -- you know, a compulsive sort of a thing. It was I guess you would call it psychological warfare.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But that's as far as it went.

INT: Was a copy of that newspaper -- was that given to the prisoners?

BH: I think so.

INT: So a prisoner might read in that --

BH: It might have been slanted so -- you know, to make them believe that they were not doing so well and that it would be to their advantage not to -- I don't remember - it was mostly chatter you know --

INT: Sure.

BH: -- from camp and the only thing that, in my mind, that periodical, they would do something like that, whether -- there was probably somebody who monitored how effective that was, but you know, about that I don't remember.

INT: You don't have any copies of the [27:00] P.O. Boxer?

BH: No, no, I didn't keep any copies on hand.

INT: But it was -- you said it was about like a monthly newspaper or so that was put out?

BH: Whether it was monthly or semi-monthly --

INT: [affirmative] Sure.

BH: -- I don't know.

INT: Okay. That's fascinating.

BH: Yeah. I would like to mention one thing that has nothing to do with Fort Hunt [27:25] but when I worked at the Army Map Service [27:29]. So I don't know, I had the feeling that you were sort of interested in lessons learned.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Shortly after I got there in early 1947 -- this was the Army Map Service, but we were not in the mapping end, we were the, at that time, engineer intelligence branch [27:54] I think of the mapping and -- map intelligence branch at the time. We were technical soldiers [28:00], but I don't remember -- but they handed us a thick book titled "Final Report of the Engineer European Theater of Operations" [28:17]. It was a thick book and at first, you know, I thought who needs that? It was a lot of logistic stuff in there and for a long time I had it in my desk and I never went there and one day I did and I found there were some interesting things in there and one of the lessons learned in there, which still hasn't been learned, is that at the beginning of World War II the British did not collect

any intelligence on France because they were allies and if they needed anything --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- they could always go to the French and they would give it to them. Their only problem is, after four weeks of war the French were totally out of the picture and all [29:00] the information was denied. So what they had to do -- and I remember what they did, I even have one piece of evidence on that -- they were asking for any photographs, picture postcards or articles also which dealt with the occupied areas, especially if they had pictures of railway bridges or construction or beaches and so on and one of the things they got was like our triple-A road address, you know, it was the AGIC [29:43], the German equivalent of it and then they found that the former owner, some refugee from Chicago, had his name in there. They donated it and the Army didn't have serviceable -- used it and then after the war, when newer maps were available, they made it surplus [30:00] and I took it. I still have it; I'm still using it because --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- it's got good road information in it and also the rail lines, but it's crumbling now; it's 70 years old --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and it wasn't supposed to --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- but anyway, most of the intelligence we had at the Map Service [30:20] on technical things was British, ISIS [30:29] or STD, Intelligence Service Information Systems or whatever and a lot of their information is what we used and then of course we also used a lot of captured German material to do maps, you know? We used one through 100,000

map sheets; the Germans had actually started that and each 100,000 map sheet -- and we didn't have a full set of them at the Map Service [31:00] -- they had the highways, they had the railways, they had certain important bridges located and description including the chambering for demolition, the lengths, you know, the under-bridge clearance if you wanted to use it for waterways, the structural material, the bearing capacity and all that on there and at the beginning of World War II and this is funny, I didn't know that for a long time and I don't think it's too well-known: the WPA [31:34] of Roosevelt's [31:37] New Deal [31:38] Institution, to make use of unemployed people to do -- they sat with a lot of time, a lot of make work things like leaning on shovels, you know --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- but anyways, repave streets and so on and they used -- they used the [32:00] library in New York [32:02] to do work on agricultural things and when the war broke out they thought, "Hey, we can use these people to do the same thing on structures and highways and so," and so --

[End of Tape 3A]

[Beginning of Tape 3B]

BH: -- and they were used and the British material. Now to come back to what I was saying --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- the lessons learned was don't count on using Allied material. When war breaks out, make sure that you have access and you have it yourself.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Since that time this is the sort of saying that has a short life. People forget it. I was struck in 1982 or so when the Argentineans attacked the Falkland Islands [00:39] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and took them in short time where the British didn't have any garrisons there or, you know, they -- it was when they had the military regime in Argentina [00:50]. Didn't take them very long of course. The British sent their fleet over there and took it back, but this was in the paper I think. One evening [01:00] a woman in England somewhere, was a retired teacher, had lived in the Falkland Islands [01:08] I guess, one evening somebody knocks at the door from, what is it, MI6 [01:13]?

INT: [affirmative]

BH: "We understand you were in the Falkland Islands [01:18]." And the teacher, "Yes." "Would you have any maps or anything that describes the terrain, you know, we want to go in there." And I thought my god, here we are now 50 years later. It hasn't been learned yet. You're in there for 200 years and then when you need something, you've got it.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: So I thought lessons learned.

INT: Well, to bring that around, the lessons that you learned at Fort Hunt [01:49] --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- seems to have been lost because you still read in the paper today the challenges that they're having in interrogation and you people -- I mean I'm a professional interrogator.

BH: I know [02:00].

INT: I've been an interrogator in three different military campaigns.

BH: Oh yeah.

INT: And up until I wrote a thesis about your program, nobody even knew about it. None of

my colleagues --

BH: Fort Hunt [02:10] you mean?

INT: They didn't even -- what, Fort Hunt? There was an interrogation compound?

BH: Well, you know, it was highly classified so if you read --

INT: Right.

BH: -- "The Escape Factory" [02:20].

INT: Right.

INT: I knew it had something to do with prisoners, but we were --

INT: Right.

BH: -- greatly instructed, don't ever ask them what they do.

INT: Right.

BH: And don't ever go into their buildings, and they had such funny names as the salt mine [02:33] --

INT: Right [affirmative].

BH: -- and the --

INT: Sugar mill [02:38].

BH: The sugar mill and the creamery [02:39] and, you know, funny and we knew people worked in these buildings, but I would never ask them and of course they wouldn't tell me --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- but it was when we went there, the first day we were called into the commanding [03:00] officer, Colonel Walker [03:02], and we had to sign a paper that we would never disclose what we did. Because after World War I, British officers wrote books which the

Nazis [03:12] found useful, and I was very surprised when the -- when this book came out and we even -- the Park Service even has a program about 10 years ago, 15 years ago maybe, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the George Washington Parkway and they had two lectures on Fort Hunt [03:35].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: One of them -- the first one was on "The Escape Factory" [03:39] where they told us all these things that they did and I was very surprised, you know --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- they would do that. And the second one was MIS-Y [03:48] and I thought a lot of people would show up and Heinz [03:52] and I went there and we met Jeanne [phonetic] there who has since died.

INT: Right, right.

BH: And there was [04:00] a book written about the [unintelligible].

INT: [affirmative] Right.

BH: This was Captain Guggenberger, [04:13] the famous submarine commander was one of the people who was -- he was there when I first went there in September. He was one of the prisoners, and of course we never talked about this thing until we were told, when we saw these books and we were told this was all being declassified including interior shots of Fort Hunt [04:40], the monitoring room, and I figured, well, if it's all declassified, you know.

INT: [affirmative] yeah.

BH: But under the present conditions today, I'm somewhat leery, you know, when I talk to you -- well, then somebody could latch onto them and say oh this is classified [05:00] --

INT: Right, yeah.

BH: -- what we did so that's why even now will not give certain names or even --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- talk about certain things. While the Cold War [05:13] is over, but --

INT: Right.

BH: -- there is one specific action which I wouldn't talk about today because it could be embarrassing to a friendly nation, you know.

INT: [affirmative] Right.

BH: Although it may have been publicized before, but I feel that that's something that once you start talking about it, you don't know how far it's --

INT: Right.

BH: -- going to go.

INT: Yeah.

INT: I have a question just about names. When you refer to -- when those who worked at Fort Hunt [05:46], when you refer the strategic interrogation program, did you refer to it as 1142 or did you -- or MIS-Y [05:54] or what was the general term?

BH: Well MIS-Y, I don't know whether they told us that that was classified [06:00] or not. I would -- we usually referred to it -- they wouldn't use Fort Hunt [06:07], you know --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- very much. We -- 1142 was the common handle and that's to my -- as far as I can remember --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- what we -- what we --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- called it.

INT: And this sounds like a silly question, but just to capture this.

BH: There are no silly questions.

INT: You're probably right. See when I started studying the program, I thought -- I mean I read it, MIS-Y [06:32], so I've always referred as "miss"-Y, but you never said it that way. It was always M-I-S-Y or --

BH: Oh yeah, yeah. No, we never used --

INT: You never used "miss."

BH: We never used "miss."

INT: Okay, all right because that's -- as you know today we have so many acronyms --

BH: Oh yeah.

INT: -- and you don't -- sometimes you don't know what people are talking about even though you work with them -- because, exactly. Okay, thank you.

INT: Bill, did you know that the other program there was the X [06:58] program?

BH: Yes.

INT: You [07:00] -- so you knew there was an X, you just --

BH: We were two detachments. We --

INT: Okay.

BH: There were two detachments, MIS-X [07:05] and MIS-Y [07:06], and they would refer to them as X.

INT: You didn't know what X was, but you just knew it was called X?

BH: Well they were designations, you know. We were at that time -- they had something. I

don't know. It probably doesn't exist anymore, D-E-M-L [07:31]. Does that ring any bell?

INT: D-E-M-L?

BH: Yeah, in the army. Detached enlisted men's list [07:38]. That was if you were not infantry or artillery or engineers or so. It was DEML, detached enlisted men's list. I don't know where they got that, but that's what we were actually technically --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- under. We weren't -- we weren't MIS [08:00]. We didn't have MI, but well that would have given it away then if you go outside --

INT: Right, sure.

BH: -- and you see you with MI they know [unintelligible].

INT: Right, so the officers were all MI? Is that correct?

BH: I think the officers --

INT: But they didn't --

BH: -- may have. I don't -- well, if DEML [08:16] stood for enlisted men.

INT: Right, right.

BH: Yeah.

INT: But I mean --

BH: I don't know. They may have kept their branch of service.

INT: They just didn't wear it on their uniform for reasons --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- like you said.

BH: Yeah, but that I don't remember. But the name of the game was -- well actually there

were a lot of these little installations. There was one that was run by the OSS [08:37] near Collingwood [08:39].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Now the bus came out there and there were always some people on the bus, you know, and it would stop at Collingwood. There were a few houses just, you know, that area wasn't built up.

INT: No.

BH: It was largely park land and open country, and the bus would stop there and a bunch of people would then -- everybody knew [09:00] somehow they had -- the OSS [09:04] had an installation there. I never got off there. I never went right or left or I don't know where it was and I don't know what they were doing and that's the way it was supposed to be.

INT: But that is very interesting.

BH: Yeah.

INT: We've never heard that. Collingwood [09:19] is about two -- it's in our park.

BH: Oh it is?

INT: It's about 100 miles from Fort Hunt [09:23]. And is there anything more you can elaborate on that? You said -- so it was something to do with the OSS [09:29] though?

BH: We assumed it was because it was -- we knew there was such thing as the OSS and it seems to me they talked that there were other installations too -- whether they were and what they were, I don't know.

INT: Do you know if they were just going into what looked like private homes? I mean was there an office building or was it just --

BH: I couldn't say.

INT: Okay.

BH: I really don't know. There may have been, you know, there at Collingwood [09:57] there was some sort of a restaurant or [10:00] something. Whether it was the cover for something else --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- no, I don't know.

INT: You're going on some secondhand information, but that's interesting because the area that we administer now called Collingwood, there's a little museum there. I've never been there myself, but secondhand information says that they seem to have an affinity towards Nazi [10:22] art there, and I wonder if there's any relationship between what you just mentioned and that connection.

BH: It's quite possible; it's quite possible.

INT: The museum on the Americanism or whatever.

INT: Right.

INT: Were there to your knowledge, from time to time, any OSS [10:41] officers in the MIS-Y [10:43] facility population?

BH: I can't remember seeing any OSS people.

INT: There was clearly a network of camps and forts all the way up the Appalachian chain into Pennsylvania [11:00].

BH: Yeah, well, I know Pine Grove Furnace [11:04] is --

INT: That's what we wanted to ask you.

BH: I was up there one time.

INT: Great.

BH: And I was taught how to ride a horse. They had --

INT: [laughs] Oh really?

BH: They had -- not officially, you know, but --

INT: Right.

BH: -- if people were identified in prisoner camps that they had somebody of interest, they were sent to Pine Grove Furnace [11:24] as a holding camp, and people would go up and interrogate them to see whether it was worthwhile to bring them down or not. And one time, and this was actually after the war, I think it was in June of 1945 that several of the people including myself were sent up there and it was very interesting. The MPs [11:53] all had horses and we were told that if the horses weren't in use, we could ride them. And the [12:00] MP -- and they had prisoners who worked in the kitchen, and I understand they didn't treat the prisoners very well so there was very great desire to work in the kitchen because food was a little better, and the food was excellent, you know. They had I guess professional cooks among the prisoners. And one time, I and another guy from Fort Hunt [12:25] who could ride, we went to the stables and there were two guys who were helping. One was an army major or colonel and the other one was an SS [12:38] colonel. They were very helpful. They showed me how to ride a horse.

[laughter]

INT: The SS crew, was it a German SS?

BH: Oh of course.

INT: Not an OSS [12:49]?

BH: Oh, no, no, no, no.

INT: Wow.

BH: An OSS colonel had more important things to do.

INT: Right, right, right, right.

BH: Yeah.

INT: So you learned how to ride a horse from a colonel in the SS?

BH: Yeah.

INT: Wow [13:00]. So --

BH: I only did that once because I got so sore after a couple of hours of riding.

INT: Yeah.

BH: I could hardly sit down for another --

INT: Wow.

BH: Yeah, but -- and we -- our job was to find whether these people really knew something or whether they just seemed to, and we recommended, you know, some of these people are than sent to Fort Hunt [13:27] to be interrogated. And the rest of them they would go back to wherever they were, wherever they were sent. Charlie?

FS: Yeah?

BH: Is the tea ready?

FS: Uh oh.

BH: Uh oh.

FS: [unintelligible]

INT: One last follow up --

BH: Oh go, please.

INT: P.O. Box 1142 [13:51], any significance to that or is that the just the post office

designation?

BH: I think that was the actual post office box.

INT: Okay.

BH: You would have the post office [14:00].

INT: There are other camps and forts that had P.O. Box designations like in --

INT: 756, was that Camp Tracy [14:08]? I think it was --

BH: Yeah, well that's in California.

INT: Right.

BH: Now I knew there was such a place, but I don't know really anything about that. Was that for the Japanese prisoners?

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Yeah.

INT: Primarily, yeah.

BH: You probably didn't have too many --

FS: Excuse me [inaudible]. Is there anybody else that wants tea?

INT: Is that tea? [inaudible]

INT: Another veteran had hinted that it was significance tied to November of 1942 and that's all we had gotten.

BH: November '42.

INT: 1142 [14:48].

BH: Okay.

INT: I'm referencing November of 1942.

BH: I had never heard of it. In September [15:00] -- I remember in September, it was right

about the time that the Italian campaign got underway in September of 1942. I mean that the Germans got on a war footing with Italy.

INT: Got you.

BH: But -- well, I got there in the 19th of September and I was very -- what did you ask me?

INT: Just if there was any hidden meaning behind --

BH: Oh.

INT: -- 1142 [15:29]?

BH: No, I knew there was -- no, I never heard of it. I -- somebody -- well it started out in Richie [15:39] in June. They selected several of us to go in a special program to be -- we were mostly held, you know, pending assignment. We didn't know what and then one or the other would be called. We were supposed to be -- we saw we were supposed to go together [16:00]. We didn't know where. Someplace in the states I think they may have told us, and then we were disbanded. Its plans have been changed. And then slowly one after the other, not all of them, but most of them were called away, and I think the word got back that they were in Virginia. They might have probably gave the address as 1142 [16:31], but nothing more and so we wondered, you know, at least I did. And then one day I came back from -- I think I had just come back from leave, and I look at the bulletin board and I see my name. I was promoted from private to corporal and was to be sent to 1142 and I was going to report to the orderly room and all that [17:00]. That's the first thing I heard --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and the next day, they gave me orders, and I still have the orders here as a matter of fact, to proceed to Alexandria [17:16] and at the station to call a certain telephone

number. And so I packed all my stuff and I went on Baltimore, from Baltimore to Washington. Then I had to -- they didn't tell me to take the bus to Fort Hunt [17:41] which I could have done in an hour. I had to wait about three hours for a train to Alexandria.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: At another station, I called Fort Hunt and they sent -- by that time it was late evening. They sent one of the little trucks, three quarter ton truck. It was very small [18:00] carrier.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And a corporal came and picked me up and my barracks bag, and we went riding. I didn't know where. I had never been in that area and he took me to the barracks, and the next morning I was being briefed what I was to do and so on. And I had to sign that I would not disclose what was being done there, and our address was 1142 [18:30] and we were not to use Fort Hunt or discuss what we were doing. Roughly that's --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- the way it was.

INT: So then would I be correct assuming while you're at Camp Richie [18:43], you didn't receive any training in interrogation?

BH: Oh yes.

INT: Are you --

BH: Camp Richie, yes. We had a two month course. Now they had different courses and I'm not that well acquainted with them. I know there was an order of battle [18:58] course --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- [19:00] and photo interpretation with another specialty. We had some training in PI [19:09].

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Maybe three or four hours and we -- the training at Richie [19:15], I'll tell you even today, I must say it was excellent. The instructors were great. They were military personnel and it was an army post and it was some of the freewheeling. In fact, I never -- I couldn't find it at the time. There was a poem that somebody made up about Fort -- Camp Richie [19:41]. "Was you ever in Camp Richie?"

INT: [affirmative]

BH: "The [unintelligible] changed the place of where the sun comes up like thunder with a morning bugle call, and [unintelligible] you know, where enlisted men write books and officers shined their [20:00] own shoes" and all that, you know.

INT: Yeah.

BH: All these foibles, but the instruction was excellent.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: Really in the first few days, they threw stuff at us in bewildering formats and I thought how can anyone manage that? Well that was only once or twice. After that, you know, we went into the detail. We had to learn American order of battle [20:25] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- British order of battle, Italian order of battle, and of course German, but the German was -- the others were, you know, were light touch, but the German -- but only up the division --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- divisional, you know, units.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: That we had to know what the function of the regimental headquarters was, the battalions [21:00] and the companies, and how many men, and how many pieces of equipment and so on. Not division artillery or corps artillery, none of that, but the -- all the divisions, the infantry, the [unintelligible], which was a mixed, you know, armored infantry, the Panzer [21:22] divisions and that we had very specific training and they had actors from New York [21:31] who were DEML [21:33] --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- who wore German uniforms and we had tents set up and it was --

INT: Oh.

BH: The teacher would sit there, you know.

INT: They'd be role players?

BH: And we had -- huh?

INT: They were role players for --

BH: Yes. And we were sitting behind the desk, you know, the IO, the interrogating officer. And the sergeant would come in and say, "Sir, we have a prisoner for you. Send the prisoner in. What's your name [22:00]?" You know, and they were instructed if they were properly asked, you know, they were to answer, but if you didn't know your stuff, they could tell you anything and there was another -- there was another episode.

INT: Oh, thank you very much.

BH: Make some cake.

FS: Okay. Would you like some cake?

BH: Cut it up and --

FS: Okay, I'll cut it up.

[laughter]

BH: And they graded you, you know, on how well you knew your stuff. At that time, knew our stuff, of course.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But I know it was -- at least we were never called to task for doing something like, well if you answer my questions, we can shoot you, or we can make life miserable for you. I guess, at least [23:00] as I remember, that I guess was psychological warfare.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: But I don't know how far you could go, maybe there were limits on it, but they -- you weren't -- you weren't strictly held to not say anything that went beyond just questioning them. There was one guy, I think he was a doctor by profession and he got so carried away with his interrogating, he forgot what he was doing and then he -- the prisoner was so obstreperous that the guy hauled off and slapped his face. Immediately, oh my god, this is a court martial offense, you know, hitting an American. And so -- and he was sweating it out for a while and this was of course big trouble.

INT: Yeah.

BH: You know.

INT: Yeah.

BH: They called him the orfi [23:57] [phonetic]. You know what an orfi is? A slap in the face [24:00]. Orfi, they called him the orfi [24:02] [unintelligible].

INT: Oh yeah.

BH: So -- but you were graded and we had pop tests just about every day, you know, one, two, three, four --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- and then we'd hand them. And, you know, after the war, I held onto a lot of these things and finally after 10 years, they weren't classified.

INT: Right.

BH: I threw them out and shortly after the -- after the Tunisian [24:31] campaign, we were given -- we were trained as intelligence non-comms --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- or intelligence officers, divisional intelligence officers in Richie [24:44] and we were trained. They took us out for exercises, you know, and dumped us there and then we were given maps and we were supposed to draw contour lines. We were given a clipboard and some other light tools and we were taught [25:00] how to make a circular map by sliding around someplace, counting paces, drawing circles, you know, how many degrees you turn and so on. We were graded on all that sort of thing and also intelligence officers staff training. And after the campaign in Africa [25:27], they actually gave us a real situation in Tunisia [25:30] without giving us the solution, but they were giving us that and we had to do what we -- from what we had learned. And we heard later on, I think -- well, that's the way they actually did it and now you can see how well you did on those exercises. You know, we were given information. The German -- the 15th regiment of that division was over there and we had to put the proper symbols in and write where it was located as you would in real [26:00] war --

INT: [affirmative]

BH: -- situations.

INT: Right, sure.

BH: And the instructions I thought were first class.

INT: Really?

BH: Yeah.

INT: Thank you.

BH: And I really enjoyed going to --

FS: [unintelligible]

INT: Sure thing, thank you very much.

INT: Yeah that type of training goes on today down in Fort Huachuca [26:21], Arizona.

BH: [affirmative]

INT: They moved everything down there, but it's very similar in terms of --

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- requiring, you know, order of battle [26:27] very clearly. Do you recall when they taught you to be an interrogator -- I mean you've heard of [unintelligible] like on TV, you know, the good cop bad cop type. Did they teach you specific --

BH: I don't think -- you see the training was for combat.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: [unintelligible] I don't recall -- I don't recall that that was the case.

INT: Okay.

BH: That's of course a good - a good sort of thing.

INT: Right, so what you were going to encounter at Fort Hunt [27:00] would be much more senior people, much more complex material and over a long period of time as opposed to

--

BH: Yeah.

INT: -- tactical combat and so on, so was there any interrogation training that took place actually at Fort Hunt? Do you know?

BH: Not that I --

INT: I mean like some sort of advanced training.

BH: Not that I know of because -- well, the navy [27:22] did the submarines, you know.

INT: [affirmative]

BH: And they had of course a much easier job because that would be a limited number of submarines and they knew where all the submarine places were in Europe. So it was much more limited. It wasn't that everything, you know, the three main fields of interest during World War II were rubber, petroleum, and ball bearings. That was I think the highest priority and that's what they were -- well of course there were other things later on [28:00], missiles, you know, you -- Peenemunde [28:04], you know. You were told if anybody mentioned missiles or rockets and so on be sure to get everything that they're saying. That became of course --

INT: Right.

BH: -- one of the priorities, but if somebody worked in the general staff, you know, or had other knowledge of important matters -- would you like some water or something?

INT: No we're fine. We're just counting. We've got about a minute or two of tape left and then we're going to take a little break in a minute and --

BH: Okay.

INT: Two minute warning.

BH: Yeah.

INT: [laughs] So.

BH: Yeah. Help yourself.

INT: But I'm trying to think just any -- another -- any last couple minutes, let's see here. In terms of the -- you talked a little bit about the technology right now. Any other [29:00] fields of technology that were especially of interest? I know you mentioned anything regarding the rocket program. Do you remember hearing anything about the V1 and V2 rockets [29:10]?

BH: Oh yes, of course, yeah. I don't remember too much. Of course once the V1s and the V2s started flying, you know, I don't remember whether the [unintelligible]. As far as I can remember, there was. But I heard Germans very often times talking about the V weapons [29:38] and how they would turn things around, you know, when the V weapons started really coming, you know.

INT: Really?

BH: When you heard that of course, then you tried to get every word that they -- that they said.

INT: Did they say that almost in a bragging sense or a threatening sense that things were going to change [30:00]?

BH: Yeah, I think they were sort of counting on it. I don't recall that that was a big thing, you know, that a lot of people talked about it. That was something we were very concerned with, what they were doing and what they had.

INT: I think we'll go ahead and take a break now so we can go ahead and switch up the tapes.

[End of Tape 3B]

[Beginning of Tape 4A]

INT: I appreciate that. I'm just going to give a quick introduction, since we're starting a new tape. Again, this is a series of interviews with Bill Hess, a veteran of Fort Hunt. This is part of the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. Today is March 9th, 2007. This is Brandon Bies for the National Park Service, as well as Chief Ranger Vince Santucci. We're also here with Colonel Steve Kleinman of the U.S. Air Force. And with that we're going to continue, and we were just having some discussions about Camp Ritchie [00:34]. And so if you want to go ahead.

INT: Yeah, I was just thinking, so technically, considering when you came to this country and going to Camp Ritchie, you qualified to be a Ritchie boy, right?

BH: Well, yes. I went through the whole course. The only thing is, I was never deployed. But one of my best friends, somebody who I didn't know, who lived in Germany only about [01:00] 50 miles from where I did, and who had relatives in Stuttgart [01:05], which is my hometown. We went to school there, and he was sent to Italy, and by a strange coincidence, he met my cousin there, who was with Psychological Warfare, and they became very good friends. They both did interrogating there for different purposes. And one day they had been together in the enclosure, and right after they parted, to go to their different ways, the Germans fired one of their 170mm guns to let the Americans know they still had ammunition. And my friend was killed. He went through Ritchie [01:46], same place.

INT: Was that -- I recall once we met, you had a photograph of yourself with a couple other guys. Was that who that was?

BH: The picture I showed you with the two girls?

INT: Yeah, at Atlantic City [01:58]?

BH: He was the one, yeah.

INT: Right.

BH: That was [02:00] -- we had a weekend off in Camp Ritchie [02:05], and his family lived in New Jersey, and he had met these girls, and he was invited to go to their summer place for the weekend. And he asked me if I wanted to go along, yeah. But he's the one who was sent Italy.

INT: And was killed.

BH: And he fell right near Monte Cassino [02:25], someplace. What was the big base there, in the war? I forget. I'm just sure it was Monte Cassino.

INT: So we've spoked a little bit about Ritchie [02:40] in previous interviews, but if you have any more specific questions about those experiences at Ritchie, feel free to go ahead.

INT: Yeah, I'm just found this interesting. So the interrogation training you said was approximately, let's see, about two months long, did you say?

BH: The course [03:00]?

INT: Yeah, right.

BH: Ritchie [03:02] was two months, yes. Which started in March, early in March, and then was over March and April, sometime at the end of April, I remember. And the final test was the so-called two-day exercise. For two days, we pretended to be in the field, and every day they gave us a map of something, with instructions how to get to a certain place, or how to reconnoiter, and how to check in and all that. And it was pretty bad, because it was very warm when we started out. And we didn't go back to base camp, and the first night there was a downpour, and it turned cold, and it was miserable. And of

course we had already dressed for warmer weather. And there was field conditions [04:00], and being in wretched water, you were -- so those conditions, yeah. And Colonel Banfield [04:08], Army, you probably know who he was, because I think he was -- became later the Chief of Air Force [04:14] Intelligence, he was the son-in-law of the G-2 at the time, the Chief of Staff of Intelligence, Army General Walker [04:27] -- now, what was his name? [inaudible] I can't think of his name now. He was the son-in-law, as I have heard it, who made the suggestion to utilize refugees from Germany, specifically, to train them as interrogators. Because up to that time we only had the intelligence group of [05:00] the Army [05:01], to reconnoiter, and they didn't see very much. And he, as I heard it -- Strong, that was his name, Joe Strong [05:09].

INT: Okay, good, that's the name. I didn't want to suggest it to you, but yes, absolutely.

BH: Yeah, he's the one. And he suggested to use people who came over, who already spoke German, and who presumably knew English well enough, too. So all you had to do was train them in intelligence functions. And that can be done relatively quickly. And these people would then be usable directly at the front, to interrogate prisoners the moment they are captured, and so the shock of that played into it. And also aerial photo reconnaissance. That was something brand new at the time, too. And actually, during the Army [06:00] maneuvers in Louisiana [06:02], graduates from the Ritchie [06:06] course, and I never mentioned that before, because I didn't think of it, were sent to maneuvers, and attached as an interrogation team, which was two jeeps, one officer, and two men in each team. Two of them to be assigned to regiments on the line, and one of them to the reserve component. No, no, not to the reserve component, except when -- the line for someone else. So that's how it was. And we went to the Louisiana [06:43]

maneuvers. And we were supposed to also train troops for security, because Americans at that time talked, you know, freely about where they were, what they were doing, and so they had to be [07:00] indoctrinated. And the first teams that went down found that if you ask an American, "What unit are you with?" oh, he'll tell you such-and-such a unit. And then they were supposed to tell you, "You're not supposed to do that, you know. If you do that again, you'll be, you know, marked on your record." And so by the time we went down -- and I only went down a couple of times at the time to the field. I was sent as a replacement team in August of '43 to Camp Pogue. Fort Pogue [07:36], now. And actually, at the time we were sent, there were only two tactical situations there, so at the time we were free to do what we wanted to. And so we went to Lake Charles, that's an R and R camp, and so on. It was pretty hot and miserable down there, and the conditions were very bad in the neighboring town. They took advantage [08:00] of the GIs, charged horrendous rents for people who had family there. And a warm Coke at that time was, I think, 20 cents, when you could buy at the PX [08:12] or elsewhere for a nickel. Well, anyway, we were sent to Camp Pogue [08:20], to train the divisions. By the time I went down there and I interrogated American troops, "I can tell you only names, ranks and serial numbers. Nothing more." And the funny thing is, in Fort Hunt [08:35] at one time, we heard that the American soldiers were more security-conscious, if they were interrogated by the Germans. That the Germans talked too much, the Americans only could give rank and serial number. So apparently that was very important, too [09:00]. An aspect of the training at Camp Ritchie [09:07]. What did you ask me? I can't --

INT: Oh, no, no, that was good, just about the training. Were the officers also trained in interrogation at Camp Ritchie, or was that somewhere else?

BH: Oh, yes, we had officers in the class.

INT: In the same class?

BH: Yeah. We had several officers in the class. It was mostly enlisted men, but they were a company, I think. I don't think we had anybody higher than lieutenant or captain.

INT: Did you ever see any of the officers in your class later on down at Fort Hunt [09:41]?

BH: No, I don't think -- no, I don't remember seeing any. But that was part of the training, too, you know. To teach security to American [10:00] troops.

INT: Oh yeah, that's interesting. So, okay. Almost teaching them how to resist interrogation.

BH: Oh, I was telling you about Colonel Banfield [10:10].

INT: Right.

BH: And they had selected Ritchie [10:16] specifically, because it was near Washington. And at Ritchie, they had demonstration areas, and I think that's in the film, too. They had a village there, and the actors, you know, from New York, they played the part. I remember one exercise was German troops in advance and retreat, you know. And they had some 75mm, the old howitzers, 75mm, which wasn't used anymore in the division, they all had 105 by that time. And how they would move into a town, and then another, and, you know what they [11:00] did in sabotage, and booby-trapping and so on. And that was another course, I think, of security. How to deactivate and how to spot booby traps and so on. And so they would bring staff people from Washington for these demonstrations. There were two areas, I don't know where one of them was, the other one resides in Ritchie [11:26]. And they would come up, and we would sit in sort of an amphitheater-like situation, and these demonstrations units would show, you know, what they wanted to teach us. Yeah. And the funny thing is, when the Ritchie Boys first went

down to the divisions in Louisiana [11:54] on maneuvers, you had these old troglodyte officers, who would go, "Oh, we don't [12:00] need this thing. We've done it this way always, why do we need these newfangled young kids who don't know anything to teach us?" But fortunately General Strong okayed it, because Ritchie [12:14] was near Washington, yet it was not on any main highway. You had the Western Maryland -- have you ever been up there?

INT: In that area, yes.

BH: You haven't?

INT: No, I have been in the area.

BH: Well, you will probably [inaudible] the underground installation there.

INT: I didn't see much of it, they didn't show me much.

BH: Well, that was a secret. When you weren't on the highway, you could see it. And people knew what it was. I was in there one time when I was DIA [12:45]. It's an experience.

INT: Oh, yeah.

BH: Yeah. And that Camp Ritchie [12:51] became the base camp.

INT: Right.

BH: For that underground installation. And [13:00] -- but the Western Maryland Railway [13:05], of course, runs right by Camp Ritchie, and that's the transportation we usually used. But there was no main highway. And the troops, you know, for the demonstrations, at first, it really shook people up. They live in some backwoods little house, and suddenly there's a troop of German soldiers with German uniforms, one of them was General [unintelligible] [13:37], right in front of them. "My, God!" you know, "Are the Germans here already?" And later on, they knew what was going on, on some

of the nighttime exercises they had, where we had to go out and find our way at night from where we dropped from a truck to where we were to be picked up again. They'd get lost, and they'd go to [14:00] one little house and try to find out where they were. And the guy opened the door, and they'd say they're lost. And the guy would say, "Well, what map do you have today, the German or the French map?" Some of the maps were written in German or in French. So the people there knew there was Camp Ritchie [14:21]. Whether they knew just what went on, that I don't know.

INT: Yeah. I want to shift back real quickly. We started talking about -- you said the three areas of interest were ball bearings, rubber, and petroleum?

BH: That was, as I remember it, at least at one time the key interest. Because petroleum, you know, especially when they were pushed out of Eastern areas, Germany had -- well, Germany made synthetic petroleum, with IG Farben, in [15:00] Germany. That was a critical item, of course. And rubber was, and ball bearings, because they had to -- there were very few sources. There was one town in Germany. You know it as Frankfurt [15:15].

INT: Right, my father was on that. My father flew B-17s. So the question I want to follow up with, at -- near the end of the war, did you hear -- was there a focus at all on such things as biological warfare, or chemical? Or more importantly, at the very end, did you ever hear any comments about atomic weapons, or nuclear weapons?

BH: Yes, we did hear about atomic. And one time, I remember now, I don't remember where I heard or read it, I heard that the Germans had something near the Hohenzollern castle [15:59], or at the [16:00] Hohenzollern castle. You know Germany?

INT: Yes.

BH: You know the Hohenzollern? I've been up there. And actually, and I found out that in the comic section of the Post just a few weeks ago where they had flashbacks that in the German town of [unintelligible] they had hidden nuclear material. [unintelligible], I know, it's not far from the Hohenzollern [16:32]. It's in the former province of Hohenzollern. And it's built right along the side, up the side -- you know [unintelligible]?

INT: No, but I actually saw the comic strip you're talking about.

BH: In there, it's a beautiful little town, almost a little resort town. But it's such a steep mountain, and apparently that's where they had stored atomic material --

INT: And heavy water and stuff like that.

BH: --as they were working about it, yeah. I don't know whether -- I heard the name [17:00] Heisenberg at the time, although that was later. That I'm not sure about. But yes, they were concerned about it. Of course, if anybody, you know, would hear that, but I don't remember too much at the time, whether before Hiroshima [17:23], whether there was much discussion about atomic weapons. I think there was talk about the Germans being near having it, or having -- not necessarily having it, but were working on it.

INT: That Heisenberg you're talking about, was that Walter Heisenberg [17:42]?

BH: Yes.

INT: Yeah. Also, since you said -- when you left the service and you came back as a civilian, you were -- does Operation Paperclip [17:56] sound familiar to you?

BH: Yes, I was involved in this.

INT: You were?

BH: On a very [18:00] marginal basis. We were used to interview those people who were sent

to Fort Hunt [18:09]. You know, name and experience and residence. And so mainly to find out whether these people were really scientists, or whether they were just trying to get to the United States. And I had at least one candidate for immediate shipment back, and he was supposed to be some sort of technical expert. He was a mechanic, a common ordinary mechanic. And so you ask them where they worked, and what they did, and soon, and you filled out a questionnaire. There was only, I think, one day, maybe two days, so it was a short period. And that's all we really did. We had no idea what else went on under the guise of [19:00] Paperclip.

INT: During that period of time, at that time was there any involvement with OSS [19:09], from the folks at Collingwood [19:10]? Because they kind of ran that operation.

BH: No. It could be that some of the officers, you know, had contact with them. But I cannot recall, and I'm pretty sure that I had never seen or talked to anybody that I knew was OSS.

INT: Wow. That's fascinating.

INT: These are great questions, because these are some of the same questions that we wanted to ask. For a while we were talking about Camp Pine Grove Furnace [19:49], and I just wanted to finish off our discussion there and see if there was anything else that you could share about that. So you just went up to Camp Pine Grove Furnace for one day, correct?

BH: No, we were there [20:00] two or three days.

INT: Okay. But it was just on one occasion?

BH: Just one, and it was very late, it was in the summer of '45. The war was already over at that time.

INT: And it was a group of you that were sent up?

BH: There were, maybe, three or four or five people. We went by car, I don't remember even who drove the car. I had heard -- I knew that that's where people were sent to, to be screened for a time. And that's the only time I was up there.

INT: Did you get the sense that, throughout the war, other people from 1142 [20:40] were being sent up to Pine Grove [20:42], to do the same sort of screening?

BH: Oh, yeah, yeah. I don't remember who that was, but I know people periodically were sent up there. I don't know whether they were sent up there from elsewhere, too, for doing this.

INT: Did you actually come [21:00] back with prisoners? Or did you just give a list of recommended prisoners?

BH: No, no, we didn't come back; we didn't handle them at all. We just filled out the form, you know, recommend, and then it would be taken from there. And how that was done, I don't know.

INT: MPs [21:17], do you think? MPs would do the transport?

BH: Possibly so, yes, possibly so.

INT: So -- but when you were at Pine Grove [21:26], you actually did speak with prisoners, just to determine whether or not --

BH: No, no. Well, I actually talked to some of them, and I -- nobody -- I don't think that anybody, if I heard the name, that I can remember anybody specifically that sticks out in my memory.

INT: Do you have any recollection of Pine Grove? If it was a huge facility? Was it larger than 1142 [21:56]?

BH: No [22:00], I don't remember too much about it, but I wasn't impressed by the size.

INT: Just bouncing -- forgive me, because these are jumping around a bit.

BH: No, it's okay.

INT: Just trying to finish off the --

BH: The only thing is, if I get too much on a tangent, let me know.

INT: No, it's --

BH: I know I tend to do that.

[laughter]

INT: No, this is great.

INT: It's all fascinating. I very, very interesting.

BH: Yeah, I find it fascinating today, too, you know. And 60 years after the fact, you know, all of a sudden. But I have to say it's of any kind of importance other than for family reminiscences or something. Especially if it's useful for anything, you know.

INT: Well, can I just ask one quick -- if you can take yourself back to, let's say, '47, '48, '49, and even [23:00] the time since then, do you have any sense for how important that program was?

BH: In Camp Ritchie [23:09]? Well --

INT: For MI -- no, no, no, MIS-Y [23:11], specifically.

BH: Oh, MIS-Y. I really don't know. Seems to me I had heard that it wasn't all that important, in most cases. Now of course the Navy [23:24], I think, got some of -- that I know. I think there were two things which, at least in my mind, came out of it that were critically important to the Navy. And that was the snorkel [23:40], because they listened to the interrogation of the petty officer who was in charge of that, I guess, you know, out in test runs [24:00]. The problem they had with the first snorkel, that they didn't put a

proper vent on there, and that the boat went down and water comes into this, and in a second sucked out all the air of the submarine.

INT: Oh, my God.

BH: And so we knew what not to do. And the other thing was, I think, the magnetic torpedo, the homing torpedo, where they send out a homing torpedo and it homes on the ship itself, and it had a hell of a time not being torpedoed by their own ship. So they knew what to do about the torpedoes that might go awry. But that was the first time that I saw that that was something that was very important. The rest, I really don't know how important it was. I guess it must have been, because it continued throughout the [25:00] war. They would have cut down on it, or cut it out, if it had been found largely useless.

INT: Right. Well, now I've done a lot of research into the program. I've looked at a lot of material in the Archives. Official after-action reports, letters, memoranda from very senior people. And I can tell you without hesitation that your program was indispensable.

BH: Well, I'm delighted to hear it, you know.

INT: I mean, its's --

BH: Because you feel sometimes, "Gee, you know, they're wasting you on an activity."

INT: No, they didn't.

BH: [inaudible] But I'm delighted to hear that, because that's what we were really, you know, we were in the States, we were lucky, we were safe. And at least we wanted to do something very useful, and not just make work. Because even at that time, the turf battle, I couldn't believe it.

INT: Between the Army [25:56] and the Navy [25:56]?

BH: Between any unit.

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: I remember [26:00] one instance, this was rather late in the game, where the Army had captured some civilian. I don't know whether he was given to us by the Spanish, you know, when Franco, at that time, well, he was beholden to the Nazis [26:18], but I guess he could see which way it was going, too. Somehow we had gotten hold of some guy who apparently had some critical information, I don't even remember what. And some other unit wanted to talk to him, too. And I remember that somebody in charge of intelligence [inaudible], "No way, he's our man. We want to get the credit for it." And well, the officer, and I won't mention names again, asked me, you know, to help draft a letter on this. And I was very naïve, I tried this thing to help him, and he [27:00] never wanted to use what I said. And finally, what he wanted from me was to help him write some obfuscation or whatever, you know, where we say nothing with a lot of words. And I thought at the time, "This war, this is an important war, and we're not sharing that with somebody who can use it because we want credit?" And of course I see it as still going on, you know.

INT: Yes, it does.

BH: I remember the -- what was this war in the islands?

INT: Grenada [27:36]?

BH: Grenada, yeah, where they didn't do what they should do. They gave some work to be done by another service, I think it was yours, who said, "We want some of the action, too."

INT: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

BH: I think this is, well, you fight a war, people get killed, you're spending money on it, and

it's more important that you get credit than [inaudible] [28:00]?" Well, lessons learned.

INT: And lost. Learned and lost, and learned and lost, yes. No, it hasn't changed much, I can tell you. But no, I just want to impress upon you, sir, that your service to your country is -- there is -- intelligence that you and your colleagues obtained would not have been obtained any other way.

BH: Well, I'm delighted to hear it, because the people I worked with, I think in particular with a guy like Dallin [28:25], who as I said died recently, he was a very bright, he was maybe 21 years old, but he was very mature, very intelligent, and very knowledgeable. And of course his father having had the background of a Menshevik [28:41] and anti-Communist former Russian. The people I worked with, I think we all took it seriously. We weren't out for goofing off, you know. What we had to do, we felt [29:00] was important, and we did it. And we just hoped, you know, that what we did would contribute something. And also, I think the security, I found wherever I worked, the security indoctrination was taken very seriously. I worked at the Army Map Service [29:24], we were the first ones in 1947 who already had to wear badges, you know, and lock up the safes at night, and all that sort of thing. And even now, you know, when I talk to you, sometimes I think, "Well, am I saying something here that maybe I shouldn't?" I know that I've been assured that everything, you know, is declassified, and so I feel reasonably secure that I'm not [30:00] saying something that gets to the wrong --

INT: No, no, no. I'll tell you, I'd be the first -- at least might my being here, I'd be the first to tell you if that was inappropriate. That brings up -- I'll ask one more question. There's some other -- some of your colleagues may see it differently, and decide that that secrecy agreement is still in effect forever and ever, and lose those lessons. Do you think that, if

we were to draft a letter from, let's say, a general officer, or from a military lawyer, that's specifically binding, relieves them of that agreement, do you think that that will make them more comfortable in talking? That make sense?

BH: No, I didn't --

INT: Okay. Let's say if I brought you a letter today, and it was signed by, you know, General Strong's [30:51] equivalent today, and says, "To you, sir. We recognize that you signed this agreement back in 1942. This hereby [31:00] relieves you of that obligation, because the information you have is so important for historical purposes."

BH: Well, I've thought about that, you know. I've thought about that. I was reasonably comfortable, you know, when I brought up the last time, to sign this thing. Especially when I heard, you know, that DIA [31:24] is going to participate in it, and know all -- that thing that you saw, there's something not quite right, that would be pointed out to me. So I feel reasonably comfortable. But I still feel like a couple of things that I didn't mention because I think, you know, this guy, you know, who was dressed up as an American officer interrogated Germans, I think he was allowed to go back early on after the war was over. And [32:00] I would think that if this appeared in the paper, and I don't know where he lives right now. And there's still some Nazi [32:07] types around, you know, "Oh, he's a real traitor, we'll have to go and get him," and it

[End of Tape 4A]

[Beginning of Tape 4B]

[talking simultaneously]

INT: Well, there was a book written by a gentleman, Chris Mackey [phonetic], he was an interrogator in Afghanistan, and another guy who was an interrogator at Guantanamo

[00:15]. They came home and wrote a book immediately. And I'm like you, I can't imagine that. I mean, it's just not the way things are done. And so it is very different. But anyway, I just bring that up to let you know that this has such historical relevance, and that the nature of it, you know, really is no longer sensitive, [inaudible].

BH: Well, I can't imagine, you know, that if you have a guideline about the --

INT: Escape Factory [00:42]?

BH: Escape vector, where everything after the war was burned, nothing was left, no records left, and so on, that you can write a book about this now. Because that's a keen idea, to take a deck of cards apart, laminate it, put a map inside, you know [01:00], and make a Red Cross [01:03] package out of it, you know. So that's the sort of thing I would've not made public, you know. So no, I'm not crazy, you know, about -- let's say everything should be secured, or some people will hear what you can use. I would think, "Well, of course." But the thing is, if is everything is classified, then nothing's really classified.

INT: Right, yes, yes.

BH: And I think that the CIA [01:38] used to wildly overclassify stuff, and after a while, you say, "Oh, it's marked Secret, so what else is?"

INT: Right. You just handle it like it's nothing.

BH: And I've seen it myself. I think somebody picked up, when I worked for the Map Service [01:53], somebody picked up a railway schedule, you know, which we used for [02:00] information about locations. Anybody could buy this thing, and they send it stamped "Secret." Well, now, of course the transmittal order may be secret, if it [inaudible] a purpose for it, and so on. But I think they were at one time very cavalier about it. If in doubt, mark it "Secret."

INT: Right, yes. Yeah.

BH: Have you ever seen an O.B. book [02:26]?

INT: Yes, yes. Many of them.

INT: You have a couple, right?

BH: I have two of them. I have the red one, the very last one, and I have the yellow one, which was the replacement.

INT: Wow.

BH: And that was -- I was surprised. In those days, the lowest classification was "Restricted." And they did away with it, because once we worked together with the British, their lowest classification was "Confidential," "Secret" and "Most Secret." And then we [03:00] agreed [inaudible] leave the "Top Secret" for "Most Secret," and we agreed to take --

INT: "Restricted?"

BH: "Restricted" becomes administrative.

INT: Right, right. Exactly.

BH: Now I'll say, at DIA [03:20], I felt my last job I had as foreign disclosure, I thought it was very important, because our allies depended, you know. And it was important to exchange. It was equally important to be completely knowledgeable about the restrictions on what you let go, because if you sent something that's marked "No Foreign." And the British were [04:00] sometimes very cavalier about [inaudible]. We gave them stuff, and we had evidence. And one time -- am I keeping you back there with anecdotes?

[laughter]

INT: No, no.

BH: One time we had something in the DIA [04:17] called a NATO cable [04:18], you know, where we would take current stuff and send it for dissemination to NATO members. And I had to review it, you know, for restricted data on there, and okay it, and it went to NATO. And one day I let something go, and the next day it comes out that something went that shouldn't have gone. Now it wasn't a serious breach in the matter where we disclosed something. But it had come to us from [inaudible], without a restriction on it. And it had been given to [inaudible] by another NATO [04:59] member [05:00]. And when the NATO cable, the NATO member said, "This is our data. How can they let that go?" And of course it was a friendly power. But they tried to use it, you know. "You owe us by now. Sign this," you know. But that's one of the things. It may not be worth a hell of a lot, but if it belongs to another country, you have no business writing your code. So you have to know what can go, what can't go. And I remember one time when Portugal [05:40] went sort of leftist, I don't know if you remember that in the '70s. They had a Prime Minister who was very friendly, I think, towards the Soviet [05:50] bloc or so. But they were a member of NATO [05:55], and you didn't want to kick them in the teeth. Well, fortunately it resolved itself. I think [06:00] the guy resigned or something, and NATO was in good standing again. But we had to do a lot of tiptoeing around. I think the Portuguese minister with NATO [06:16] was very diplomatic about it. And a lot of damage could be done, you know, if you had gone too far, and say "Okay, nothing to Portugal [06:27] anymore," you know. They're a NATO member. So that sort of thing, you know, you have to really read the newspaper, and see if the headline didn't say something happened that it changed the situation so that what you could do yesterday,

you don't want to do today anymore. And that was -- I retired very early, because I found I couldn't take the pressure anymore, you know --

INT: That's smart.

BH: Of that continually being under the [07:00] gun. And I had over 35 years of federal service, including military. I felt that I was in the carpool, and another member was always extending. "If I work another few months, can I get more retirement pay?" And one day his office called and said to send him to the hospital. He had a heart attack, and two days later he was dead. "Could we drive" -- could I drive the car home? He went by ambulance. I said, "I'm not going to go out on my feet first. I want to retire while I still can." It was -- I took it very seriously.

INT: That's smart. I would have done the same thing.

INT: Just a few wrapping-up questions, in regard to 1142 [07:54]. You brought up this just a second ago with the O.B. books [07:58]. Can you recall, off the top of your head [08:00], the different sections that were at 1142? There were different organizational sections, right?

BH: Yeah, well, I remember there was an O.B. section there, and they went to England after the landing.

INT: Okay.

BH: They came back. In fact, a good friend of mine who lived here, he died a few years ago, was in that O.B. section.

INT: Would you mind saying --

BH: He was Sean [inaudible].

INT: Oh, okay, you've mentioned him before, yeah. Okay.

BH: Now, his brother also was in the O.B. section [08:30], and he lives in California now. I forget what town it is. But he was --

INT: And he was at 1142 [08:38]?

BH: He was there a brief time, and he went to England, and he came back again. In fact, if I ever find that picture at 1142, where, before we disbanded, we had a celebration.

INT: Right.

BH: With dancing, and he was in that picture.

INT: Oh, really? Oh, I'd love to -- if you ever find it, that'd be tremendous.

BH: I've been looking for it [09:00] in all my stuff, since we moved here. It's still in boxes, and I can't find it all.

INT: That would be great.

BH: But yeah, I know there was an O.B. section [09:08] in Ritchie [09:09], and in 1142 [09:12]. And there may have been others. There may have been an aerial photo section, too, for all I know.

INT: Do you remember anything about the evaluation section?

BH: I think so. I know there was a major, maybe Lieutenant Colonel Slafka [09:32] [phonetic]

INT: Slafka.

BH: I think he had to do that.

INT: Yeah, he was the commander of the evaluation section.

BH: Yeah, and there was a Sergeant Sharp [09:39], who died by now.

INT: Yep.

BH: I remember those two names.

INT: And do you recall Wayne Spivey [09:45]? From Georgia?

BH: Oh, yeah.

INT: Because we're in touch with him.

BH: He was in our barracks.

INT: Oh, was he? Okay.

BH: Now, you say you've contacted him?

INT: Yes, we've interviewed. I actually flew to Georgia and spoke with him.

BH: Did he remember me? Probably not.

INT: I think he did, but you know what, I don't know if we had found and gotten in touch with you. This was [10:00] very, very early on, when I spoke with him. But he's got, like, a really sharp memory.

BH: Oh, yeah.

INT: So --

BH: Yeah, I remember Spivey [10:07].

INT: Okay.

BH: I remember he got married while he was --

INT: You got it.

INT: Yep, he got married when he was there.

INT: So let's see here. Just moving through a few more physical questions about the compound. I think you said in the last interview that you remember there was a parade ground, and you would go out and salute the flag every morning.

BH: No, once a week we had to go out.

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: Once a week, not all the time, under one of the commanders. Wasn't Captain Pogue [10:36].

INT: Pogue?

BH: He wasn't that very long. He was a little different than the others. He had been an enlisted man before the war, and he was promoted to lieutenant, and then captain. And he didn't like us, we were too educated, I guess, and too liberal, and all of that. Captain Pogue, he wasn't there very long. But he was more G.I. than [11:00] the others. And once a week, I think, we had retreat parade at the parade ground.

INT: This is going to sound like a real specific question, but there's relevance. Do you remember where the flag was? Was there a flag on the parade ground?

BH: I'm sure there was. I'm sure there was a gun.

INT: Oh, really? Okay.

BH: I think it was a recorded bugle call, I don't think we had a bugler there. Yes, the flag, I'm 99 percent certain that the flag was at the parade ground.

INT: Okay.

BH: Yeah.

INT: Okay. Do you remember how the orientation of the parade ground, if you could see the gun batteries from the parade ground?

BH: I think they were right behind the parade ground. Aren't they there anymore now?

INT: Not entirely. The gun batteries are there, yeah, they're still there. There's no flag -- the reason I'm asking the flag question is because the Park Service is thinking about putting - restoring a flag pole. And we're trying to figure out where that flag used to [12:00] be.

BH: I'm sure it was, or maybe I'm imagining that now. But I know that I can see the gun, and

I think the flag was there.

INT: Okay.

[inaudible commentary]

INT: Yeah.

INT: Which emplacement?

INT: Battery Mount Vernon.

INT: Mount Vernon, okay.

INT: It would have been right up adjacent. And you think they fired a gun off, when they had these?

BH: Yeah. They had one of those old 75s there, yeah.

[inaudible commentary]

INT: Right, see if you can get that to him.

INT: Add that to your list [laughs].

INT: Just going through a list of questions again. When we came in, you had mentioned that you recalled Alberti [12:40] [phonetic], from the Navy [12:42]. Do you remember anything about him, or anything specifically about the naval interrogations?

BH: No, I don't. I remember, it seems to me he was always referred to as Mr. Alberti.

INT: And so do you think he was a civilian?

BH: I don't remember whether I ever saw him.

INT: Okay.

BH: I can't be sure about it.

INT: Okay.

BH: But [13:00] suddenly out of nowhere last night, I suddenly saw an Alberti [13:05]. "How

do I remember that name?" I thought. Well, you'd be interested.

INT: Absolutely. But our understanding --

BH: Richly [13:12] [phonetic] is a name I remember.

INT: Wait, say it again?

BH: Richly.

INT: Richly?

BH: Yeah. I think he was something mate. He was --

INT: With the Navy [13:21]?

BH: With the Navy. He wasn't an officer, he was a non-commissioned officer.

INT: Okay. Because there's so little that we know about the naval aspect. And Alberti [13:34] is this mysterious figure that we've heard about who was kind of --

BH: You know, I've kind of had a feeling that he was sort of mysterious.

INT: Yeah.

BH: I don't know if I ever saw him even, but I remember the name. And you mentioned a White, too, at the beginning?

INT: White?

BH: Lieutenant White?

INT: No --

BH: Maybe?

[talking simultaneously]

INT: We're in touch [14:00] with one naval interrogator, whose last name was Thurmer [14:04] [phonetic]. Angus Maclane Thurmer, who was only at 1142 [14:08] for a short period of time. But White, I'm not sure.

BH: I thought you had mentioned him. So I'm imagining that. Alberti [14:17] and Richly [14:17], I remember. And they didn't live there, you know. They came out when we had somebody's people.

INT: Right, right.

BH: So we never had much to do with them.

INT: So was there a regular naval contingent who was actually housed on base?

BH: No.

INT: So they all came in, did interrogations, and left?

BH: For a while, we had an Italian captain there. Because I think in the beginning, they may have had Italian prisoners. But of course after '43 or so -- and he was there for a while, and I think he disappeared, probably repatriated or something.

INT: Speaking of Italians, Walter Chini [15:00] [phonetic], we've spoken about him, he recently passed away. Do you -- he's of Italian heritage. Did you know, was he doing work with Italians there, at 1142 [15:08]? Do you know if Chini was working with Italians? Because that's his heritage.

BH: That may be, I don't know.

INT: Okay.

BH: I don't know. As I say, there may have been one or two Italian prisoners when I first came. But after September of '43, you know, the Italians -- I don't recall having seen any, anymore.

INT: Okay. Okay. And then, we spoke a little bit our last time a few of the more special guests that you remember there at the end of the war. Two of which we briefly spoke about were Oshima [15:44] and Gustav Hilger [15:47]. Do you have any recollections of

them?

BH: Yes. I think Hilger, I think I interviewed him, when he first came there. I remember that because on the sheet that I [16:00] had, it said "Brigadier General," you know, and when I interviewed him, I said, "You were a brigadier general?" "No, no, I'm civilian, I'm Foreign Service." I said, "Well, it says." He says, "Well, that's an equivalent rank that they give." And he must have thought I was a real dummy, because I never heard of that before. I know now, of course, that that's even today a civilian's from the DOD [16:26] given equivalent rank. So I didn't know that. And this was just a sort of an interview when he came in. Oshima [16:37] I remember monitoring. I remember him being asked about certain things. He had this very high voice, and he would always answer, "It's very hard to say, I don't know." He never seemed to know anything, always weasel out of it.

INT: You think he was just trying to [17:00] avoid answering the questions?

BH: Possibly so, because at that time, you know, the Japanese were still generally very close-mouthed, and things like that, and considered being a prisoner or not dying for the fatherland to be the greatest disgrace they could bring on themselves. And so I don't know.

INT: And he was being interrogated in German, though?

BH: Is that so?

INT: No, no, I'm sorry, I'm asking. When he was interrogated, was he interrogated in Japanese?

BH: I think he must've. But he spoke English, you know.

INT: Oh, did he speak? Okay.

BH: Because otherwise I wouldn't have [inaudible] --

INT: I wasn't sure. But since he was ambassador to Germany, though, he would have spoken German. So I wasn't sure if they interrogated him in German, or in English, or in Japanese.

BH: That I don't know. To my knowledge, we didn't have anybody there who spoke Japanese.

INT: Okay.

BH: Whether they would have brought someone in from the Pentagon [18:00], or so, that I don't recall at this point. I only remember being impressed at [inaudible] and denying everything.

INT: Do you recall if the folks -- we've had other folks tell us that. Folks like Oshima [18:14], and Hilger [18:15], and other high-ranking folks. They, as opposed to staying in the prisoner compound, that they were in cottages. Is that familiar to you, where they would have been staying?

BH: Well, that's a great possibility, because after the landings in Normandy [18:33], we had a German admiral who was in charge of the Sea Frontier [18:44], or whatever it was. He was flown directly to Fort Hunt [18:47], and we were told that he was going to be there. And I think I heard them say that he was not brought to the cells where the others were kept, that he was either in [19:00] the commandant's house, or some other special facility because of his rank. And I understand that Dallin [19:08] also was there.

INT: Yes.

BH: I never saw him --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- or heard anything about him while he was there.

INT: Okay.

BH: Those are the only two really high-ranking people that I can recall.

INT: Okay. And so the end of your time at Fort Hunt [19:25], you were -- when were you officially discharged from the military?

BH: Well, I was actually back in Ritchie [19:32].

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: In the summer of '45, they told us that 125 tons, I think, of German documents had been captured, and were to be sent to the States, and they were going to send them to Ritchie. Would I be willing to go to Ritchie [19:54]? Well, I was getting ready to get married, and the war was over. I would be very reluctant [20:00], and nothing happened. And then suddenly, I think in early January or late December, they sent me to Ritchie. And I was very unhappy about that, you know. I had just been married, I knew I would be out of the Army [20:17] very soon, and I guess they figured I wouldn't be there very long, so they put me to work in the quartermaster's or something, and I was very put out about it. And I never -- and I was -- to answer your question, I was discharged from Ritchie [20:36] in February of 1946.

INT: Okay.

BH: And I could choose where I wanted to be discharged, and I chose Camp Grant [20:46], because my parents still lived in Illinois [20:49].

INT: Okay.

BH: And so I was discharged at Camp Grant, but out of Ritchie [20:55], not out of Fort Hunt [20:56].

INT: And so once you were discharged, though, you said [21:00] earlier that you ended up

back at 1142 for a little while?

BH: No, I started looking around for work.

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: And then I heard that they were continuing to do work, translation work, at Fort Hunt.

And I didn't know what I was going to do. My wife wanted me to go to college, you know. And well, I wouldn't be able to get in right away, so I said, "Well, I'll find a job." And when I heard that Fort Hunt [21:33] was wanting to hire people, I applied. And they hired me, after they investigated me. The guy who I had worked for before, I didn't know him, he didn't know me, I had to go through the whole clearance business again. I did it in April, I was hired, and we did translation work mostly, or related. They did manuals, you know, and [22:00] cold war fighting and so on, that they learned from German intelligence people, yeah. So that's the long answer to a short question.

INT: No, no, that's great. Do you remember who -- to put it bluntly, who was signing your paycheck? Who were you actually working for?

BH: Oh, we were paid in cash.

INT: Oh, really?

BH: Yeah, they had a table.

INT: Did they tell you to say that?

BH: I told you about the payroll that I burned.

INT: Oh, yeah, you did. Right, right, right.

BH: The barracks had coal stoves, and if they had gone out, I was [inaudible], one day I came back in the winter, and all the coal stoves had gone out, and so I thought, for myself and the benefit of the others, I'll light a fire in one of the coal stoves. And we had a table

where we kept newspapers and so on, and there was [23:00] wind and cold. And I took paper that I found, and I started a fire. And the next morning, the drill sergeant called me and said, "I hear you started a fire in the barracks." I said, "Yeah, why?" He says, "Well, were you nice and warm?" I said, "Well, yeah, it took a while." He says, "Well, you know, you burnt the payroll in the process of starting a fire, so are you doing anything this afternoon?" "No, I'm not on duty." "Well, you come to the orderly room, and type up another payroll, and you know you're not allowed to make any mistakes. Because if you do, that person will be redlined, and he won't appreciate that."

[talking simultaneously]

INT: So, but getting back to postwar, so you were just paid in cash, when you were working postwar?

BH: [affirmative]

INT: And again -- do you know who you were actually -- were you working for the Army, as a civilian employee of the Army [23:58]?

BH: Oh, you mean when I was a civilian [24:00]?

INT: Yeah, when you were a civilian, yeah.

BH: No, they had -- no, at that time, I'm sure I was paid by check.

INT: Okay. Yeah, that's what I was trying to figure out, who.

BH: But that, I didn't know --

INT: Okay.

BH: -- who did that.

INT: Do you know who was running Fort Hunt [24:20] at that point?

BH: Well, when I was a civilian, there was only one officer that I can remember. I think he

was the only one. He was an Army [24:29] colonel. I think he was a full colonel. Cone [24:33], spelled C-O-N-E.

INT: Arnold Kohn?

BH: No, no, no, no.

INT: Because there's a Cone who was the adjutant of 1142 postwar. He was at least a captain. And we've actually --

BH: Oh, I think I know who he was.

INT: Okay. Yeah, it was K-O-H-N, I think. This one that was --

BH: This guy was C-O-N-E, that I remember.

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: It wasn't the Jewish [25:00] spelling, K-O-H. That's why it sticks in my mind.

INT: Okay, got you.

BH: I think it was C-O-N. It could've been K-O, or probably C-O-N-E.

INT: Okay. And he was pretty much the only officer that was --

BH: This other guy I think was tall, I remember Cone [25:17] was about medium height.

INT: Okay.

BH: He was the only commander there that I can remember when I was a civilian.

INT: So when you were a civilian, were you reporting to someone in the military, or did you report to another civilian?

BH: I think they were civilians at the time. They were people who worked there. Herman Holley [25:40] [phonetic], he was there. Ivanovski [25:43],

INT: Oh, okay.

BH: Holbrooke [25:49].

INT: Okay.

BH: Holbrooke. He was a captain, or major maybe, by the time. I'm pretty sure.

INT: And they were all there as civilians, afterwards?

BH: I'm not sure [inaudible]. Newland [26:00] worked for the Pentagon [26:01], when I was stationed there in the '70s. Newland, he was a colonel, I think. Yeah, he may have been there.

INT: And they were -- as civilians?

BH: I'm not sure.

INT: Okay.

BH: But those that I mentioned to you, Ivanovski [26:17] --

INT: Herman Holley [26:22]?

BH: Holley, and --

INT: And Holbrooke [26:26]?

[talking simultaneously]

BH: They were there. We used to go out together, after the war.

INT: Really?

BH: We used to meet for supper, or for dinner, you know, for quite a while, yeah.

INT: Is it possible that you were still working, although civilian, for the Military Intelligence Service [26:42]? Is it possible when you were back there as a civilian that you were still working for the Military Intelligence Service?

BH: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

INT: Okay. It was still run by MIS?

BH: It was still run, and they transferred the activity, and they asked us if we wanted to go,

and we didn't want to go, because we figured [27:00] that wouldn't last very long. They transferred it to some facility, I think, in Long Island. I don't remember where. But it was transferred.

INT: Long Island, New York [27:12]?

BH: I'm pretty sure that's where they were taking it, yeah.

INT: Was there a military facility in Long Island, that you're familiar with? Did they mention it?

BH: Well, there was some installation. Roosevelt [27:30] something, but I don't know whether that still exists.

INT: The reason I asked, if it was New York [27:38] was because there was -- we know there was an installation on Long Island, in Boston, I think it was Fort Strong [27:44], where they were working a lot of the Paperclip [27:46] folks. And a lot of the folks from 1142 [27:50] that we've interviewed were all taken from 1142 to go to Long Island [27:55], in Boston.

BH: This was after -- this was in the [28:00] summer of '46.

INT: Okay.

BH: And I'm pretty sure they said -- I know it was New York [28:04], but I'm pretty sure that they said it was somewhere on Long Island [28:11], some facility.

INT: Okay.

INT: Roosevelt -- there's a veteran's hospital [inaudible].

BH: I know they had some installations. I don't know when they were deactivated, but it somehow sticks in my mind.

INT: Okay. We just have a couple minutes of tape left.

BH: I have all the time in the world, if you do.

INT: Well, we'll try to wrap up with this tape. And we're pretty close to concluding here. In terms of -- were you sworn to secrecy again, when you left, do you recall?

BH: I don't believe so.

INT: So it was just that initial, upon entering?

BH: The initial, that I remember.

INT: Okay. Okay. And then that's essentially it, for the questions that I have. We've got a couple minutes of tape left, if either Colonel or Vince [29:00], if you want to ask anything to finish up?

INT: While you're thinking, you seem to have a fairly clear recollection of Strong [29:10], in terms of --

BH: I don't think I ever saw him.

INT: Okay.

BH: He was, they called the G-2. They called him, I think, G-2 at the time. And I think he was the only staff officer who was only a major general. All the others were lieutenant generals. That's how high they esteemed intelligence.

INT: Right, that's kind of still the case.

BH: Yeah. In fact -- no, I think it was his successor, General Bissell [29:42], who signed my appreciation certificate for war [inaudible]. I still have that.

INT: Really? Great. Great.

INT: What's it say on there? Does it say 1142 [29:57], or [30:00] --

BH: I don't recall.

INT: We actually have a copy of one, if it's the same thing. Irwin Lachman [30:08], he met

the czars.

[talking simultaneously]

INT: Yeah, and we've got a good scan of that back at the office.

BH: And it's signed by Clayton Bissell [30:16]?

INT: Yeah, I think that's actually --

INT: His is signed by, too. I think it just says --

BH: My wife shouldn't hear all this because she says, "You remember all these things? Well, why don't you remember what I tell you to do?"

[laughter]

INT: Well, speaking of that, there's a last question as the tape runs out. What did you tell your wife that you -- did you tell her during -- it sounds like, were you dating while you were at 1142 [30:43]?

BH: Oh, yeah, all the time. Well, I told her I was working at this place, and that what they were doing was classified. And very fortunately, she never was very curious as to just what we were doing. I talked about the people, but [31:00] she never showed any great curiosity as to, you know, what was going on.

INT: When did she first learn that it had to do with interrogation?

BH: Well, right when I got there.

INT: Oh, so you did tell her? Okay.

BH: Oh, when she --

INT: Yeah, when she found out.

BH: That I don't remember.

INT: Have you told her yet?

INT: Yeah [laughs].

BH: I imagine if you ask her now what was I doing, she probably couldn't tell you. Not that she was told --

INT: Not to, right?

BH: -- it's a secret, because of military stuff. It just never interested her. And she doesn't understand why am I interested in watching the History Channel, you know, when they talk about ancient battles. I've always been interested in history, I'm very interested in genealogy [31:00] now. And these things are, you know, some of -- what do you want me to do? And I'm very interested in geography, and before the war, you know, unless you could teach, there wasn't any way you could learn that.

[end of transcript]

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