

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
Interview with Erwin Lachmann by Brandon Bies and Sam Swersky  
Washington, D.C.  
February 6, 2007 and March 13, 2007

INTERVIEWER: Today is February 6th, 2007. This is National Parks Service historian Brandon Bies with Fort Hunt Oral History Project, as well as team member Sam Swersky. We're here in the home of Mr. Erwin Lachmann, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 [00:20], and we're going to talk a little bit about his experiences. So, with that, Mr. Lachmann, if we could just start off with a little bit about your own personal background. Your family's background, when you were born, where you were born.

ERWIN LACHMANN: All right. I was born in Berlin in 1922, and I stayed in Berlin until 1933, when -- after the Nazis [00:51] took over, I left with my mother and my father, and we went to Switzerland [00:58]. There [01:00] I went to secondary school for -- I was 11 at the time, and I left Switzerland [01:13] when I was 18. And I crossed over in 1940, in the winter of 1940. I crossed over an unoccupied part of France [01:35]. And parts of Spain and Portugal, to the States.

INT: And if we could back up and cover a little of this in a little bit more detail, if that's okay, what was the background with both your parents? I think you -- last time we spoke, you'd mentioned that your mother had been involved in World War I [01:56] somehow?

EL: Yes. My mother [02:00] was Russian-born. She was born in Kiev, in Russia [02:05], and had been a nurse in World War I [02:08]. And my father was German [02:09]. His family had been in Berlin [02:12] for three generations. They came from a small town. I mean, a great-great-great grandfather was born in a small town in the eastern part of Prussia [02:30]. And my father was a businessman. That's all -- so that's it. Lots of people came over there --

INT: And so, you left Germany [02:49] in 1933. But prior to that, you'd gone to regular German schools and whatnot?

EL: Yes.

INT: And then, why was it your family decided to leave Germany [02:58]?

EL: It was not my [03:00] whole family. It was my mother. She -- I left with my brother, and we went to Switzerland [03:13]. The reason -- as I mentioned, I think, last time, the reason was not anti-Semitism [03:22] per se. It was that my brother came back from school, very enthusiastic about saying that the director of the school, the principal, had made a speech, how great war is. That's why I mentioned my mother went to be a nurse in World War I [03:44], on the Russian [03:45] side. And she was indignant that her children are being taught that kind of attitude about war. And so, she said that, "My children shouldn't stay here [04:00]." And that was the main reason that she always told me that she left. It was not so much the anti-Semitism [04:08]. It hadn't touched us yet. And so, we left in March, I think, or April. March or April 1933. Very early.

INT: In 1933, though, had there been any visual -- or any noticeable impact of the Nazis' [04:29] rise to power?

EL: Oh, yes. There in the streets --

INT: But you were still receiving your education with both Jews and non-Jews --

EL: Yeah.

INT: -- all in the same school?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay. And so, in 1933, that's when you went to Switzerland [04:46]?

EL: Yes.

INT: And you were there -- was it primarily for your brother to attend the school there, or --

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: Of course, to attend school. That's one that it should say [phonetic].

INT: Okay. And how long were you in [05:00] Switzerland for?

EL: From 1933 to December 1940.

INT: And did your father ever rejoin you while you were there?

EL: No.

INT: Okay. Okay. And so, after -- throughout this time, were -- did you face any anti-Semitism [05:23] or anything in Switzerland [05:27]? Or were you --

EL: No, not really.

INT: Okay. And what about when 1940 comes along? Why did you decide to leave Switzerland?

EL: Well, yeah. We felt -- we wanted to go away from Europe, because it looked very grim at that time. We had -- Switzerland [05:51] was almost invaded then, and it's not generally known that the Swiss were very, very nervous. And they don't realize that [06:00] Switzerland was not invaded by the Germans [06:06], but -- and my mother managed to get the visa to the United States [06:11].

INT: Had anyone in your family ever been to the United States [06:16] before?

EL: Yes, my father had been. He was in -- in 1905, I think it was -- anyway, just after the San Francisco [06:31] --

INT: Earthquake?

EL: -- earthquake, yeah, the San Francisco earthquake. And he came back with lots of

photos, and had been all around the United States [06:45], and I went with him, showing the photos that he had. He was in Washington [06:50], he had pictures of Washington. I remember that.

INT: Did you have -- did you know other people in the United States [06:57] at that time?

EL: That's [07:00] a good question. Yes, I -- we did. He had relatives. You needed -- now I've forgotten the name of -- an affidavit. We needed an affidavit in order to immigrate. And we had a distant cousin of my mother who was in New York [07:24], and -- with his wife, and they gave us an affidavit.

INT: Okay. And so --

EL: They were American citizens.

INT: And had they also come recently to the United States [07:39]?

EL: Yeah, I think so. But they'd already been -- no, wait a moment [laughs]. The wife was American-- and he was -- I don't know. He'd been working in Italy. The wife was American.

INT: Okay. And so, in 1940 [08:00], you were telling us a little bit last time, but if you can go into detail -- I guess it was -- I don't think "adventure" is the right term, but it was rather difficult for you to get from Switzerland [08:11] to the United States.

EL: It was stressful. Let's put it that way. It was stressful. You needed visas to get -- so, you needed, first, a visa to get to United States [08:22], you needed an American visa. That was the most important thing. And my mother had studied law in Russia [08:29], and was working very hard at that, to convince the consulate that we were good candidates to get the visa. Visa is difficult to get. You need -- you had to have some wealth; you had to have some connections in the United States, that we did have. And it wasn't a big

problem with us, because the Russian [08:56] quota was empty, because of Stalin's [09:00] policy of not letting anybody out. The German [09:04] quota was, of course, very full. And there's no hope to getting it. So, the problem was that we were -- my mother was born in Russia, so there's no problem. But the German quota -- we were born in Germany [09:21]. So, my mother convinced the consulate, Just in Zurich -- the consulate in Zurich that we were -- well, my brother was already over 18, but we were both were -- we were both underage, and we should be on the mother's quota. And so, we managed to get in.

INT: And so, your actual trip, did you leave direct from Switzerland [09:52], or you mentioned earlier that you had to go through a number of countries?

EL: Yes, all right. We went [10:00] -- there was -- it wasn't easy. We managed -- we heard about a Swiss company that was a private organization. Kind of travel agency that was sending people from Switzerland to Spain [10:24]. We had hired some buses, and -- well, one bus. We were on one bus, I can't say that there were many buses. I didn't see others. But I think they had a regular schedule. And they took refugees there, the people who wanted to go from Switzerland [10:46] to Spain [10:47], where all refugees wanted to get away from Germany [10:51]. I mean, from the Germans -- and so, we traveled to - from Geneva. We stayed overnight in [11:00] France [11:02], and then got on to Barcelona [11:04], to the Spanish border at Barcelona. You want all the details, right?

INT: Sure.

EL: It was kind of dramatic, because we got to -- I think it was Valance [phonetic], in France, and in the bus park [phonetic] that we were supposed to have some coffee. And we went to a café. And, I noticed there was a truck that came, parked next to us, and it was full of

German [11:39] soldiers. This was unoccupied. So, I told them, "I noticed that." I was, at that time -- I knew the uniforms of everybody, and I knew they were not French. I mean, I saw the uniform. I didn't hear them talk. So, I told them how the leader of this group -- there was a chauffeur [12:00], there was a kind of leader from -- these are Germans [12:04]. So, we all rushed to the bus [laughs], and parked somewhere else, got away from the town.

INT: And so, the whole bus was full of immigrants -- well, not immigrants, but folks like yourself, who were refugees.

EL: Yes, I think so. But I really don't know what everybody were -- I was a young man. I knew personally another young fellow. We talked. And there was a family, and I knew some other people who came with us to New York [12:40]. So, well, I can go on, and -- so, we had -- it was also kind of dramatic. We were in a café, and the waiter whispered to us, "Where are you going?" He knew it was the buses [13:00] [phonetic]." So, we said, "We are going to Spain [13:03]." And he said, "Ah, you're going out." And he said, "Tell them how we hate them, how we hate the Germans [13:10]. We are occupied. We are not happy." So, there were all kinds of little things like that. And then, we went to a hotel, and we had to change the hotel, because to stay overnight in Nim [phonetic], I think it was. Somewhere in the south of France [13:28]. And -- because the Belgium [13:31] officers had been there. And so, we changed the hotel, and so on. Finally, we got to the border, the Spanish [13:38] border. That was always very stressful for everybody, because the Spanish guards that entered at the border, the Guardia Civil [13:50] called Madrid [13:56]. He looked it all up, and took all our passports, and looked at them, and so had a normal procedure [14:00]. And -- but they called Madrid or we

were told they called Madrid, but I don't know that exactly. And in Madrid, they checked with the Gestapo [14:16] officer. Because Franco was allied, kind of. Still let the refugees through. And so, they refused entrance to the people the Gestapo [14:30] didn't approve. So, we didn't know, you are stepping at the border, and you didn't know if you came through. And so, we went on to Barcelona [14:44], and there, my brother had a friend from -- he had been at the university, and he had a Spanish friend, and they invited us for lunch, and so on. And then, we [15:00] took a train to Madrid [15:04], and in Madrid, we had a relative that went with us. They invited us to lunch, too. And then, we went on. I won't tell you all the stories, people that talk --

INT: But you -- this is fantastic. This is great.

EL: Well, I'll tell you one story. We got to the -- it was very difficult to get into the train from Madrid [15:27]. It was overcrowded. And recently, I read a story about that. Ah, yes. Well, it's not a story, with other people -- but anyway, it was very difficult to get into the train, because it was overcrowded. And there were very few trains at the -- this was after the civil war in Spain [15:53]. And there were very few trains. And we had to take the train from Madrid [15:59] to Lisbon [16:00]. And luckily, we also had -- my brother also had a friend, I think, from his university days. I mean, it was -- there were Spanish students there. And he had this Spanish student -- and, luckily, the Spanish student hired two strong men to get us into the train. And they went through the window, and threw out people, and then we got -- and their luggage, and we found two seats. And it was quite a scene, there. Anyway, now, the interesting thing is, we went to -- when we got to the Spanish [16:48] border, there's -- to the Spanish border, the Portuguese/Spanish border, we all had to leave the train. And in our [17:00]

compartment was a young American priest of Irish background. We talked to him, so we know. Irish background. And a young student, a Jewish student. There were quite a few Jewish students who went to study in Switzerland [17:21], and other places. In Switzerland, mainly. Because they couldn't get into American universities to study medicine. They were studying medicine. So, the two were friends, and we talked to them. Now, what happened at the border was that you all had to get out of the train, and there was a kind of tent, where there were Spanish [17:48] officers and Portuguese [17:50] officers, I suppose. Photographs. And we all had to stand in line for a long time because the whole train was very full. And we had to stand in line. There was an American couple, middle aged, who went to the front of the line, and said, "We are American citizens." And most of them, they were either Spaniards, as opposed to normal Spaniards, from Portugal, or Portuguese who were going home. But lots of refugees. They went above -- so, the American priest came up, and so, I said, "I'm American citizen too. You go to the front -- to the back of the line, like everybody else." I was very much impressed. I said, "That's the kind of country I want to go to." First of all, this friendship between the priest and the Jewish student. It was very impressive. I said, "That's the first I have seen of America." First action I've [19:00] seen -- very impressive. So, I saw where -- that's the next item I told you already. How about -- when you stand in the American line, it was the export line -- was overcrowded. Everybody wanted to go to America, and many people went through America to other places because not only to America. There were people who went to South America. Everybody wanted to leave Europe. And they were not only Jews. All kinds, all kinds of people wanted to leave Europe. The war was going on. And so, it was very crowded.

We were standing in line. Long line in front of the offices of the export line. And there was this young man, whom I met on the bus, and who was going to America. And he came by, with saying -- he came by somehow [20:00], and said, "Well, you know that -- I just found out that there is a Portuguese ship leaving for the States [20:11], and they may still have some cabins." So, I made the best decision of my life. I went -- I saw a cab passing by, and I was standing with my mother and my brother. And so, my brother -- no, I did it. My brother was two years older than me. I hailed a cab, and this young man had given me the address. It was in the port, you know. He must have said the address -- and we got there, and they said, "Yes, we have a few cabins left, and they're in first class." So, we think about it, and had very nice trip on it because the man hadn't -- didn't realize [21:00] -- that man didn't realize that we were really refugees, and feel the sharp pain, and -- so, that was very nice. Finally, we got to the States [21:12] without any problems. So, that was --

INT: So, they didn't ask if you were refugees? They just -- as long as you paid for the --

EL: Yeah, yeah. They didn't really realize. They just -- that was a line that went only from Lisbon to the Azores. The Portuguese. And it's the first time they crossed the ocean. So, when we got to the States [21:47], I got friendly with some of the young officers there, and we talked French. He didn't know English, but I spoke French, and there were friendly, they showed us [22:00] -- they asked us to come on deck and to the bridge, and showed us this. And one day, they asked us, "Where is Booklin?" We got a radio that we -- a radio message that we should land in Booklin." And so, I told them where Brooklyn was and then, when we got to the States [22:30], because they didn't know any English, they went to the Azores, and they knew some French. So, I had -- and then, the

officials from the port, the -- well, there was a whole boat of officials who came, and so, I -- this was 5:00 in the morning [23:00]. We got off -- my brother and I got up early to see the Statue of Liberty [23:02], and then, we translated for them. First [laughs] good action.

INT: Right. Little did you know --

EL: They asked -- you know, they were, you know, port officials, port authority, New York Port Authority officials came aboard.

INT: So, a few questions. On this whole trip, did you have -- what did you have, in terms of personal belongings?

EL: Oh, we had some suitcases. But we had some things sent. I think, because we had a lot of -- well, no more books. I still have some here. I did -- we had in the States [23:52]. And then, later on -- so, I think -- my grandmother had stayed in Lugano, stayed in Lugano. And [24:00] my grandmother stayed there, and I think she sent some packages and containers of whatever. Packages. Later. It was through whatever existed at that time. Something -- and she came later on, too. But I think what we carried was -- we didn't carry these books with us, and we had just the suitcases.

INT: And so, at this point, had you -- you did speak English?

EL: Yes, I did.

INT: Had you learned that at school?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay. Okay. At this point in your life, what languages did you speak?

EL: I spoke German [24:48], I spoke French, and I spoke English. And English, of course, I could translate. English we live like [phonetic] -- but spent in schools, but one year

[25:00] reading "Othello," by Shakespeare. It wasn't very useful in New York to own copies of this --

INT: [laughs] So, at this point, you came to New York. Did you go through Ellis Island [25:17]?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: At that point, the officials, the immigration officials, came onboard. And there, I did some translations, too [laughs]. I was busy. And they let everybody, as far as I know, go through. Almost everybody. But there were some people they didn't let through, because we knew many people. There was a German [25:44], for example, who had -- what was he -- was making films, and he had been working for [26:00] the Minister of Propaganda, I think Goebbels. I knew him, too. We talked, and he was going to South America, I think. Anyway, he had to go through Ellis Island [26:12]. That's the last time I saw him, if you'll be asking, and so, there were a few people who were selected to go to Ellis Island [26:24]. There was still an immigration office there to look -- they wanted to take a harder look at the people coming through. I forgot to mention about the trip, you were asking all the details. We had all these visas, you see. We had a Portuguese [26:41] visa to get to Portugal, and a Spanish [26:44] visa from -- to get into Spain. And what we also had, a British paper. laissez-passer, they call it. And once we left [27:00] -- the boat left Portugal [27:02], we were stopped by -- as soon as we were in international waters -- that's three miles away -- there was a -- we were stopped by a British boat. And a young officer came on board, and it was also very dramatic. Because he came -- there was this young British officer. He's very elegant. He had his gloves on his hands, and he had --

he looked like the 18th century [laughs]. What do you do earlier? There were -- today's not a good day for me right now, with words.

INT: That's fine.

EL: We were going -- they were warned, you know? We were going, and he was sitting in the back, very elegant. And he came onboard, and he looked at all the passports. I think nobody was taken off [28:00]. But anyway, it was -- had a dramatic event that showed how the British ruled the waves.

INT: And you may have already said this. What was the name of the ship that you were on?

EL: Cavallo Avucho [28:20] [phonetic]. That's called Cavallo Avucho; that's the name -- I asked the Portuguese [28:24] later on, and the Portuguese naval master -- it's the name of some Portuguese.

INT: And so, what did you and your brother and your mother do upon arriving in New York [28:39]? Did you stay in New York? Did you --

EL: No, no. We went to Philadelphia, because in Philadelphia, we -- my mother had good friends. She was a good friend of the wife of a physician. He was a neurologist, and a very well-known neurologist in Berlin [29:00]. And they had come to the States [29:01] a little bit earlier, and got the position very easily, I think, because he was a world-class neurologist. And he was teaching, and he was [unintelligible]. So, we went to Philadelphia to urge that [unintelligible]. And then, that's [inaudible].

INT: And so, did your mother rent an apartment, or buy a house there, in Philadelphia?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: We had an apartment.

INT: And was your brother also studying at that time?

EL: Yes, he did, yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: [inaudible]

INT: So, this -- so, beginning around 1940, you were both studying at Penn?

EL: Yeah.

INT: And did you hold any jobs while you were here, or were you just a full-time student?

EL: No, full-time student.

INT: Okay. And were you at Penn when you found out about America's entry into World War II [29:57], and the bombing of Pearl Harbor [29:59]?

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you remember [30:00] -- did you have any particular reaction to that? Did it come as a surprise, or --

EL: Well, we were a country at war [laughs]. We hadn't been before, actually. And so, that was -- I should -- well, the country at war, and we didn't know what would happen. But it wasn't -- it didn't change your life immediately. But then, my brother got drafted first. He volunteered, kind of. No, he was drafted. And I wanted to be -- I knew I would be drafted, but I wanted to finish my studies -- I mean, the term. Not the whole studies [unintelligible]. But I -- so, I went, too [31:00], and I was also very favorably impressed by the other board, the draft board. And I talked to them. And they were very, very courteous, and very friendly. But see [laughs], they still drafted me about two months before I finished my term, and I could not finish what I had started. And then, I was drafted. How do you want to know about my army life? Do you --

INT: Sure. But real quickly, with being drafted, were you excited? Did you want to be in the military?

EL: Yes, yes, yes.

INT: And to -- I mean, what was your reaction? Did you consider yourself, at this time, to still be German [31:47], or were you an American citizen at this point?

EL: At this point, I was not.

INT: Okay.

EL: Not yet. But I was very glad to go, to be drafted -- I didn't volunteer [32:00], just because of the university; I wanted to finish the few courses that I started. I thought it would be an advantage to finish these courses in the middle of the administration [phonetic], a few months. And then, I was sent to Fort McClellan [32:21], by train, all the way through -- Fort McClellan, several days. But anyway, and there, I wasn't --  
[End of Tape 1A]

[Beginning of Tape 1B]

EL: He said what's that -- we listened to the speech of Bozer [phonetic], and so, onto the first war [phonetic]. There was a kind of shock for everybody else. But I just -- I remember being at war, we were heading into conflict and war. And not to go back -- that was go back [phonetic] --

INT: Sure.

EL: We left Germany [00:46] in 1933. But 1934 -- yes, that was '34 -- my father would stay home, back in Berlin [01:00]. Thought it would be safe to come back for two weeks of vacation. And my father had a very good relationship, he was a good friend of the police sergeant, an officer of the police station. And he -- always gave him some hints. What

can be done, what cannot be done, how dangerous things are -- and he told -- the police sergeant said that if you want to see your wife, or your children, it's all right now. It's not difficult to get a permit of some kind. You need a permit to get through. So, we went back. And it was for three weeks. I was really -- that was very important in my life. I was living under the Nazis [01:55]. They were in power. And when we left, they were still not in power [02:00]. The uniforms were not complete, and such. But they were in power, and there were uniforms everywhere. And it was a terrible atmosphere. I don't know if we regret [phonetic] -- the famous -- novel, I was reading, at the time, a famous novel by Sienkiewicz, "Quo Vadis." They made a movie out there. "Quo Vadis." It's about Christians in early Rome. It's about St. Peter. And I was reading that. It was a well-known novel. And I was reading it, and it was the same atmosphere. The one conversation -- who is still alive? Who is still -- who has been arrested, please? It was a terrible atmosphere. We sent to see my mother, said, "You better go and play. Erwin, you're back so why don't you play tourist and see the museums and everything [03:00] that's worthwhile seeing? We were ten and eleven, ten and twelve. Anyway, I wanted to tell you this important thing, but I talked to lots of people who were in concentration camps later on, and who had been in Germany [03:18], and so on. And I -- of course, we had been in Switzerland [03:21], and we were really outside of that. So, most of these people had been under Hitler [03:28]. But I had been two weeks -- it was enough.

INT: So, that obviously made quite an impression upon you, because --

EL: It was really terrible.

INT: Did you -- have you ever returned to Germany [03:44]?

EL: No, I did not.

INT: And even to this day, have you --

EL: To this day, I did not.

INT: Did you -- throughout the remainder of your time in Switzerland [03:58], and when you were here in the United States [03:59], were you able to maintain [04:00] contact with your father, and writing letters, and --

EL: Yes, yes.

INT: And so, here -- back in the United States [04:11] -- did you have fairly strong feelings, especially after having made that trip, even just for a few weeks, about wanting to join the military?

EL: Yes.

INT: You mentioned about wanting to finish your studies.

EL: Yeah.

INT: But were you fairly patriotic and wanting to --

EL: Yes, yes. And I became a citizen in Fort McClellan [04:35]. And there was a special sergeant, officer, in charge of that organization. And my brother was -- did a job in Florida. He was in the Air Force, deployed there, and he was sergeant for that organization -- [unintelligible] [05:00]. And so, we had -- I was naturalized in Fort McClellan [05:10]. There was a special -- well, we had to fill out some papers and so on. And then, we went to the court in Anniston, Alabama. So, I'm a citizen of Alabama, that was it. Was interested, then -- I don't know, I'll tell you all the stories that I remember.

INT: Sure.

EL: When I was waiting for the bus to take us to the courts, I noticed two young fellows. Two soldiers. They were a little bit older than most [unintelligible]. And they were

talking French. And I listened, at any rate. I said a few words, I think. And they said that they had been -- I asked them something, where they're from [06:00], and they said they were from Spain [06:02], and they had been in the Spanish Civil War on Franco's side. I asked them, "Where are you from," so, they have -- they said they had military experience, which I thought was just soldiers, but they had military experience, they had been fighting in the civil war in Spain. I'll tell you a story, because when the court started the proceedings and called them up, and they were -- one was a Bourbon, the Spanish, and the other one was French, was also a Bourbon. And the judge asked, "Are you renouncing all the claims you have on any foreign territory?" So, one said, "I renounce my claim on France [06:56]." And the other one -- "And all its [07:00] territories, and I will renounce my claim on Spain [07:03], and all its territories." They were of the royal family, and they had legal claims, in theory, on both countries. And you know, you have to renounce when you become a citizen. You have to renounce claims. So, I mentioned that this [unintelligible] about that.

INT: Do you remember about the date when this happened, when you were drafted, or even what year it was?

EL: Yes, of course. In '43.

INT: Okay.

EL: '43, and it was in March '43.

INT: Okay.

EL: Yeah, and I became a citizen soon afterwards.

INT: Okay.

EL: It was very organized. It came through the system very soon. You know, quite a few --

like I said, buses -- Fort McClellan [07:55]. Fort McClellan had 40,000 trainees [08:00], and it was a training camp. Almost entirely, as far as I know. And there were 40,000 men there. And there were several buses. You could [inaudible]. And so, I had my training there, and I was -- this was infantry. And I -- but then, there was a moment when several of us were called to headquarters, and we had to take some exams. We all were wearing glasses. And the doctor decided that we were not fit for the infantry. We didn't see well enough. And so, we were assigned to the training [09:00] regiment headquarters. And it was the three of us, and -- in the mail center there. Anyway, to make a long story short, I went on leave to New York [09:20], and talked to my mother, who was in New York. And she said that, true, all my friends are in intelligence, they were in Fort -- Camp Ritchie [09:33]. You might have heard about Camp Ritchie and so on. "And why don't you try to be in intelligence. That would be much more useful than being in the infantry." And so, I talked to my commanding officer, and the first thing I knew is that -- gets getting out [phonetic]. There's a story of [unintelligible] was telling [09:54] or Dean was telling, about a phone call -- anyway, [10:00], I got the cut that -- the term they use -- they cut special orders for me to go to Alexandria, Virginia [10:11]. From Anniston, Alabama. And I had this paper, and I was the only enlisted man in the whole train, because they're all officers going, you know, on their own. It was not -- but they were all officers going to special assignments and so on. So, I had this paper. And I got to Alexandria [10:36], and then, I was told to wait -- I mean, I was told to get -- go to the station, and the truck would pick me up. So, I went from the station in Alexandria [11:00]. And there was a truck that came. A sergeant was in the truck. It's just -- "Are you private" -- I was private at the time -- "Private Lachmann?" And I said, "Yes." "Just

hop in.” So, I hopped in, and I thought, “Well, now I’m going to be Bond.” Bond wasn’t known there, but a big spy. And so I got to 1142 [11:28].

INT: And so, you knew that you were doing something in military intelligence.

EL: Yes.

INT: You just didn’t know what.

EL: I didn’t know what.

INT: Okay.

EL: They didn’t tell me.

INT: But they -- when you were at --

EL: But I thought I would be a spy, or something very exciting. And I was just -- at 1142 [11:45], in your description, the articles, you [phonetic] -- you make it seem very exciting. It wasn’t that exciting, for me, at least. But anyway, I got into intelligence [12:00].

INT: And so, for what you were about to do at 1142 [12:04], you didn’t receive any special training while you were at Fort McClellan [12:08] or anything?

EL: No, no.

INT: Okay. You just had to impress upon them that you were able to speak German [12:12]?

Was that the -- or did they even ask that?

EL: That’s a good question. I don’t know when they -- I talked to -- well, I don’t remember. I can’t tell you. I know I talked to my commanding officer, and the rest of it is on papers. But I don’t remember the question that they ask, or something -- I don’t remember.

INT: At this point, were you in touch with your brother? Was he already --

EL: No, he came later. He came a month later or so.

INT: Okay. Okay.

EL: I was first, I think. Then, he appeared, a surprise. And we both thought there must be some officer in the Pentagon [12:58] who wasn't -- who [13:00] thought that people who studied in Switzerland [13:03], but they all know languages. The one thing we had in common, two of us. And there were other people who had been in Switzerland. There was something -- some officer was interested in the Swiss background [inaudible]. There were several Swiss people, or people who had been to Switzerland [13:25], in our unit.

INT: Okay. And so, time -- this would have been -- I think last time we spoke, you said this was around April of 1944.

EL: Yeah, March, April.

INT: Okay. Is when you got to 1142 [13:39].

EL: It was before Normandy [13:42]. I remember that.

INT: Okay.

EL: Because -- yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: '44.

INT: Okay. And so, could you describe your initial reactions to suddenly being at this new place, and what it was like arriving there [14:00], and what were you told that your job was going to be there?

EL: The -- my reaction was -- well, it's another assignment. I was a bit disappointed, because I thought -- I realized immediately that I was not going to go overseas. And there was a master sergeant, I think, at that time [phonetic]. They're called master sergeant, from Philadelphia. He told me about secrecy, this kind of thing. And I immediately helped --

or he told me the name of -- I'm not going to be sent overseas. And I asked him [phonetic] -- and on my first assignment was -- and there was an interesting assignment. There was a major. He had a kind of -- he was a pretty high officer [15:00]. For me, I think he was a major. And he was not a second lieutenant; he was a major, he had been a lawyer. He had a kind of -- don't remember his name. He had a kind of Hungarian name, but you -- [unintelligible]. He was a lawyer -- an important man, for me, at least. And he said, "You are going to be in charge of documentation. We get a lot of documents." The prisoners bring with them a lot of papers. I mean, they have address books, they have letters, they have their orders to official documents, and so on. And we're trying to go through them, and see if anything is useful [16:00]. And so, I started on that. It was very interesting, but there was a problem with me. I didn't know how to type. And everything had to be documented. Every document had to be entered into a file. And I was typing like this, and this major thought, "You are too slow at typing, and I can't have that." So, I was several weeks there and was fired.

[laughter]

Rather immediately. And I was put to that unit that was listening to the prisoners. And I -- the rest of my time, I was doing this.

INT: You were in the room monitoring?

EL: Room monitoring.

INT: Okay.

EL: And so, that's my first impression. Now, I can tell you some interesting things that I -- I told you before [17:00], I think, of the documents. Some of the documents I saw when I was working on them. It was my official function. But I was working with a friend, a

colleague, and he showed me a few things. I've forgotten them. When I saw -- but there were some interesting things. The most interesting one was this German [17:27] Navy officer. And I think I told you this story.

INT: Please tell it again. Tell --

EL: Sure, sure. The Navy officer who was from the -- I'll try to remember his name now. Hapsburg [phonetic] -- from Hapsburg, I think. But I'm not sure. And he was from the top aristocracy in Vienna, and he joined -- he was staffed at -- I mean, he joined the Navy. And [18:00] his mother gave him addresses in case [laughs] he's taken prisoner, so he has connections in the other world, the democratic world. And the first list -- he had a little book. And the first book I saw was [unintelligible] the King of England [18:23]. Buckingham Palace [18:24]. So, Buckingham Palace, so he wouldn't miss it. And there were other people like that. It was a very strange, you see, at least something that you remember. And he was -- he became the little darling. I say that in some pejorative way, because the Navy just loved him. He was very cooperative. He spoke fluent English of course, and very cooperative. And after a while, he was -- he got civilian clothes [19:00], and he was in Washington all the time. He was a handsome young fellow, and he had all these girlfriends in Washington [19:08]. He had a wonderful time. And I don't know what happened later on, but he was a kind of -- he had special orders with the Navy, with the Navy component. So, I don't know how much he talked, how much information he gave. I had one impression, that they liked him because of his personality. He was a very nice fellow. Because, in contrast to Hilger [19:37], whom you have not forgot [phonetic], he was only in the early 20s. He said he couldn't have known much about the German [19:47] navy. He was an officer, so, anyway, he

was the -- our prime -- our prime guest [20:00], I would say. Prime guest. He had a wonderful time.

INT: And so, do you remember, was he held there for quite some time? It sounds like he was there for a little while.

EL: Yeah, he was there for quite some time. Of course, he couldn't go back to Germany [20:12]. And he didn't want to. And I don't know where he went, somewhere else, later on. Probably not Buckingham Palace [20:23], [laughs] but he went somewhere, perhaps. But anyway, he had a very good time. So, that was one prisoner I remember well. And so, yeah, that's because of his documents, his address book. There were other address books that were interesting. But this documentation I found that -- the most interesting.

INT: Did it surprise you that there were so many documents captured? I mean, to me, in my own modern impression, I would think, if you were being captured, you would want to destroy any documents that you [21:00] had. But did a lot of these prisoners have documents on them?

EL: Yes. We had a whole section. And there were quite a few documents. A person -- of all the documentation, you had to ask, do you have the listing [phonetic]? There was a Dutchman was in charge later on, for all the time I was there, and he would tell you about the details of -- yeah, that's right. I never thought about that. Why did they carry with them so many documents? Some of them. I don't know. It's an interesting question. Why did they -- well, we had very -- of course, many officers -- there were so many officers. And I think some of them at least -- well, this is a typical case. I mean [22:00], other people also tried to have contact once they are prisoners of war. And they wanted to show -- you see, the people we got were selected with some -- many of them were self-

selected. As I mentioned before, my theory about Fort Hunt [22:24] -- I'm sure other people don't share, but my own theory. It was an anti-Guantanamo. At least, in the period when I was there, it was an opportunity for people to talk. For the first time in 13 years, they could talk freely to authorities, to other people. Perhaps they could talk in the family, but not to other people. Would talk about what they knew about the Nazi [22:51] regime, and what they didn't like. And some of them liked to talk anyway, and they wanted to show -- I think they had these documents [23:00] because they wanted to show how important they are. They wanted to show that they are important. They have something to tell and so on, in case they are prisoners, and took it with them.

INT: And could you expand on that? Just talk a little bit more about your theory?

EL: Yes, I'll be glad to. Seagull -- [unintelligible] -- that's in the other prison [unintelligible] focus on Guantanamo. The other prison camps, and the first reaction when they were taken prisoner on the front line were interrogations, of course. And many of them said -- well, only -- what they called the Geneva Convention [23:48], they just have to say their name, and their serial number. And then, have these interrogations. And some thought that [24:00] "there might be a chance for me to say more, and to talk to American authorities, military leaders. And this will contribute to the war against Germany [24:21]." And they hadn't make up their mind. Of course, they weren't saying that to anybody, and so, they were self-selected when they had a small -- a chance to go somewhere else, something special. Some -- that I don't know, what they were told. How were they got dropped off at that place, but I'm sure that some were self-selected. They said, "Can't we talk to a higher officer?" That's it. "I may have something to say to a higher officer." That's usually the case when people are put in prison. They always

want to see the boss, get better treatment and so on.

INT: Sure.

EL: They don't want to deal [25:00] with privates and sergeants. And so, they talked to a higher officer. So, the higher officer was in the front line. That's their captain or colonel. Said, "Harry [phonetic], he wants to talk to me. What does he want to say?" And so, they said, "Well, I was in a scientific outfit, that's a scientist, some scientific background," or "I was a key officer for transportation of troops from east to west Germany [25:38], and so on. And so, this colonel knew about 1142 [25:46], and sent people to 1142. And there were, of course, civilians [unintelligible] you as a civilian. And so, there was [26:00] selected, and self-selected. And so, this way, we had a lot of people just talk. And especially toward the end. They had this attitude, too; everyone -- there were more people who talked freely. But some people were selected. Not self-selected, but they were really Nazis [26:22] [phonetic], and they didn't want to talk much.

INT: Do we need to change --

INT: We're going to stop real quick.

[End of Tape 1B]

[Beginning of Tape 2A]

INT: Okay, this is the second in the series of taped interviews with Mr. Erwin Lachmann here at his home. Today is February 6th, 2007. This is Brandon Bies with the Fort Hunt Oral History Project, as well as team member Sam Swersky. And we're going to go ahead and pick right up where we left off on the last tape. And if you just want to keep going with what you were speaking about, that's just fine.

EL: Where was I [laughs]? When I arrived -- documents, yeah. I think it was documents.

No, I don't remember any other documents, really, that I saw.

INT: That stand out?

EL: I've seen quite a few. All the general orders, you know, like, medical orders, U.S. Army, and so on. And [unintelligible] [01:00] they had some private -- yeah, they had some private memories -- that's right. They had letters from their wives that they carried with them or their children. And their -- so, that was very useful for interrogations, because we knew the relationship to their wives. I mean, it is useful to mention that we knew that, and people became more open and at least the interrogators, told us this. They were open, and more friendly, and so on, if we knew their background.

INT: And so, would you -- you would pass that -- if you were to read a letter, would you type up a report or something, then pass them on to the interrogator?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: They were aware of everything. Yes, we did that. So, there was documentation that you show the soldier [phonetic] [02:00].

INT: Any maps, or anything like that? Battle maps, or --

EL: I hadn't -- there were quite a few maps around. But I don't know if they came with the prisoners, or we just had them. We asked -- at that time, the Army Map Service [02:19] didn't exist. But they asked all kind of maps from the intelligence units that [unintelligible]. I think we -- quite a few maps around, but I don't think they were carrying maps with them. I don't know. Maybe. But I know we had maps, because we -- when people were in the -- they'd mentioned they were on a certain town. We had maps

of the town that the interrogators looked at where they lived, and looked, you know, at the street [03:00] [unintelligible]. We had maps around, but I don't know if they were brought in by prisoners [03:07]. I don't think so.

INT: And so, after you were done with these documents, did they -- were they filed -- did you file them away somewhere, or --

EL: Yes, yes. They would be filed --

INT: So, they weren't destroyed?

EL: No, they were not destroyed. And they should be available. I know -- you wanted to ask -- I'll look later on at the list, and I'll mention the person that was in charge.

INT: What's that [phonetic]?

EL: Maybe alive, I don't know.

INT: Okay. And so, you were involved looking at documentation for just a brief -- a few weeks, a few months?

EL: Yeah, a few weeks.

INT: Okay.

EL: Okay, and then, I was assigned to that unit, was listening, and I listened for the rest of my time. Except some special assignments, like Hilger [03:58]. I know it's [04:00] -- he told me that [unintelligible]. I didn't know that. It might be after I was assigned, I don't know.

INT: And so, if you could talk a little bit about the monitoring.

EL: Yes.

INT: What were you told -- were you given some instructions, or did they --

EL: Yeah, we were read some instruction. We had a bulletin board, where things were put on

-- especially when -- obviously, we did -- it wasn't always you knew about that [phonetic]. I remember there's a bulletin board, and they had the new miracle weapons of the Germans [04:43]. They had these -- the jets. And all kind of new things that they had. And everything along those lines, we had to write down. And so, there were bulletin boards [05:00], and from time to time, you heard not only about the weapons, or the technical things. There were other things, too. And then this was the beginning of our assignment today, and I know how many hours this -- but there was a bulletin board, and we looked at the bulletin board, and then we sat down with earphones, and listened, and wrote down on some forms. You have the forms.

INT: [affirmative]

EL: And on the forms, we put down our name, the date, the hour, and, of course, there were two people who were talking. And what they said, of importance. Of course, unfortunately, much of what they said was of no importance whatsoever. They talked about their girlfriends.

INT: Would you be listening in [06:00] -- would you be assigned just to one room, or would you be assigned to a whole cell of rooms?

EL: One room.

INT: Okay.

EL: Definitely. Like a cell. One room. Well, one room, and for several hours. We were mainly during the day. So, sometimes -- when somebody was important, we listened at night, too. Because they might wake up and start talking.

INT: Would people always had roommates, though? Would they always be in groups of two? Or were they ever with three, or were they ever by themselves?

EL: Good question. I don't remember now. Certainly, there were two. I mean, well, makes sense. I mean, they weren't talking to themselves. So, that happened, too [phonetic] -- I'm sure with -- anyway, so, there were two. But then, there must have been three sometimes. I think there's three. And there were not four. I think it was difficult to hear [07:00] who was saying what when there were four. But I think there were three sometimes.

INT: How was the quality of the listening? Could you hear very clearly?

EL: Yeah, I could. I could. And I remember -- now, I listen sometimes to TV, German [07:22] TV and so on. And when they have local access, I find it difficult now, after all these years, I never -- [unintelligible] and I never went back to Germany [07:34]. But then, I could hear all these different accents. And I realized some were Bavarians, some were Northern Germany. My German [07:49] was so much better then, than now. But I haven't used it much. And so, I could hear clearly. Technically it was [08:00] pretty good. Good enough so that I could understand; you see, we didn't have only officers there. We had also soldiers for one reason or another, and we talked the local dialect, local accents. And I remember understanding them and telling the east from the Bavarians. [08:21] But I knew that, and could understand it. So, I'm looking back at this now, and I'm kind of surprised that I could do that with [phonetic] -- none of us technically was very good [phonetic].

INT: Could you make recordings? We've seen some references to a -- either with a record, or with a tape. And if the conversation got real interesting, make a recording. Do you recall --

EL: Yeah, I think so. We had that. I'd forgotten about that. But I think we could push the

button of some kind. And when it was getting interesting, and I was writing down -- and then, record [09:00].

INT: Okay.

EL: Yeah, I think we did that.

INT: Okay.

EL: Yes.

INT: But was it your job, or was it someone else's job, to listen to that recording once it was made, and --

EL: Yeah, it was somebody else.

INT: Okay.

EL: I didn't listen to it again. It disappeared. My text handle [phonetic], the pencil. And the recording was unclear [phonetic] -- I don't know where.

INT: And so, do you know if any of the prisoners [09:32] ever realized that they were being recorded?

EL: That's a very good question. I think, sometimes, at the beginning, they said something like, "Shh, we might be recorded; they might be listening to us."

INT: At the beginning, as soon as a new prisoner would walk in?

EL: Yeah, something like that. And when you first got in there [phonetic]. And -- but [10:00] normally, I can't [unintelligible] -- other instance [phonetic] psychologically. Some of the prisoners [10:09] were alone for some time in the cell. And it's very well-known psychologically, they were very eager to talk. Very, you could see it immediately, and I think that was done on purpose. I think they were alone in the cell for, let's say, three days. Not very long. But after a few days, it's normal for a human being to want to

talk. And then, somebody else comes in, and they ask who you are, what is it -- and so on, and how long, and then, they start talking. People don't often talk about things of interest, but they talk about their wives, and their life, and so on. And it comes out in bursts, you know. It's interesting, psychologically. I found that the [11:00] -- general rule, somebody had not been talking for some time, with hardly any exceptions. They burst forth with all kinds of things that they wanted to talk about.

INT: But -- so, most of the time, though, you don't think they knew they were being recorded? Just sometimes?

EL: No, only sometimes. In my experience, sometimes get -- was getting interesting. So, I wrote down -- he's talking about -- oh, it comes back now to me. He's talking, let's say, about weapons. He's talking about weapons. Mention that, which weapons. And then, recording starts.

INT: Okay. And so, would some -- did it vary? Would some prisoners be very productive [12:00] -- that is, would they talk a lot, and other ones would not talk a good bit, or --

EL: Yeah, that's right. After the first burst [laughs], that's usually the case. And some people were not talkative. I don't know if they realized that we were listening to them or not. They were Nazi [12:21] types, of course. And they were hard-edged, and they were talking, but nothing of importance. They knew what not to say. And they were not really talkative or friendly to the other fellow. Sometimes, when they realized that the other fellow had been in the same S.R., you know, or S.S. [12:46], then they talked more. Usually, the Nazi [12:51] types were suspicious of the other fellow. They were -- this was toward the end of the war. And they knew there were quite a few people who were not Nazis [13:00]. And they were kind of [unintelligible], and haughty, and didn't want

to talk too much.

INT: Did -- what was I going to say -- let me ask you another question. Could you ever see the prisoners [13:19]? Did you ever -- you didn't have a way of looking into the rooms, or anything like that?

EL: No, no.

INT: Okay. Did you see prisoners out and about, walking around?

EL: Yeah, but I did not know who was who.

INT: Okay. And so, you would have no way of knowing if you'd been listening in to one person's conversation, or anything?

EL: No.

INT: Okay. Do you know what happened with the information that you were writing down, the notes, and everything?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Was that just handed off to someone, and you never saw it again?

EL: Yeah. We had a box where we put them in. And the box was lifted by somebody, and on to interrogators, or whatever.

INT: Would you ever listen in [14:00] on an actual interrogation with an American and a prisoner?

EL: No.

INT: Or was it just the rooms?

EL: Just the rooms.

INT: Okay.

EL: I am not so sure. I think I did. I think I did, but it didn't stay in my memories. I think I

did, because I remember someone that was a -- speaking German [14:27] with an American accent, and asking questions. Somehow -- it's very vague. It was unusual. But I did listen. The -- they must have come into the cell, and asked questions.

INT: Were you aware of a practice that was used at Fort Hunt [14:50], that takes the common name of a "Stoolpigeon [14:53]," where they would take a German [14:58] prisoner [14:59] who was sympathetic, and put [15:00] them in the cell? Do you know anything about that, or does that ring any bells to you?

EL: I think so. I think there were some. I think there were some, but, again, I don't remember any particular case. But I remember, there were some, I think. For prisoners [15:23] who had some very interesting information. But I can't really remember specifically, but I have the impression there were some.

INT: Did you ever -- not when there was a prisoner [15:37] there, but did you ever see what the prisoner rooms looked like? Did you ever get to see what -- how it was set up, or --

EL: I think so, yes. For one reason or other. Because, I don't know, some people took me around for this or that. I've forgotten [16:00] -- I did see some cells.

INT: Where were you actually conducting the monitoring? Were you in the same building as the prisoners [16:12] were in, just a different part? Or were you in a totally different building?

EL: Totally different building. It was a special building that was -- that they'd formerly used, I think for munitions in previous wars. It was kind of underground. It was underground, and I could identify it, you know, if you had a map or something. It was underground.

INT: And so, was this close to where the prisoners [16:47] were? But it wasn't inside the barbed wire fence --

EL: It was not.

INT: Okay.

EL: It was not.

INT: And you remember it being somewhat underground?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did you get the idea that it was built specifically for that purpose [17:00], or that it had been used for something else?

EL: No, I think it was used for munitions. It was kind of underground, with solid walls, and I had the impression it was used for munitions in previous wars. It was [inaudible].

INT: Do you know -- do you remember how many other monitors, like yourself, would have been in that building at any given time?

EL: Yeah. I think a dozen or so.

INT: Okay.

EL: There would only be a few of them. A dozen seems pretty high. Between six and a dozen.

INT: And would you -- were you all in one large room, or did you have your own --

EL: No, no. We had a whole private room, yes.

INT: Okay, okay. When you were listening in, was it headphones that clamped your ears, or was it coming out of the speakers in the wall? How did you actually hear the sound?

EL: I think we had headphones.

INT: Okay [18:00].

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay. Let's see, here. When you were doing this monitoring, was it always in the same

building, or was there a time where you would go --

EL: No --

INT: Was there only one monitoring location for all of 1142 [18:19]?

EL: As far as I know.

INT: Okay.

EL: As far as I know. Because I couldn't be sure that -- there must have been some others, too. I don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: I always went to the same, and my friends and colleagues were always going to the same --

INT: Did you get the sense that there was anything else in 1142 [18:19] that was bugged with microphones, besides the prisoner [18:46] rooms? Was there --

EL: No.

INT: -- were there exercise yards where the prisoners got to go outside and -- do you know if they --

EL: I don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: No. I didn't hear anything.

INT: Okay.

EL: Because my [19:00] earphones are what I heard. If you mean set to their walking [phonetic], no.

INT: Okay. Was your brother stationed at 1142 [19:10], and if so, can you tell us a little bit about when he arrived, and --

EL: Well, he arrived, and he was, at that time, a first lieutenant, I think. Second lieutenant. Anyway, he was an officer. And he lived in town, in Alexandria [19:29], near King Street. And he had an apartment with his wife, and I was there very often. And he had some friends invited. And he had some enlisted men that he invited, too. Of course, while I was involved there, he wouldn't able to [inaudible]. But I was there often [unintelligible] [20:00]. I lived in barracks.

INT: Okay.

EL: Like most of the people I mentioned, we were all in the same barracks.

INT: Okay. I'm going to talk about that in a few minutes, about what your living conditions were like. But staying on this subject of your brother, do you know what he was involved in, what his actual role at 1142 [20:23] was?

EL: He was interrogating. As far as I know. He didn't talk much about it. So, that [unintelligible] answer.

INT: Did you not talk much because it was understood that it was secret information, and you weren't supposed to share it?

EL: Yeah, yeah.

INT: Okay, okay. How -- do you know if he received any special training to be an interrogator?

EL: That's a good question. That's a good question. Did he? I don't know [21:00]. I don't [unintelligible].

INT: And what about -- when he was at 1142, did he end up going elsewhere to do interrogations as well, or was he just at 1142 [21:14]?

EL: After his stay at 1142, I know he went to several other assignments. But I wasn't -- it had

something to do, sometimes, also, with prisoners [21:33]. Or, people -- prisoners of -- but that was after. I don't think -- after 1142 [phonetic], he went to an assignment. He had left -- if he did, I don't know. But I know, after the assignment, he went to New York [21:54]. He had an assignment in New York, and he went on boats that [unintelligible] [22:00]. So, it had something to do with prisoners [22:05]. It was very shortly after -- we were still in the army. He was not discharged, yet. But he had other assignments after 1142 [22:17].

INT: Okay. Do you recall if there were any other sets of brothers who were stationed at 1142?

EL: Ah, good question. I don't think so. I mean, I don't recall it.

INT: Because you're the only set that we found. I was just curious if that was unique.

EL: No, no, I think it was unique.

INT: But did anybody get the sense -- or, did you get the sense that you ever received any special treatment because your brother was an officer, or anything like that?

EL: No, no.

INT: Okay. You had said that your brother lived -- he and his wife had an apartment in Alexandria [23:00], but you lived in the barracks area?

EL: The barracks area.

INT: Can you describe anything you recall about that? How many people were there, and what -- how -- if it was old or new, or --

EL: I know it was cold [laughs]. They were not comfortable. But that's -- I remember it was very cold. But otherwise -- what was your question, again?

INT: Anything, any descriptions that you remember about the barracks. How big they were, or --

EL: There were over 20 people.

INT: Okay.

EL: And they had beds in the style --

INT: Were they bunk beds, or just single?

EL: I really don't remember that. I remember some single. But there might have been bunk beds, too, at different times. I really don't know.

INT: Sure [24:00].

EL: And there was a latrine outside.

INT: So, you had to walk outside to use the latrine?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Were the people who lived in your barracks, were they all room monitors, or did they have all different jobs there at 1142 [24:16]?

EL: The ones I knew were all room monitors. We had other assignments for interrogation, but ever -- they might have had some assignments, but the ones, as far as I knew, at that time -- see, I read about it [phonetic], you know, other assignments. I'm not saying that they didn't. But they were all monitors.

INT: Okay. What about other facilities there at 1142 [24:46]? Did you eat on post, was there a mess hall --

EL: Yeah, there was a mess hall.

INT: Okay.

EL: There was a mess hall. So, the food [25:00] wasn't very good. What you would expect -  
- we had chicken a la king, because the mess sergeant was selling chicken on the side.  
So, you know, he cuts off little pieces and gave it to us. Anyways.

INT: What about anything else for entertainment or relaxation while you were there?

EL: There was a movie once a week. I mean, compared to most army posts, it was a very luxurious outfit because we had movies once a week, on Sunday evening. And we saw lots of bad movies, but we couldn't wait to see the movie. This was like any other armies -- they also had -- I mean, [unintelligible], it was the only other army post that was on there [phonetic]. And they also had movies. Much [26:00] better choice, because they had several movies here [phonetic]. But here they had movies once a week, and there was a swimming pool someplace and at certain hours, enlisted men could swim.

INT: And did you take advantage of that, did you --

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you remember, did they ever let prisoners [26:21] play in the pool?

EL: Yes, I did. I did, and I have stories of that.

INT: Okay. Would you want to -- we can -- if you want to save that for -- are they related to your special assignments?

EL: No.

INT: Okay, well, please, go right ahead, then.

EL: No, it was not -- because I remember very clearly, and I was discussing that the commanding officer, Serbou [phonetic], a general [26:43] -- in France [26:46] and it was under siege by American troops. And he got special orders from Hitler [26:58] that he should [27:00] never surrender. He should die there. All the people should die there. And they all did, except a few officers who were taken prisoners [27:11]. And the first thing we did -- I had read all this in the paper, you know, that he was taken prisoner, he was named, so on, in the paper. And then, what do I do? What did I see? He was diving

into the pool. I thought about it [phonetic] discussed it -- he had such a -- he's swimming in the pool, and all the -- not all, but many of us saw this stuff [phonetic], you know, following orders of Hitler. So, that's one thing I remember. You know, the pool. So, what else -- you had questions -- because we didn't get to some subjects here.

INT: Sure, sure, and I'm trying to just go through and systematically cross things off of my mental list.

EL: Sure.

INT: But I do want to -- and if we get to the end, and we haven't covered everything, please jump right in. With -- at 1142 [28:11], did you get the impression -- we talked a little bit about this last time.

EL: Yeah.

INT: That a good number of your fellow comrades there, the room monitors, interrogators, were immigrants to the United States [28:26]?

EL: Yes.

INT: You'd said before that some were, and some weren't.

EL: Yeah. They were not all. That's an important point to make. They were not all. We were not all German [28:38] Jews. They were -- I don't know -- there were most of us, I'd say, you know. Many, better than most. Because there were -- they all -- the ones that I -- they all knew languages. And generally, they knew more than one language. That was really obvious. And there were a number [29:00] -- now, I might mention some that I remember particularly. Among Americans, there were two or three I remember particularly. I remember Craig [29:15] [phonetic], of course, I mentioned him. He has a very wealthy family in Chicago, and had lived in a palazzo in Venice, because they had a

palazzo when he was in Venice. And he had also been, for a time -- well, at the beginning of the war, he went -- he was in Zurich in Switzerland [29:38]. And then, he went back to Chicago. His family called him back and didn't know what to do with him, and sent him to land that they owned, property. A large estate that they owned in New Mexico [29:52]. And he became an agent to Navajo [30:00]. And he knew many languages, so it was very easy, not only the German [30:06] -- of course, he knew Italian and French, German, and so on. He was a very interesting fellow; I knew him pretty well. But this was one American. Not a refugee, not Jewish and so on. And I remember one -- somebody who was not Jewish. Bader. He had a moustache. He was older. And some -- he was from Geneva blockade [phonetic], French, I think. And I remember that -- I mean -- and then, there was a very good friend of mine, Carlo Weiss [30:58], who was Italian [31:00]. And from Trieste. There were many -- if I look at the picture, I think --

INT: Sure, sure, yeah. And what I thought we might do -- this is great, but I thought we might do -- we need to switch -- is, at some point, go ahead and maybe go through the picture, and go through that list of names --

EL: [unintelligible]

INT: -- and just spend -- maybe just spend a whole 20, 30 minutes going through what you remember from that.

EL: Yeah, sure, then the --

INT: We can either do that today or another time. If you want to --

[End of Tape 2A]

[Beginning of Tape 2B]

EL: One was that I heard --

[audio break]

INT: We'll just pick back up where we left off.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And if -- I'm trying to think if we were -- what we were talking about, or if you would rather just, right now, start talking about some of what you remember you learned from listening in on some of the room conversations.

EL: Well, I might as well -- we still have quite a lot of time. I don't know that much. I mean, it's --

INT: Sure.

EL: I remember -- well, there were not very many important things. So, I remember, in particular, two items that I thought were a little bit important. You know, at that time. To the war, I thought. And one was that I [01:00] heard one of the fellows who was -- had some scientific background. I don't know if he was an officer who had some technical background, who said that when they moved into Minsk -- in other words, at the beginning of the invasion of Russia [01:18] -- that must have been in 1941. I think so, 1941, June. Minsk is much too far from the border, from the Polish [01:32] border. And he had found a whole atomic -- I don't know which term he used. An atomic laboratory. And he was sure that -- so I push the button, and the -- so it created, of course, kind of a sensation. Because the Russians [01:56] in 1941 were already [02:00] working on the bomb. That's what he said. Of course, I -- don't want to speculate. Anyway, it was a very important discovery.

INT: Was this before or after we had dropped the atomic bomb [02:17]?

EL: That's a good question. It was before.

INT: Okay. So, did this -- did it make sense -- was the whole theory of atomic energy --

EL: Yeah, yeah, we knew about it.

INT: -- was that something that was somewhat known? Did you know about that from your schooling, or from being at 1142 [02:35], when it was a topic that --

EL: Yeah, there was a topic.

INT: Was that one of the topics that they put on the -- you mentioned there was a board where they put some key subjects.

EL: They didn't use the word "Bomb," I think. They used "Atomic energy," or something like that. And I knew there was a lot of work being done on atomic [02:55] energy. I had a distant relative who was a previous [03:00] [inaudible] --

INT: Okay.

EL: And he was working on that. So, that was -- there was an important piece of -- discovery, an important item. The other item which I thought was very useful for us was two people, being in the Africa Corps [03:25], and they were talking about how clever they had been to put the shells in the tank before the tank was meeting actually [phonetic]. So, they were -- we found out only through human intelligence, because how do you know that they put the shells in the gun before they were in the assault, they were ready to shoot.

INT: So, they would be driving around, and the gun would be loaded?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: The gun would be loaded [04:00]. And that was something I was told that we didn't know. Anybody knew what they were [phonetic]. So, they had one foot up over a

British tank there. To go and -- and it was -- so, that was the two things I remember, and I only mention it to you, because I found it very useful. Because if you go through the papers, I -- forms I filled, there might be more things.

INT: Sure.

EL: I don't know what they -- trying to remember other things that are really useful.

INT: Sure.

EL: Really useful. We had a lot of information about -- that was useful, of course. And about the resistance in Germany [04:54]. I mean, once you had somebody with [05:00] -- who were anti-Nazi [05:03] declare themselves. And then, we put him together with somebody else, who was also anti-Nazi. Then, they said, "Well, how about this one or this one, and he's a good friend of mine." There was a lot of that. I mean, at the end of the war. Because I wasn't -- in that period- - every week, there were more people who were talking.

INT: So, did you get the sense that when you were there, in '44 and '45, prisoners [05:36] were more willing to -- were more open, and more talkative than they had been when 1142 [05:42] first opened?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: Not from first opening, when I first came.

INT: Oh, okay.

EL: You could see the --

INT: Really?

EL: -- see where -- we got the prisoners [05:51] from Normandy [05:52], and they were much

less open [06:00] to -- I got there before Normandy, and we got a number of prisoners [06:06] from Normandy [06:07], and stood from all the battles after Normandy. But once -- let's see. In the winter, once the offensive -- the Battle of the Bulge [06:24] -- was lost by the Germans [06:26], they got people in Battle of the Bulge [unintelligible] -- certainly from Normandy [06:36], and Battle of the Bulge [06:37]. I remember Battle of the Bulge, there was quite a few people who came. And then, after Battle of the Bulge, people started to open up. They decided in their minds that the war was lost. And then, we were lost -- thousands and thousands of prisoners were -- just surrendered [unintelligible] [07:00] to us. That was the breaking point, really.

INT: Were -- did it --

EL: Breaking point.

INT: Did you get the sense that there was an influx of prisoners after D-Day [07:16]? Did --

EL: Oh, yes.

INT: And so, that was noticeable on your end?

EL: Yes, when I first came, there were very few prisoners [07:24]. There were prisoners who had been taken in Africa [07:26]. And they could be -- I think it was in Italy [07:33]. Yes, definitely in Italy. And so -- but, no, there was a wave of prisoners that came in after Normandy [07:45].

INT: Did the type of prisoner, the background, whether they were in the Luftwaffe [07:53], or in the navy, or in the army, was that varied, or were there surges or time [08:00] periods where you were more likely to have one type of prisoner [08:03]?

EL: Oh, yeah. Towards the end of the war -- after Germany [08:07] had been broken down in 1945, we got lots of civilians. Lots of people were involved way behind the lines. I

mean, they were in Berlin [08:22] in the ministry. This was a definite -- we see who were occupied, and to get lots of people who were in the government, for one reason or another. And that's how Hilger [08:38] came. He's one. They had people, though, that - - and that was very interesting, to see -- this was a very interesting part because it was not only the army [phonetic], and the army of [unintelligible] navy, but navy had their own installation. But there were other people too. [09:00] And there were -- and these were officials, government bureaucrats. High-ranking government bureaucrats, officials, and so on [phonetic], and that was very interesting to find out, to hear how a system falls apart. They were telling about that. When a system falls apart, and how they close one, a ministry, different parts of the government.

INT: And so, these -- I don't know if you'd call them political prisoners [09:42], but these civilian prisoners, and also the scientists --

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did they -- am I correct in saying they mostly came at the end of the war, then?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: There were not many scientists on the front line. So, they only came at the end of the war [10:00]. I didn't listen much to scientists. And I mentioned the one scientist, scientific thing I discovered, because, I don't know, I didn't -- we were assigned, or were selected, also. It was a combination of selection and assignment. We knew who they were. . And I didn't pick scientists, because my scientific background was very weak.

INT: Okay.

EL: At that time.

INT: Well, would you say that you pick those people that you listened to?

EL: Yeah, I think so. You see, they had these sheets, and you could take one sheet or another. So, I think I listened -- I picked them. At least sometimes. Because I didn't care. And sometimes, I saw something interesting, that seemed interesting for me. Especially at the end when [unintelligible] Hilger because I don't know in particular, because I was assigned to him [11:00]. Like, I didn't know that [unintelligible] was later, I think. Assigned to him. Outside the listening thing. And other people from the foreign office, other interesting [unintelligible], and other ministers -- civilians are as interesting, yeah [phonetic]. Ambassadors and so on.

INT: And so, again, though, all of these individuals, they came in, essentially, when the war was over, and were there --

EL: Yeah.

INT: -- do you remember how long a lot of these folks were held at 1142 [11:35]? Was it for a lengthy period of time, or do they get the information and let them go right away?

EL: It depends on the people. I think that there were quite a few from Nuremberg from the war time. I mean, before defeat, there were -- [12:00] there were only soldiers and officers. And I think many soldiers were -- didn't stay there. They didn't know much, and interrogators picked the things very important. I did, too, anybody else listens [phonetic]. There was hope that this soldier had been stationed somewhere in Germany [12:27] that's near an airfield, where they would view planes and so, what did they say, saw the planes [phonetic]. We didn't understand what was going on. Instead of -- you knew you were selected, because we knew that this airport, this airfield, was there, where it really was, actually.

INT: Right.

EL: And another thing. While the war was still going on, there was a lot of interrogation of people [13:00] who knew the industrial structure of the country, or knew there were some factories in some places, and had worked in a factory. And so, to say, "Well, there was a factory in that town, and I worked there for two weeks," or something, you know, before I was drafted. And that's what we wanted to know. And then, they were sent on to a regular camp. In the first selection, somebody had noticed that he had been in that town where there was a factory, or an airfield, it was the surrounding you [phonetic]. We didn't know much, of course. Security was tight in Germany [13:50].

INT: You mentioned that a lot of these individuals, especially the ones, the more military prisoners [13:58], when they were done being interrogated [14:00], they would then be sent off to another prisoner facility?

EL: Yes, that's my understanding. I didn't see any who left, and never saw any who had left - - who had left and came back, or something

INT: Okay, okay.

EL: And I never met any after the war.

INT: And did you get the sense that some of the prisoners [14:22] who were being questioned - - did you get the sense that they all had come direct from the front from Europe, or that some of them had been held in American prison camps for a while, then went to 1142 [14:35], and then went back to prison camps? Or did they all just come straight from the front?

EL: The ones I remember came from the front.

INT: Okay.

EL: That's what I remember. They might be. I'm sure there were some. Because the whole system was -- it was a well-organized system. I'm sure, if they found somebody in a camp of interest, they would send them to -- but, no. The procedure was that [15:00] -- I remember when they came in.

INT: Okay. Did you have an idea of how long it had been between the time they had been captured and the time they had come to 1142 [15:10]?

EL: That depended for -- not very long. Not very long. I remember, they came -- I was in -- also on one assignment I had -- the reception area. Received them, to talk to them, told them what the rules are [phonetic]. And they came in their uniforms. Some were wounded. And bloody uniforms. And to change, asked them to change their uniforms. And so on. And then, we'd get the documents, you know. And I was -- several reception parties.

INT: Okay [16:00].

EL: And I had the impression they had just come, you know, that their uniforms are muddy, and the ones I remember was like their uniforms were muddy, or some blood or something, was around it [phonetic]. It was like --

INT: And so, where were these? Since we're on the subject here, now, where were these reception centers?

EL: I don't know. It's right there --

INT: But it was here -- was it at 1142 [16:25]?

EL: [unintelligible] --

INT: Oh, really? Okay.

EL: Yeah, it came right into 1142.

INT: So, you actually remember prisoners [16:33] at 1142 [16:34] who arrived there in the uniforms that they'd been captured in, still with blood and mud on them?

EL: Yeah. That's right.

INT: Okay.

INT: Could you expand on that a little bit? I mean, do you remember -- it was just sort of taking -- what the transport they may have arrived in, or no?

EL: No. I suppose I knew at the time, but I didn't pay any --

INT: Do you remember the number of people [17:00] that may have arrived?

EL: Yeah. There were a group, let's say, of 20 or 30. Something like that. Maybe 30 is a bit high. Well, they were -- officers and enlisted men together, I think. Unless -- I think so.

INT: Do you know if they would be flown in, or sent on in ships, just kind of what Sam was just asking.

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

INT: Okay.

INT: It's just that we have no information about -- we don't want -- we don't expect that you would know these things. It's just that no one has ever told us these things before.

EL: They used to come by truck to 1142 -- but before that, I --

INT: How [18:00] did they get to the United States [18:01]?

EL: Yes, but I don't know. Because there were so -- the mud and so on, and it --they couldn't have been flown in. They didn't have planes then. Did they? I don't know. That's a very interesting question, because it might have been such high priority that even the few planes we had were used for the purpose, instead of bringing American soldiers back, you know. Might have been -- it's a very interesting question, and you should ask the key

[phonetic] --

INT: With how they were dressed with their uniforms, were they then immediately given prisoner [18:43] uniforms?

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you remember what those prison uniforms looked like?

EL: [unintelligible]

INT: Okay.

EL: I think they had "POW" [18:51] written on them.

INT: Okay.

EL: Because I -- I think so. Somehow, I don't know.

INT: So, is that, then, when [19:00] they would be searched for any documents or things in their jackets?

EL: Oh, yes, yes, we did that.

INT: What was it like, being -- you weren't in combat. You were here in the United States [19:17].

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did you -- do you remember any of your emotions of seeing a row of German prisoners [19:24] in their uniforms, just like they'd been taken right off the front lines? Do you recall any emotions from that?

EL: Not particularly. Not particularly. I felt closer to the war. Because one thing about 1142 [19:41], it was very far from the war compared to other people who were with you in training. My regiment went to Anzio Beach, and many of them died, and so on. We felt very conscious -- we didn't feel [20:00] heroic at all. That's -- you mentioned -- in the

article, I think the Post article, saved you one [phonetic] -- because the [unintelligible] something heroic about -- I think I can -- some of my friends I talked to. I know with Carlo [20:22], I talked a lot about that. We felt very, very much left behind. All the other people who you were in training, and we all had been in a regular army unit before.

INT: Right, right.

EL: Nobody was drafted to 1142 [20:41]. They'd all been in training units, and they all went and died. I mean not all of them, many of them. And we felt that we really -- it's a strange thing we are there. And I wanted -- want to mention that, at the end of the war [21:00], two of the [unintelligible] -- it was earlier, because -- anyway, it was that the war was still going on. And they had passed along a bulletin of some kind that the Army Transportation Corps needed officers. And so, if you want to volunteer, fill out certain paper. I wanted to be an officer. And I thought, transportation's pretty good for me, because it was not very technical, and I'd studied economics, and I did pretty good [phonetic]. So, I went to the sergeant I saw first, the master sergeant, and I asked for papers to fill out to go. So, he put his big hand on the paper and goes, "No. We can't let you go, because you know too much." And that was while the war was still going on.

INT: Right.

EL: "And if you were captured [22:00], you might betray all these people in the German [22:04] resistance, so, we won't let you go." So, I was very disappointed. I remember that. I wanted to be in the regular army, and an officer, and at the front. There was no guarantee that the war would be over soon. You could have roughed [phonetic] -- but still, many months, and I would have been off at officer training. I would have sent -- we would be sent overseas. And of course, I've forgotten all the names of these people.

INT: Sure.

EL: I don't -- but certainly, I heard a lot about the German [22:42] resistance. There wasn't much, but --

INT: [affirmative]

EL: And they knew each other. See, that was -- there was -- there wasn't much of a German resistance, but they did know each other in a small, tight group [23:00].

INT: To finish off talking a little bit about the actual prisoners [23:05], and I think you touched upon this a little earlier, when prisoners would be assigned to a room, would they try to group prisoners together that were similar, or that were --

EL: I don't know. I didn't do the assignment.

INT: Okay.

EL: I got in the reception -- I was still a private then --

INT: Okay.

EL: I became a sergeant. That was later, I think. Anyway, there were some higher officers in my -- who did the assigning, I'm sure -- they thought this through, who was going with who. So, I don't know.

INT: Could you give any sense, from your perspective, how many prisoners [23:47] went through 1142 [23:49]? I know it'd be very difficult, because you were there for only two of the years. But even when you were there, did it seem -- was it constantly -- were there lots [24:00] and lots, or was it small, or -- any sense of numbers?

EL: When I was there, it -- the first weeks or so, there were not many prisoners [24:13]. They [unintelligible]. And I don't know. They came from Italy [24:17], I suppose. I really don't have a -- but later, after Normandy [24:24], there was a constant flow of prisoners

[24:28]. And the numbers, I don't know. I would say a few hundred. I believe, most certainly, a few hundred. Maybe as many 1,000. Because I was in contact only with the reception here and there, when I was assigned to reception. Or I was assigned to listening to a few [25:00] dozen prisoners [25:03]. And then, half a dozen a week or something.

INT: Sure.

EL: So, hard to say, but it was certainly a few hundred. Whatever -- and that could be more than a thousand. There might have been, altogether, including when I left, a couple of thousand.

INT: Okay.

EL: Over 2k [phonetic], something like that. Does that fit with other --

INT: It certainly is close. The number -- the exact number that we've read was that, up through, I think, December of 1945, there had been --

EL: December --

INT: -- there had been 3,400. All total.

EL: According to the -- that's all total, yeah.

INT: And there may have been a few more after that.

EL: That includes -- you say we had Japanese interrogators. They were in the barracks, actually. But we didn't talk much with them. They were not interested in us [26:00] -- and they were from Hawaii, and I don't know how many Japanese -- there must have been Japanese prisoners [26:05]. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been there. But I don't know anything about them.

INT: But you do remember that there were -- do you remember if there were a lot of Japanese interrogators, or just a handful?

EL: A handful. And I don't think they were interrogators; I think they were listeners.

INT: Okay.

EL: Yeah, and they were somewhere else. I never saw them at work. I really don't know.

INT: But did they stay -- did you say they were in your barracks?

EL: In the barracks.

INT: They were actually --

EL: Because I think they were all enlisted men.

INT: Did you socialize with them --

EL: Not much.

INT: -- or did they keep to themselves, or --

EL: They kept to themselves, and they were kind of different. I mean, they were very much interested in sports. All those Europeans were not interested in baseball. Not all [laughs]. I mean, most of them were not interested. And so, they're -- I don't know. They would always listen to the radio [27:00] to the latest sports news, and so on. And so, it struck me we had very little contact with them. And they all spoke English, you know, because --

INT: Sure.

EL: -- [unintelligible].

INT: Sure.

EL: They were writing [phonetic].

INT: But you don't recall ever seeing or knowing about a Japanese prisoner [27:18] --

EL: No.

INT: -- who was --

EL: No.

INT: Okay. Could we speak just for a little bit about -- Fort Hunt [27:28] was a joint interrogation center where there were army interrogations, and there were navy interrogations.

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you -- what do you remember about the naval involvement, the U.S. [27:39] naval involvement at 1142 [27:41]?

EL: They were in a separate place. Separate. And I don't know if they were monitoring, listening also. I don't know if we listened to -- yeah, we listened to some navy prisoners [27:56]. So, they might not have their own listening [28:00]. But they had their own interrogations.

INT: Okay.

EL: Of the navy officer. And we did -- because of this Hapsburg, whatever his name was, I listened to him. I mean, I know him very well, and I remember the way he talked, and what he talked about, and so on. So, the navy had asked us to listen to them. And that -- I remember him, particularly. And there were also other people I listened to. That's another story of substance I might tell you.

INT: Sure.

EL: So, the navy was settled, and the rumor went that they didn't observe the Geneva Convention [28:47].

INT: Okay.

EL: Who, I don't know, because they were not under direct command of Colonel Walker [28:54]. That's the rumor. I don't know. And they had [29:00] a number of enlisted

men, I think, too, and officers and enlisted men -- I mean, American ones. But before I forget, I would like to talk about the navy -- the German [29:24] expedition to Greenland [29:26]. I might have mentioned --

INT: I think you mentioned this before, but please go ahead and share that.

EL: I don't remember where I -- you have to get some navy people to find out more details.

INT: [affirmative]

EL: Because I remember, they were under the command of a scientist called Weiss [29:26]. I remember his name. And they -- I was in the reception committee. Committees were a way of saying they were in a reception assignment [phonetic]. And they came all dressed up in very warm clothes, and [30:00] they were scientists. They were civilians, under the command of the German [30:05] navy. And they had a meteorological station in Greenland [30:12], where they could provide meteorological information to the German [30:19] navy, to the U-boats [30:20]. And they were interesting people. I listened to them, too, and they were scientists, and had certain level of scientists there. I think the commanding officer was a really well known scientist in his field. And I remember that the -- they came dressed up for the Arctic, and I took two gloves that I kept for years. They were too big for me, but it was nice to have them in winter because they were really warm [31:00]. And so, that was one thing we heard. And the navy -- things are coming back, now.

INT: Great. And so, these folks from Greenland [31:13], they were Germans [31:15] that had been captured?

EL: Captured, and --

INT: Were they captured in Greenland?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: By the navy.

INT: Okay, by -- okay.

EL: By the navy. Because -- yeah, there was a navy ship. I've forgotten what kind of ship, or whatever, but they were captured there. And they were brought to us, because it was very interesting, scientific station in Greenland [31:38]. Have you heard from anybody else about this?

INT: No, no, that's the first -- that's the first one.

[laughter]

EL: You got it from me.

INT: We're going to stop right now and change tapes.

[End of Tape 2B]

[Beginning of Tape 3A]

INT: -- and pick right back up today. I'm going to have to do my introduction at the beginning of each tape.

EL: Sure.

INT: Today is February 6th, 2007. We're here at the home of Mr. Erwin Lachmann, at his home in Northwest D.C. [00:20], interviewing him about his experiences about P.O. Box 1142 [00:24]. This is National Parks Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as Fort Hunt [00:30] Oral History Project team member Sam Swersky, and this is the third in a series of tapes. So, if you want to pick right back up, we were talking about the Greenland [00:39] --

EL: One more thing about the navy. I think that's a well-known story, that there was a U-boat [00:44] that was set at the end of the war, this was in the spring of '45. So, Germany had lost the war. They realized it. The German [00:54] navy sent a U-boat [00:55] to Japan [00:57]. That's a well-known story, I think.

INT: You read my mind perfectly [01:00], because that was the next question I was going to ask.

EL: Yes.

INT: But, please, tell us your recollections.

EL: So, some of the -- well, the crew of that U-boat [01:17] -- the crew of that U-boat, was sent to 1142 [01:20]. And I listened in to some of what they said. And they said they had all kinds of papers. Where they had the -- well, let's call it the navy, the -- what is that -- they're sent to destroy other boats, other ships. There's a long, narrow --

INT: The torpedo [01:44]?

EL: Torpedo, yes. The torpedo. They didn't -- all the U-boats [01:54] had several torpedoes. Four, six, something like that. And they didn't have [02:00] any torpedoes. What they had were documents. They were all to prove this roundup [phonetic], but they're all -- that's why I remember the conversation. They said they rolled them up, and they -- all kind of plans for the new weapons that the Germans [02:25] had been using [phonetic]. And so, that -- they talked about how they put these papers in where the torpedo [02:33] was supposed to be. That's what they said. I mean, they were sailors. I think they were not officers. And they didn't talk about the science they were carrying. They had scientists, too. They had some scientists in the U-boat [02:45]. I think there was a -- in the press there [phonetic] also. And I think they were also there. But I remember, I had

some contact with the -- through listening to the sailors, how they put the papers in [03:00] the torpedoes [03:01]. Well, the place where torpedoes ought -- should be.

INT: Right. But in -- but you weren't involved with any of the scientists?

EL: No.

INT: Just the sailors, listening --

EL: Yeah, that's all --

INT: Okay.

EL: And I remember it was very fascinating at this -- at the last moment, the Germans [03:18] sent their U-boats [03:21] with their allies. I mean, one of the U-boats, at least, and I think there might have been two. I really don't remember. But I think this was in the newspapers at the time.

INT: In fact, there's actually even been a book --

EL: Oh, a book.

INT: -- that has recently -- very recently written on that, that we have a copy of, that we've been looking at.

EL: Yeah.

INT: But we -- at the same time, that's why we want to ask these questions, because you're the experts. You were the one listening in on these actual prisoners [03:48].

EL: Yeah, and the science, I didn't -- I knew they were going to make us weapons, some kind [phonetic]. They were the -- somebody might have mentioned what kind of plans they had there, but I really don't know [phonetic] [04:00].

INT: And so --

INT: Do you remember, at all, whether the people at 1142 [04:09] knew that there was

something big that had just happened? Could you describe, maybe, that U-boat [04:15], what you might remember of having arrived at 1142 --

EL: No. It was not -- actually, the security was very -- even then, after the -- or, at the end of the war, there was no leakage, as far as I know. There was no gossip about people coming in. And I think that's an important thing. I don't remember anybody coming in, "You know who we have now?" No, nobody ever said anything like this. So, there was an -- we missed some sensations, possibly, but there was no gossip about who's coming in [05:00]. So, we didn't know, like, U-boat [05:03], though that'd be interesting [phonetic], and nobody else told you about the meteorological station on Greenland [05:15] because I didn't talk.

[laughter]

But I met several people who knew that. Quite a few. But they didn't talk about it. I don't remember any case where somebody said, "General so-and-so has arrived."

INT: And so, that -- was that just understood amongst -- I mean, as part of the whole secrecy of this?

EL: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

INT: You just didn't meddle in other people's business?

EL: Yeah, that's right.

INT: We had talked a little bit -- we talked a great deal, now, about the navy, and you had mentioned that there was just a rumor that the navy may or may not have abided as closely to the Geneva Convention [05:55].

EL: Yeah, it's a rumor. I have no proof whatsoever.

INT: But your understanding about [06:00] the army interrogations is that they --

EL: Yeah, very different.

INT: They --

EL: Colonel Walker [06:02] was very different.

INT: Okay.

EL: I don't remember -- I never talked to him personally. I mean, he didn't come for me [phonetic], let me get settled, and so on. But I think he must have had an order. I don't remember the order, but you can find it, perhaps. Very specifically, that when the officer -- of course, we had officer above us, in the general hierarchy, because there's an army hierarchy, but we got assignments. I remember, there was four in our barracks, and there was some officer, not always the same, called and said, "I want so many men over there. I want these men."

INT: And so, but, again, your understanding is that very strict, the army was to adhere to the Geneva Convention [06:58] --

EL: Yeah, very strict. Very strict.

INT: And is it your understanding [07:00] that from the army, they never laid hands on anyone, or anything?

EL: As far as I know.

INT: Okay. Okay. And regarding the navy, you can't share anything other than -- it's just a rumor, and you don't know any more about that?

EL: I don't know anything.

INT: Okay. Do you -- you'd mentioned about your commanding officer. Real quickly, do you recall who your commanding officer was? What their name was?

EL: No. I'm trying to remember. If you have a listing, I probably can find [phonetic].

INT: Sure, sure.

EL: That's a -- I can remember a few who were in the commanding positions. I don't remember any commanding officers. Or I --

INT: Okay. When you were at 1142 [07:54], you had mentioned that no one -- you stuck to your own business, and didn't ask questions. Do you remember [08:00] there being other buildings, or other programs going on there that were off-limits, that you knew something else was going on, but you just didn't ask?

EL: No, I don't know remember that really.

INT: Okay.

EL: There must have been, but I don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: Pretty large place. But they're looking for something [phonetic]. They kept things very secret.

INT: Do you remember, when you were coming and going to the post, would you have to pass through a security checkpoint, or a barbed wire -- were there any MPs [08:36] around?

EL: Yeah, there were MPs around. There were MPs; there was a whole unit of MPs. There were MPs [08:43] around. And coming in, we went to Washington [08:48]. I think there were -- yes, there must have been. But I really don't know, because we have a pass, the identification [09:00], it was so normal just to show [phonetic] -- because every other army post had MPs [09:06] at the entrance. How it was I knew [unintelligible] couldn't get in [unintelligible].

INT: When these German prisoners [09:16] that you described, as you -- when you were working with reception, would they be guarded by MPs [09:22] as they came in?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think so.

INT: Okay.

EL: If they came by truck, of course. There were MPs on the truck.

INT: When you were coming and going from 1142 [09:34], did you go into Washington [09:37] for social activities?

EL: Yes.

INT: How frequent -- was that common, or just every once in a while?

EL: Oh, it was common.

INT: Okay.

EL: At least once a week.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: Yeah. Very common.

INT: And what would you usually leave the post for?

EL: What?

INT: What sort of activities would you do?

EL: We went to the movies, for example, and we went -- usually we went [10:00] -- several of us. And we went to USO [10:04]. Several USO in town. Went to USO, to the movies, met girls, and so on. Went out with girls. Met also Alexandra [phonetic], a girlfriend I had. And went -- we would -- went out, went to concerts.

INT: Were you able to get frequent passes home to see your mother in Philadelphia?

EL: Not frequent. I think it wasn't like the regular army. It was like in Fort McClellan

[10:44]. I mean, it was two weeks a year [phonetic]. It was [unintelligible]. It was not more frequent [unintelligible], a lot easier.

INT: Sure. Sure.

EL: It seemed normal to me [11:00], and not special [inaudible].

INT: And finally, did you have any -- from what you recall about your uniform -- and this was a military post. You were still wearing a uniform all the time.

EL: Oh, yes. All the time.

INT: Was -- were you -- did you have any special uniform, or special patches, or anything? Or was it -- were you just blended in as any other soldier?

[talking simultaneously]

EL: I think we had -- I don't remember, really. Because I don't -- didn't keep my uniform. But I think we had a patch for District of Columbia [11:35], and District of Columbia site [phonetic], I think it was. Respectful of [phonetic] --

INT: But it wasn't anything specific to 1142 [11:43]?

EL: No.

INT: Or to military intelligence, or anything like that?

EL: No, no, no, no. Just District of Columbia [11:48].

INT: Okay. Okay.

EL: I think. I'm not sure.

INT: And speaking of that, I think the last time we were here, you'd said that you [12:00] were assigned -- you had your own alias, or your own code name?

EL: Yes, yes. That was with Hilger [12:06].

INT: Oh, okay.

EL: I was -- I just went [unintelligible]. I had the same thing. He must have had his own name, and gave me also the code name. And he was -- well, I was assigned -- I don't know how it happened. But I was assigned -- it was toward the end, of course, Hilger [12:31] had been in Berlin [12:32], I suppose, and was not -- and there was this -- I was told that there was a Mr. Hilger, and he has his own -- he was not an assailant, and he had his own place, somehow. And that I should talk to him, and take walks with him [unintelligible].

INT: Okay.

EL: And he has been a foreign service [phonetic], and he really was a very interesting man. He had been [13:00] -- may I talk about him?

INT: Oh, this is fantastic, great.

EL: That's the real -- that's the subject of it. He wrote a booklet on -- I think while he was at the State Department [13:10] [phonetic], so I knew a lot about him. But he -- I [unintelligible] that mention in this booklet. He was from a German [13:24] family that had been, for years, in Russia [13:27], before the revolution. One or two generation, one generation. They had been publishers. He told me about his life, of course [phonetic]. And they had been publishing maps, or publishing in Russia. And then, he joined the Foreign Service, German [13:46] Foreign Service, and he made a career there. And he was assigned as first political officer -- I think it was first political officer. Now I've forgotten. But PCM [14:00], he might have been. First political officer. And in Moscow, at the embassy in Moscow. And the one thing I remember, and this is the only really interesting, historically, that was that he told me that he went -- you know when Ribbentrop went to Moscow, to sign a treaty with Germany [14:30] and the Soviet Union

[14:30]. So, they didn't talk, went to the whole embassy [phonetic]. There was the ambassador -- I almost have his name on my tongue. He's very well-known little -- and Hilger [14:44], the three of them, went to the cabinet to meet Molotov [14:51] and Stalin [14:53]. And when -- and they went there, and Hilger [14:58] didn't -- he was an interpreter [15:00] from the German [15:01] side.

INT: Okay.

EL: He was -- on the Russian side. They always do that kind of thing. And so, he interpreted to Ribbentrop and Stalin, and when Ribbentrop [15:10] went back into the German [15:13] car at the embassy, he said something that's historic. It's very interesting. He sat down and said, "These are people we can deal with. They are like us." It's very interesting, you know. When he saw Stalin [15:28], he remembered Hitler [15:31]. "They are like us. We can deal with them. They are not like Chamberlain and Daladier," which he had seen just before in Munich. Yeah, these democrats. "But they are like us, we can really deal with them." That was always a question. How similar is the Soviet Union [15:48] to Nazi Germany [15:49]? But Ribbentrop said it was very similar. At that moment in history.

INT: And so, that's something that Hilger [15:58] relayed to you?

EL: Yes [16:00], he told me. And I don't know if he wrote it in his book. I didn't read his book. I should have, perhaps, because I think he published a book. It was later on, he stayed here in Washington [16:11]. So, that was the only really interesting thing he said. He talked about the structure of the embassy in Moscow, the German [16:22] embassy when Schulenburg was the ambassador.

INT: Oh, okay.

EL: And mentioned about others interested, and about his life as a German-speaking person in Russia [16:39]. His family lived in Moscow for a time before the revolution. So --

INT: How did you come to get this assignment? Was it just out of the blue, you were told, "We're going to assign you to this gentleman?"

EL: Yeah, I think -- I don't know [17:00]. I really don't know. Because normally, it would have been somebody else, like Danny [phonetic], the specialist on Russia [17:07].

INT: Right, right.

EL: No, but I don't know why I was assigned. I didn't ask for it, I think. I might have mentioned something. I don't -- no, because it was an interesting [unintelligible] think about, wanting to monitor scientists [phonetic].

INT: And so, were you given specific tasks, or just told, "Spend time with Hilger [17:31], and find out anything he's willing to share with you."

EL: Yes, basically.

INT: Okay.

EL: It was understood. Being enlisted men, and so, I played a role of a grandson, and we got along very well. And called me Sergeant Erwin.

INT: And so, he never knew your real name?

EL: He didn't know my real name.

INT: Just Sergeant Erwin [18:00].

EL: I suppose it would be the same thing [phonetic]. I don't know.

INT: And so, just a few more questions with Hilger [18:08], to finish up that subject, were you -- was this essentially a full-time assignment for you, or were you also doing monitoring while you were working --

EL: I don't know. I know I did take some long walks with Hilger [18:24]. But he might have been for certain weeks, and there was nobody else. Certain -- a week or two, something.

Some days I'd walk with Hilger [18:40]. But -- and then, I didn't have to [phonetic].

INT: Were you still a sergeant at this point, or had you been promoted from private?

EL: PFC, I think. I was a PFC, I think, at the time.

INT: How did it feel -- I mean, you were dealing with -- this is a very high-level [19:00]

people. You were listening in to conversations of people who were at the top of their field. Could you talk a little bit about how you felt personally?

EL: I was interested. I found it fascinating, because it was a good opportunity to hear what people on the high level, in another country, in another civilization, actually because Nazi [19:23] civilization was a very [unintelligible] one, and another culture, what they were like. I noticed that. Because I had worked and little experience of being a student. I mean -- but how much hate, and how much competition there was, in different units of the army against the S.S. [19:52], and the civilians against the military, and the various different departments [20:00] of the government. And I was kind of struck back that -- I thought it was more unified. And I didn't have much experience. I thought the government was the government. But there, I could see that government was very much split. And they didn't seem to like each other very much, and kind of hate -- but that was -- might be every government. The Nazi [20:26] government, people were -- had strong, strong feeling of hate that came from the top. That's my theory. And Hitler [20:37] had - - was filled with hate, and all the others, and then -- so, they -- of course, they hated the enemy. And the British, the Jews, and so on. But they hated each other, too. They had this -- there was a zealot culture of dislike and hate and competition, which was nurtured

from the top [21:00].

INT: Did you get the sense that -- was Hilger [21:04] a Nazi [21:06]?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: I got the sense he was not. He certainly presented himself very much as a -- he had been in the Foreign Service. He wanted to serve his country. That's another thing. His country was run by Hitler [21:22], but he -- that's the way he presented himself. He certainly didn't present -- I don't know. When he talked to -- at the embassy, with the people who were the S.S. [21:34], he didn't say what he was saying to me. Certainly not. But he presented himself that he had been gearing up all his life, and he had selected -- he wanted to be in the Foreign Service. He felt that very few people could do what he could do. That was his approach. He thought the invasion of Russia [21:59] was -- that's all he took [22:00], was a big mistake, a terrible mistake of Hitler [22:06]. He was right. But Russia was much stronger than Hitler [22:10] thought, because he knew Russia [22:14] very well. And he told me -- he actually mentioned that he had written some memoirs that don't say that Russia was much stronger than people in Berlin [22:24] were thinking. And the political officer, it was his job to do that. And he felt that he can help somehow get Germany [22:38] and Russia [22:40] closer, and avoid the conflict. That's what -- how he felt. That's, at least, what he told me. I don't believe him entirely. But he had joined the Foreign Service, had been assigned to Moscow. I'm sure he asked for that, and it was a normal assignment [23:00]. He needed somebody -- we think he knew Russia [23:02] [phonetic] and spoke Russian, and -- but, he felt that he had some usefulness there, to avoid the war. That's before the war started. And then -- so, that's

how we felt.

INT: Did you get any sense for why he was -- was he voluntarily cooperating with the United States [23:23]?

EL: Yes.

INT: Any sense -- I guess it would have made sense for him to cooperate with the United States [23:29] as opposed to, say, with the Russians [23:30].

EL: Yes.

INT: So, was that -- do you think the primary catalyst for him being willing to speak with you -  
-

EL: Yeah.

INT: -- did you get the sense that he was afraid of what the Russians could do, and wanted to help the United States [23:45]?

EL: Yeah, they were all afraid of Russia [23:48]. So, did I happen to think the U.S. [23:54] and even the Nazis [23:55], I'm sure [phonetic]. And so [24:00], he felt that he had a historical role to play; again, he could talk to people. They would listen to him. And he could talk about the history. He had a mind more of the historian. He was very much interested in history, and he knew he was playing a role in history. And he wanted to talk to people who'll listen, take notes, so on. And later on, he talked to us [inaudible].

INT: Do you recall -- you said he had his own cottage. Do you recall -- was it his own, or was it shared with someone else, or --

EL: No.

INT: -- did you spend time with him in the cottage?

EL: No, no. First off, it was in the spring of '45, and we walked in spring '45. Don't

remember if it was cold, or if it was spring.

INT: Do you know if they were monitoring his cottage and bugging it [25:00] or anything?

EL: I don't know anything about it.

INT: Were there other prisoners [25:04] who also had cottages, even ones that you weren't --

EL: I don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: There probably were. I just don't have an -- Hapsburg maybe had a cottage. I really don't know.

INT: Did you know whether he was taken into town, or whether -- to do --

EL: Hilger [25:23]?

INT: Yes.

EL: I don't know. I didn't take him in town.

INT: So, you just took him for walks around the compound itself?

EL: Yeah, that's the only thing I did [inaudible].

INT: Okay.

EL: It was a special assignment.

INT: Is there anything else with Hilger [25:37] that you want to share, or think that we haven't covered?

EL: No, I don't -- he talked a lot about his family, and so on, there isn't more [phonetic].

INT: Do you know if, after the war, did he bring his family here?

EL: I don't know. I just heard, when he was at the State Department, that he was a special consultant to the State Department. That's the only thing I know.

INT: You never --

EL: I did -- no, I didn't see him [26:00].

INT: Were there any other special assignments besides Hilger [26:07] that you were given, assigned, or any interrogations, per se?

EL: No, no, I don't think so, no.

INT: Okay.

INT: Do you remember how you reported the information of your conversations --

EL: No, I don't remember either. I must have, because that was the whole idea. I don't know. I don't think I wrote reports. [inaudible] I think. I must have talked to some officers about it.

INT: And so, any -- I'm just trying to wrap up in the next few minutes here, with the intent of coming back some time to talk in more detail about what specific lists of names, and photographs, and things.

EL: Yeah.

INT: Anything else, though, regarding listening in, what you might have learned? You mentioned a number [27:00] of things that you did learn from room conversations, but anything else stand out?

EL: No.

INT: You know, important things that stand out in your mind?

EL: No. There was a lot of stuff, but I think nothing was really important to remember. I -- if I remember it, I'll tell you, if I remember. Things might come back to me.

INT: You were at Fort Hunt [27:30] for -- 1142 [27:31] for a fair amount of time.

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did you feel that your position was one of -- required a lot of responsibility? Did it

require some judgment on your part? I mean, you were still a PFC.

EL: Yeah.

INT: Could you talk about that, a little bit about --

EL: Yeah, compared --

INT: -- the skillsets --

EL: -- compared to whom? [laughs] I ended as a sergeant, but [28:00] -- yeah, I think so. I felt it was a responsible job, but I remember -- the one thing about -- the listening thing, and the monitoring, the assignments, and documents, you had a feeling that you don't -- you, of course, don't have [unintelligible]. Many other jobs, you had the feeling of, "Maybe I discovered something." Right now, I think, paper here, and document it [phonetic] -- we got copies of documents. And we also got reports. That's the one thing I liked very much. We got official reports from OSS [28:48]. You know OSS. And from general -- V2 [28:57] from von Braun [28:58] [phonetic], they'd send us copies [29:00] of their reports. Yeah, that's right. That's how I found out a number of things. And I enjoyed reading them. I found them much more interesting than a newspaper. I have a lot of them [inaudible] about my hearing. There were two relatively high officers, and they were colonels, something like that. They were not generals. Colonels. And I tell it -- I've told that story several times. And it was -- the war's still going on. And we just stood with the -- with these officers, at least. Not for everybody, perhaps, but the high officers. A copy of The New York Times. And then, I heard, "Look who got The New York Times, and look what they have here." They have, word-by-word, the [30:00] official war bulletins of the Americans, the British, the Russians [30:07], and us. They have our war bulletins word-by-word. We cannot win this war. They are so sure of

themselves that they publish our information.” And his reaction was, “We cannot win this war against people like that.” It’s very important, because USIA [sic] is always held propaganda, but this was the best propaganda you could have. Because in Germany [30:40], they never published anything, official bulletins of the British, or the Americans, or the Russians, anything. They always want German [30:55] propaganda only. And it was a shock to see [31:00], and he recognized the wording. He might have written it at some time [phonetic], I don’t know. He recognized the wording. It was not fake. And so -- and, of course, the German [31:13] text was victory after victory. The Russian [31:23] front was still going on. So, he was very much impressed. I think that’s a good story, because you have the problem with USIA, should be indulging some propaganda, or just tell your neighbors [phonetic], you get just the news [phonetic]. And so much actually happened. He didn’t know I was listening. He was saying, “We cannot win the war. They are so sure of themselves.”

INT: I can’t imagine what it would be like to hear that, to [32:00] -- right as the German [32:02] officer is being, essentially, deflated.

EL: Yeah, that’s right. He was very surprised.

INT: Any -- quick -- we’ve got about a minute or so, and then I want to let you get to your lunch and everything. If you want any question --

INT: I guess, just an overall question. Some of the veterans have said that -- did you feel that you were playing a part? That you were doing your part in the war effort?

EL: Yes.

INT: By the intelligence that you were gathering?

EL: Yes, yes. But, as I mentioned before, we --

[End of Tape 3A]

[Beginning of Tape 4A]

INT: This is the third time we've been together. This Brandon Bies of the National Parks Service, here with Sam Swersky, also of the National Parks Service. And we're here in the home of Mr. Erwin Lachmann, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 [00:31], and today, we hope to conclude our series of interviews and discussions about his time at Fort Hunt [00:39]. So, with that, Mr. Lachmann, you were just starting to say -- we were asking, is there anything from the last interview that you think we might not have discussed?

EL: I might have mentioned it to you, but I've forgotten now if I did mention it to you. But I just -- I just remembered it, after you had left, I think. And that is, I had -- I heard a very interesting conversation [01:00] when I listened to two officers, German [01:05] officers at the time. I think it was a time of the Battle of the Bulge [01:11]. And things were not going well for us. And we distributed to, at least some officers, there were also enlisted men, I suppose -- The New York Times, it was a regular thing we did. I don't know if we distribute to all of them, or -- certainly, at times, did from time to time [phonetic]. And then, I heard the conversation. "Look here. They have all the official announcements of all the departments of defense. Look here. They have it translated into English, our own [02:00], and they have the Russian [02:01], the significant thing is -- the important thing is, really, they have the Americans, of course, and the British. But the important thing is, they have our own. Look, they really have our own, complete, and they are not afraid of mentioning this." Of course, at that time, of the Battle of the Bulge [02:22], the Germans [02:23] were saying what a great victory it was. And they said they're not afraid of publishing. Anybody can read this, and another guy was saying --

the other fellow was saying, "How can you win the war with people like that?" I think that's a very interesting comment, because it's very important for USIA, for example, to just give the news. And it's so impressive for people who had never heard the news straight.

INT: And so, you were actually listening [03:00] in when they realized that the war wasn't going their way.

EL: Yes. Just because The New York Times was publishing their own "Oberkommandos," it was called, and high command announcements.

INT: Do you recall other instances of things like that happening, or are you --

EL: No, no --

INT: That's just one that sticks in your mind?

EL: That's the one I remember particularly.

INT: Well, since our last interview, there's just a few things that we didn't cover. We really covered a great deal.

EL: Yes, I know.

INT: So, some of these questions will be jumping around a little bit.

EL: Yeah, sure.

INT: But they're just things I scribbled down.

EL: Yeah, sure.

INT: And feel free to elaborate on anything that you do recall. But I just wanted to cover, again, the role of monitoring, which is primarily what you did there --

EL: Yes.

INT: -- in the interrogation, and the interview process. And we may [04:00] have tried to

mention this a little bit before, but did you primarily monitor just the room conversations, or did you also monitor the actual interrogations that were going on?

EL: No, the room conversation.

INT: Just the room conversations.

EL: This I remember, yeah.

INT: Okay. And would you do this both before and after a prisoner [04:23] would be interrogated?

EL: I don't know. I don't know. I know -- I wrote down whenever it was interesting, or I wrote down what they said. And then, I pushed the button to, you know, to have the tape. And then, I put it in a box of some kind.

INT: Okay.

EL: And then, it was -- what happened afterwards, I don't know.

INT: Okay. And so, would you have any conversations with the actual interrogator who was going to be [05:00] --

EL: No.

INT: So, you would just hand it all --

EL: No, I -- yeah, I don't remember.

INT: Okay. Did you ever feel that there were instances -- I mean, we talked a little bit about this, where something that you were listened in, something that you discovered in a room conversation, played a critical role in interrogation? I know you mentioned some instances, like, I think, the way that they were -- the German [05:26] tanks were loading their shells, and things like that.

EL: Yeah, yeah, I don't know if it played a role in the interrogation.

INT: Okay.

EL: But, I know that this was considered very important. I mean, some officer said that we sent it straight to the Pentagon [05:42].

INT: Okay. Would you get feedback from officers, or people, and say, "Oh, this was good information that you got" --

EL: No, very seldom, no.

INT: Okay.

EL: That -- for example, the instance in Minsk, of the nuclear [06:00] research there, I remember conversations, some officers looked at it and said it was very important. He's going to Russia [06:14], to headquarters at the Pentagon [06:17]. G2 at the Pentagon. That's what I remember.

INT: And was that as a result of something that you heard --

EL: Yes, it was.

INT: Okay.

EL: That's what I heard. I mentioned that to you.

INT: Yeah, yeah.

EL: Like, when the Germans [06:29] moved into Russia [06:32], they discovered a lab that was obviously a nuclear research facility.

INT: And did you -- you didn't have any scientific training or anything, did you?

EL: No, no, I did not.

INT: Did you even know, when you would listen into conversations like this, what "nuclear" meant? Did that concept exist during the time?

EL: Yes, yes. I did --

INT: So, you had a [07:00] basic understanding, then?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay. But you -- had you been told, "Listen for anything about nuclear" --

EL: Yes, we were told about the -- their wonder weapons that they had at -- there was a bulletin board. And on the bulletin board, there were things that -- about the new wonder weapons, and so on. And so, we looked at them, and tried to understand it.

INT: Do you remember what any of those were, going back? Any specific weapons or technologies?

EL: Yes. One was the new jet planes that they had. And the other one was the V [07:43] weapons that were targeted against London. Well, several places. Quite a few places. So, I remember these two.

INT: Okay. Moving on a little bit [08:00], I think you mentioned this to us the first time we sat down and chatted --

EL: Yeah, yeah.

INT: -- but we weren't recording then. Did you mention that you remembered there were prisoners [08:11] there from the Vlasov Army [08:13]?

EL: Yes.

INT: Can you expand on that, or do you remember anything?

EL: No, I didn't talk to any of them. I think -- or I didn't listen in, either. I might have. I might have, because some of them knew German [08:28], and -- because, Russian [08:31], I wouldn't have been able to really understand. But there were people under the Vlasov [08:35] Army. My friend Alex Dallin [08:42], talked to me about that.

INT: Okay.

EL: Because he spoke Russian [08:46], and he was involved with that.

INT: Do you know -- for folks like that, do you have any idea if they had room monitors who listened in, like, folks like Dallin [09:00], who understood Russian?

EL: I'm sure they did. Actually, I say, "Yes, I'm sure they did." I suppose it would be quite normal that they would do that. But I didn't see it myself. I didn't hear it myself.

INT: Do you know if folks like Dallin [09:21], who spoke Russian [09:22], do you remember if there were a large number of Americans there at 1142 [09:27] that spoke Russian [09:28], or just a handful?

EL: No, no, no. Just a handful. I knew two of them, and I know their names, and I knew them. One was Schidlovsky [09:37] was his name. And the other one was Dallin [09:39]. I don't remember any others.

INT: Okay.

EL: And I met them after the war, too.

INT: And I think you had also mentioned that you recalled that there may have been some French prisoners [09:54].

EL: Yes. We had some. And I did listen [10:00] to some.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: Because I know French [10:01]. But it was not very interesting. They were not -- [laughs] I didn't find anything that they said, that they seemed to know, and so on. But there were very few, but there were some.

INT: Okay. And do you remember, were they military prisoners [10:17], or political?

EL: No, they were not political -- they were not civilians. They were -- they were -- let me -- they were Frenchmen who had joined the S.S. [10:32]. The S.S. had organized all kinds

of battalions of various nationality, and they were caught in France [10:43], I think, as members of the S.S. [10:46], but they were French.

INT: Okay.

EL: And I listened to some, but I don't remember them saying anything particular that was of interest.

INT: Do you remember, was this while the war [11:00] was still going on, or was this after the war?

EL: The -- I don't know exact date.

INT: Sure.

EL: It was after, of course, the German [11:11] defeat in Normandy [11:13], and it was not after the war, in the sense that -- there were S.S. [11:26] caught by us, and I don't know what happened to them. And -- but it was not after the French [11:36] had re-established their government.

INT: Yeah.

EL: With De Gaulle [11:39] and so on. It's -- I don't remember that at all.

INT: Okay. And speaking a little bit more about the prisoners [11:48], do you remember any other nationalities or groups of prisoners that were there?

EL: Yes. I remember, this was an interesting story. I [12:00] didn't listen to them, but I was told, of course. It's such an original story. And I'll tell you about it. There were Tibetans [12:08] there. Tibetans there. And they wanted, of course -- I didn't tell you this story.

INT: No.

EL: This is one of the colorful stories.

INT: Great.

EL: They wanted to cross the border into the Soviet Union [12:23]. I mean, high in the mountains, they meet somewhere. And they were herdsmen. And they were caught by the Soviet border guards, and taken prisoner [12:37], or arrested, and then, forced into the Russian [12:42] army. And they came with the Vlasov [12:44] people all the way to [laughs] Washington [12:48], because -- they were made prisoners [12:52] by us, and they had fought with the Vlasov [12:54], and now, the problem was that they didn't speak Russian [12:58], they didn't speak anything. I mean, except Tibetan [13:00]. And -- but we -- so, we figured out -- I mean, we -- not I, but we -- somebody in the Pentagon [13:11] thought that they must be Tibetan [13:13]. And so, we got the Tibetan specialist - - there were very few people that speak Tibetan, even in Washington [13:21] -- to talk to them. And we -- it was a problem of repatriating them. And it was a problem that the State Department worked on, and so on. And it was a very interesting story, these Tibetans [13:36]. They didn't know where they were, because they didn't have any idea of the planet.

INT: Oh.

EL: They didn't know where they were. They didn't know. They'd never heard of a United States [13:47] or anything like that. So, this was a kind of colorful story. That's why I heard about it, because it's colorful. I didn't -- of course, I didn't monitor them.

INT: Do you know if -- I mean, would they even be monitored [14:00]? I guess no one spoke Tibetan [14:03], so --

EL: No, I think they were interrogated.

INT: Oh, really? Okay.

EL: Yeah, to find out who they were, and that's how we found out. Because we closed -- we found a professor of Tibetan [14:12], or something like that, somewhere. I mean, Washington [14:16], or somewhere else in the United States [14:17]. And he found out that they had been taken prisoner by the Russians [14:24], the Russian border guard, you know. They knew they were Russians. I think they must have known that that was the Russian border, or something. But they were herdsmen, you know. So, they didn't know anything about how the planet was, where they were.

INT: So, do you think they were intentionally brought to Fort Hunt [14:45] for that reason, because --

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think so. It's all guesswork, truly --

INT: Sure, sure.

EL: And -- because nobody knew who they were, and what they were doing, and so, they thought Fort Hunt [15:00] would be a good place to find out.

INT: [laughs] That is -- I'm glad I asked the question. That's good. Any other nationalities, any -- that's probably the most colorful story.

EL: Yeah, that's the most colorful one. I don't know. No, I don't think so.

INT: Any Italian [15:21] prisoners [15:22]?

EL: There were lots of Italian prisoners around, but not at Fort Hunt [15:27], in my days. I don't know. Before, it might have been.

INT: Okay.

EL: I would have found out, I think, because Carlo Weiss [15:37] was a very good friend of

mine, and he would have taken care of them. I mean, he would have talked with them, at least. But I don't think so.

INT: Okay.

EL: But I know there were thousands of Italians [15:52]. And I have the impression, now, just vaguely, that there were Italians before [16:00] I came. In the early days, there were Italians there, because there were probably thousands of Italian prisoners [16:08].

INT: Right, and I get, at that point, Italians were allies with the Germans [16:11] earlier on.

EL: Yeah, I think so.

INT: So, by the time you got there, in '44 --

EL: '44, yes. In April or so.

INT: Okay. And so, by then, Italy had already --

EL: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

INT: Do you recall any Japanese [16:28] prisoners ever being there at the end of the war?

EL: I do remember Japanese interrogators or monitors. Enlisted men. They were in our barracks, and they were from Hawaii. And it must have been there for a purpose, but I really don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: We didn't talk much with them. So, it would have been strange, I would say it would have been strange that they had these Japanese [17:00] soldiers from Japanese backgrounds. So, there's American [17:00] soldiers that -- and from Hawaii, who, for no purpose, and so, there must have been some Japanese [17:13] --

INT: But you never spoke with them about what their role was?

EL: But we never -- no, no. We never talked to them about what they were doing.

INT: Okay.

INT: How much shop talk was there between the monitors and the -- you talk about Carlo Weiss [17:27] being a friend, and --

EL: Yeah.

INT: -- Rudy Pins [17:30] I think you mentioned earlier being a friend. How much was there talk amongst you about the work that you were doing?

EL: Relatively little, because I suppose we all understood we were not supposed to talk too much. But we did talk. There was a lot of social life, in the sense that we are out in Fort Hunt [17:53], and we are together on -- and we are all very young. And so, we talked [18:00] a lot, I think, it seems to me. There was a lot of friendships established, and there was a lot of social life, not in the sense, organized social life, but we talked to -- we took walks together, and in the barracks, we talked, and so on. But we didn't talk much about the work.

INT: Did you keep in touch with these people after the war, and --

EL: Yeah, to some extent.

INT: Did you talk a little bit about Fort Hunt [18:26] --

EL: No. After the war, we all had families. We talked about the families, and what we were doing. No, I don't think it was really interesting for us to talk about what happened during the war. You know, I mean, it was just -- it was the past. And when we met again -- some of them I met again -- you're going to go through the list, I --

INT: Yes, we will.

EL: A few -- whom I met again for one reason or another.

INT: Great.

EL: I think we never talked, actually, about Fort Hunt [19:00] and what we were doing. We always ask, "What are you doing now?"

INT: Sure.

EL: Started to talk.

INT: Sure. One question about the prisoners [19:12]. We've been talking about the range of prisoners that were there, but would it be safe to say that the overwhelming majority of prisoners were German [19:20]?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: That's right.

INT: Could you give any sense of --

EL: At least, in my time.

INT: Sure.

EL: I don't know about -- there might have been a majority of Italians [19:31] two years before. I doubt it.

INT: Could you give any sense, from the folks that you were listening in on, and you had experience with, how many were Nazis [19:44] versus anti-Nazis [19:46], versus somewhere in the middle? Could you get any real sense?

EL: Yes, I can tell you. To begin with, there were quite a few Nazis [19:57]. Quite a few. I can't see them, but they were real Nazis [20:00]. At the beginning, when I came. And as the war progressed, we had fewer and fewer, and there were more and more anti-Nazis [20:10], actually anti-Nazis. They would say that they were in the resistance, and so on. So, that's -- it was definitely a change of opinion. So, you cannot -- there was a timeline

of change.

INT: Did you get a sense that the real Nazis [20:35] were typically older, or officers, or were there also younger enlisted men who were also hardcore Nazis [20:46]?

EL: Both, I think. You cannot really generalize. And there were some officers who were real Nazis [21:00] -- and by "Nazis," I mean not only that they didn't cooperate, as far as I know, but I did know that they expressed their opinions in conversations I listened to. For example, I remember an enlisted man who was from a poor background in the Rhineland, somewhere. Frankfurt area, somewhere in the Rhineland. And he expressed - - he had discussed the whole regime, you know, with another fellow, who was not very convinced. The other fellow was not anti-Nazi [21:42] -- I don't know. He was not convinced, and he told him how wonderful the Nazi [21:46] party was, because they did so many things for the poor. For poor children, and so on. There was an interesting angle about the Nazi [21:57] regime that I heard -- how -- he [22:00] was a kind of social worker, and was a member of the party, and worked for poor kids in the town where he was, which I think was Frankfurt, but I'm not sure. And it was very interesting angle, because usually, you don't hear this. But he was really happy there, and was a member of the party, and he said -- one thing was very interesting about the Nazi Party [22:27]. The society that they had. They said that when they were cheated by a store, or anybody, they always could go to the Nazi Party headquarters, and complain. I don't know how true this is, but anyway, that's what he said. He could complain, and things were working out very well, because everybody was afraid, of course, of the party. And so, that -- and he was definitely lower-class [23:00], if I can use that term, and was working with children, and so on, in the slums in Frankfurt. He was a very convinced Nazi

[23:13].

INT: Did you ever recall listening to any conversations where prisoners [23:20] were actually speaking about the Holocaust [23:22]?

EL: No.

INT: Or any atrocities or anything?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: I did not. I don't remember anything. It's a good question. Of course, I didn't know about the Holocaust [23:34] at the time. And -- afterwards, I did -- no, I did not.

INT: And did you get the sense that there, at Fort Hunt [23:44], no one really knew anything about the Holocaust [23:47] until after these camps started being liberated?

EL: No. We don't know something. I'll tell you how I found out. It was very dramatic [24:00], because there was a movie that -- we got movies from Portugal that had been made by the Germans [24:08] for themselves. And intelligence, British intelligence, I think -- I don't know. American intelligence bought them in Portugal. And they showed us the movies. And there was a very dramatic scene of the -- that was after July 22nd, so it was late. After July 22nd, '44. But it was before the end of the war. And they showed us a movie. It was very dramatic. They had the general who was accused of being involved in the July 22nd plot. You know the July 22nd plot?

INT: That was the plot to kill Hitler [24:55]?

EL: Yes, right. And he was accused, and there was [25:00] a judge called Festner [phonetic], or something like that, who was searching all of them, and he was very aggressive. And there was a general, a German [25:13] -- it might have been a colonel. I don't know -- a

German officer, high officer, who was involved, accused, of being in that plot. And the judge asked him, “Why did you think of killing Hitler [25:29]? Why were you in the plot?” And he said, “Well, I’ve been in the East, and there was all this murdering.” And, Festner, what the judge said, “How dare you talk about murder? You are a murderer yourself.” It came out suddenly, like this. “All this murdering, all over the place.” So, that was movie, very dramatic.

INT: And [26:00] you watched this at Fort Hunt [26:02]?

EL: Yes. They showed us movies also. That’s an interesting angle. They showed us movies -- [laughs] American movies on Sunday evening, but they had these movies, too. At least, I remember that one. And there were some others, I think.

INT: Well, you yourself, in terms of the true, horrible scope of the Holocaust [26:28], didn’t really find out until the rest of the world was finding --

EL: Yeah.

INT: You weren’t privy to any information gained there at 1142 [26:36]?

EL: No, no. No, the answer is no.

INT: Okay. How did you feel -- since we -- so, clearly, there were a number, quite a few Nazis [26:48] that were there at 1142 [26:49], what was your own personal feeling, as someone who had fled Europe, about their treatment, and how we were treating -- did you feel that they were being treated appropriately? Do you think they should have been treated differently?

EL: I think “Appropriate” is the right term. You obviously wanted them to cooperate. In some instance, I think -- we overdid it in the sense that there are some that -- like, where they were not being -- some were very cooperative, got all kinds of privileges. And as I

mentioned before, I thought that some way, it was overdone sometimes. And only a few instances -- basically, I thought it was appropriate. You wanted them to cooperate, and so we treated them well. I thought it was -- I mentioned that I thought -- I was shocked when I saw the commander of Serbou --

INT: Right.

EL: -- [laughs] diving into the swimming pool [28:00], after they had told his soldiers to die to the last person. I thought that was a little bit too much.

INT: [affirmative] But, for you, were you -- did you find yourself with having a lot of anger --

EL: No.

INT: -- towards these folks, or were you -- you were just a soldier there, doing your job, and you stuck to that?

EL: Yeah, I stuck to that. I think that was important to keep to your work, to your duty, as it is.

INT: Did you get that sense for the other monitors and interrogators that were there as well?

EL: I can't -- we talked -- we didn't talk about that. I don't remember talking -- so, they might have different feelings, but I really don't know. We didn't really talk about that at all.

INT: So, the fact that a lot of you were -- had been refugees --

EL: Yes.

INT: -- but that wasn't really a big topic of conversation or anything?

EL: No, not really.

INT: Okay.

EL: Not really. And I was kind of surprised [29:00], in a French [29:02] article that I noticed,

that someone had different names, and came from different places I thought they came from. And so on. So, no, I didn't -- they were -- people didn't want to talk too much about that.

INT: Wrapping up with speaking about prisoners [29:23], I think we spoke about this a little bit last time. The stoolpigeons [29:27], the folks who were German [29:31] prisoners who had then agreed to assist the Americans. Did you -- were you familiar with that being --

EL: No.

INT: -- used there?

EL: I was not familiar with that. I was not told. There were -- I probably listened to some stoolpigeons [29:44] --

INT: And didn't even --

EL: I wasn't told.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think that was a good idea. Because, otherwise, I don't know, when you listen, you don't have a different attitude, you see, that's what -- our guy with well, it was much better [30:00] if I just wrote it down.

INT: Okay. So --

EL: Anyway, I didn't know.

INT: So, you didn't even know that there were stoolpigeons [30:09] being used?

EL: No, no.

INT: Okay. And --

EL: [unintelligible] map.

INT: Okay. Do you know -- do you have any recollections of -- at Fort Hunt [30:23], any relations with the OSS [30:25]?

EL: No.

INT: No? Okay.

EL: No. I -- let me see. I remember, vaguely -- no, I think that was later. No, I don't think so.

INT: Okay. And any other intelligence groups that would come to 1142 [30:45] to ask questions --

EL: No, no.

INT: -- or --

EL: I didn't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: Probably, there were, but I don't know. I knew the navy people. I know there was navy people.

INT: Right.

EL: I told you about that.

INT: Right, right.

EL: But I don't know if there were any other groups [31:00].

INT: Okay. And are any other folks that were -- do you know if there was regular contact with the Pentagon [31:06]?

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you know how --

EL: There was an office in the Pentagon [31:11], what was called G2 by us. I don't know if

it's an official name. And we went -- I went there a couple of times, to bring reports or papers, or something like that. And I didn't really talk to them much. But I knew some of the officers there. I mean, I knew the names of some of the officers. Not the same thing. And it's -- the names of some of the officers there. And I remember going to the Pentagon [31:43], and being driven back in a Jeep a couple of times or more, and carrying papers. But I don't know what papers they were. I've forgotten now. But I was just a messenger.

INT: So, you were just acting as a messenger between --

EL: I think so.

INT: Okay [32:00]. You weren't actually briefing anyone?

EL: No.

INT: At the --

EL: I don't remember.

INT: Okay. Okay.

[End of Tape 4A]

[Beginning of Tape 4B]

INT: In the Pentagon [00:05], you said this just happened a couple of times, when you were in there?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did that have an impression upon you, this huge -- was the Pentagon [00:14] still under construction while --

EL: No, it was already finished.

INT: Okay.

EL: It was very big, yeah, it was -- it might have been. Not quite finished. But, anyway, it looked exactly the same as now.

INT: Oh, yeah?

EL: Yeah, and it was the same kind of thing.

INT: Did you get the impression, though, that you were the only one going in the Pentagon [00:35], or were there other folks that were also being used occasionally, as messengers to --

EL: I don't know.

INT: Okay. Any other places you would run errands like that, to any offices in Washington [00:44]?

EL: No.

INT: Okay. Were you familiar --

INT: Were there any contacts with intelligence services from other countries? From Britain, or --

EL: Ah, good question [01:00]. Yes. There were lots of other groups. There were -- there was a British officer there, at least one. Obviously came from intelligence too; I remember him. He had a British uniform on, and we took long walks, and we thought it was very creative, because the British was tall, lanky, and took long -- walked very fast. In other words, I remember him. And I don't think he was alone. There might have been two of them. I really don't remember. There was a British officer there.

INT: Was he permanently stationed here?

EL: Yeah, I think so. For a time, at least. Good, your other question, I've completely forgotten about it.

INT: That's great.

EL: There was a British officer. There was no French [01:59] officer. I would have noticed that [02:00]. I don't remember. There was no Russian [02:06]. Real Russian, I mean. They might have acted like an officer, a real Russian. As far as I know. I mean, of course, obviously, it's as far as I know.

INT: Sure. But you do recall the British officer being there.

EL: Yes.

INT: Do you know anything whatsoever about what his role was?

EL: No.

INT: If he interrogated, or just was there --

EL: Nothing, nothing.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think he was RAF [02:34], but I'm not sure.

INT: Oh, RAF?

EL: Yeah. Doesn't mean anything, because he was intelligence. I think, yeah, he was kind of -- RAF [02:42] uniform, but I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

INT: Do you remember about how old -- was he older?

EL: No, he was in his 40s, 30s.

INT: Okay. And did you get the sense that he was there, essentially, permanently? That he was assigned --

EL: For a time, he was assigned [03:00], because I saw him often.

INT: All right.

EL: But not the whole time I was there. I don't think so.

INT: Do you think he may have been with other British -- maybe one or two other people, or you're not certain?

EL: Not certain.

INT: Okay. Let's see. That's a good question. Let's see, here. So, we had mentioned you made trips to the Pentagon [03:27]. Oh, that's what I was going to ask. We may have touched upon this the other time. Do you recall hearing about Camp Pine Grove Furnace [03:36]?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: Doesn't ring a bell. Well, I might have heard the name, but it doesn't ring a bell.

INT: Okay. What it was, was a camp in Pennsylvania --

EL: Yeah.

INT: -- which was, essentially, a holding camp for prisoners [03:51] who were pre-selected to go to Fort Hunt [03:55].

EL: Oh, I see.

INT: But they didn't have room for them.

EL: I see.

INT: At Fort Hunt [03:58]. So, it was just kind of a holding [04:00] area. They might do interrogations there --

EL: Okay.

INT: -- but then, the real interrogations would be done at 1142 [04:06]. So, you never made any trips to there?

EL: No, no. I heard a lot about Camp Ritchie [04:12], because several people who worked

with me had been trained at Camp Ritchie.

INT: Right.

EL: That's one camp I heard about.

INT: Did you get the sense, with Ritchie [04:23], that a lot of the folks had gone to Ritchie, and then came to Fort Hunt [04:29], or were a lot of folks leaving Fort Hunt to go get additional training at --

EL: No, no, the first one.

INT: Okay.

EL: Some had been at Camp Ritchie [04:37], and came to -- of course, most of the people, I think, in Camp Ritchie were sent overseas, and were doing intelligence overseas. That's my impression. And I don't know, but it came later on, because I had some friends here, several years later, who had been in Camp Ritchie [04:58], and told me about it [05:00]. But I had never been there.

INT: Okay.

INT: Did you have any knowledge of other intelligence operations that the government was involved in at the time?

EL: No.

INT: After World War II [05:15]?

EL: Nothing, no.

INT: Let's see. Do you remember there being any civilians at 1142 [05:35]?

EL: No.

INT: Anyone who was working there -- or, even at the end of the war, if there was anyone who had worked there previously, as military, that had come back after being mustered on to

work as a civilian?

EL: No, I don't --

INT: Okay. So, as far as you recall, it was strictly a military operation?

EL: Yeah. There were German [05:59] civilians [06:00], like Hilger [06:01] I mentioned in --

INT: Right.

EL: There were civilians, and -- yeah, that's the one that --

INT: Okay.

EL: [unintelligible].

INT: Do you remember any women ever being on post?

EL: Any women?

INT: Any women, any female prisoners [06:20], or any Americans, someone who was maybe a WAC [06:25] from the military --

EL: From the -- no --not a single one. Wait, I -- I would notice a woman. I don't remember any.

INT: And any other -- we spoke, there were Asian Americans, Japanese [06:40] Americans there. But no one else, any African-Americans that you recall there?

EL: No, no.

INT: Any -- okay, okay. The folks who -- do you remember anything about the guards, or the MPs [06:55], that were there?

EL: Yes.

INT: Were they, like yourself [07:00] -- I mean, do you know if they spoke German [07:02], or were they just military --

EL: No. They were regular, what I remember, they were all regular military police [07:10]. I

don't think any of them spoke German [07:13], or knew any, had been overseas, or were refugees, or so on. They were regular MPs.

INT: Did they -- did you ever interact with them, or did you stay --

EL: No, not much.

INT: Do you know if their barracks were the same as yours, or if they stayed in their own barracks?

EL: No, there must have been other barracks, because I don't remember them in our barracks.

INT: Okay. Okay. And speaking of some of the -- you know, we talked about what you remembered about the physical description of the camp last time. But, just a couple last little questions. Do you remember -- would you go out on the parade ground every -- did you have inspection on a regular basis, or anything like that?

EL: Yeah, sometimes. But very -- and there's something else I remember, that [08:00] -- it's interesting. The camp was kind of special -- it had a special flavor. After FDR [08:11] died, we had parades. Kind of assembly. This was -- Colonel Walker [08:19] was -- I was told organized this. And we all assembled on -- or stood at attention, and saw him, and then, you know, in honor of FDR [08:40], they had the loudspeaker system, and they played Marian Anderson [08:11], singing spirituals. That was original. [laughs] I don't know if any other camp did that. That was our ceremony to honor FDR [09:00], the day after he died. So, it was really special. It was a special place.

INT: And so, you just stood there at attention on the parade ground, and they played that over the loudspeakers?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Huh. What do you remember about Walker [09:21]? You mentioned Walker. But you

think Walker was the one who had that done. Do you -- what do you remember about him --

EL: Yeah, I had information it was his style. But I don't know, and he was in charge. I remember he had a mustache. That's all I can remember. And he had honored -- I was told, but I mean, he didn't tell me personally, about the Geneva Convention [09:42], and everything has to be just right. And later, I was told -- actually, it was my sergeants of some kind. I mean, I never talked to him. I'd only --

INT: Did you get the sense that he knew everything that was going on there at the camp [10:00], because of being the camp commander?

EL: Yes.

INT: Or was he -- was he incorporated into the military intelligence group that you were, or was he just kind of an administrative head of the camp? Do you know what his background was?

EL: I really don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: I don't know.

INT: And getting back to, you know, going out and doing the occasional inspections, and what not, on the parade ground, do you know, would they run a flag up every day? Do you remember --

EL: Yeah, I think so. It was like any other -- I think so. The military police [10:40] did that.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think so.

INT: I mean, would you know, if you ever -- if they ever played taps, or reveille, or fired off a

gun in the morning to wake everybody up, or anything like that?

EL: No, I don't think so.

INT: Okay.

EL: I just don't remember. Taps. I think they had a flag. I think there was a [11:00] -- but, no, I don't remember that.

INT: Do you remember anything about where the -- do you know, was the flag at the parade ground, or --

EL: There was a flag at the parade -- I think so.

INT: Okay.

EL: I do, yeah.

INT: When you were lined up at the parade ground, do you remember anything about the surrounding of the parade ground? What you would see, what -- could you ever see the --

EL: There was this old building right in front, but -- where Colonel Walker [11:32] lived, or had his office. I don't know. But that was his headquarters.

INT: Okay. So, his --

EL: That's another for the parade ground [phonetic]. When you came in, this was here, and it was over there.

INT: Okay. So, as you came in -- so, his was the closest building to the parade ground? They were right in the center?

EL: No, it was not in the center, but the front.

INT: It was in the front?

EL: A bunch of old -- between his [12:00] building, his home, I think. And the parade ground.

INT: Okay. And --

INT: Do you want to draw it, or --

INT: Yeah, do you think you could sketch that out for us at all?

EL: Oh, I --

INT: If you -- would you mind giving that a try?

EL: More or less. I -- maybe I don't remember --

INT: And don't -- you're not going to be graded on it or anything, so don't worry.

EL: [laughs] So, there was a road from the entrance, going this way. And there was a --  
Colonel Walker's [12:38] house was an old-fashioned house. It had a porch.

INT: Okay.

EL: And it had obviously been there for some time. And then, there was a parade ground  
here. Like this. That's all I remember.

INT: Okay.

EL: There were other buildings here.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think [13:00] -- this was another headquarters here, where the top sergeant was, and so  
on. But I don't remember that very well.

INT: And do you -- you would have entered the fort, though, coming in here?

EL: Yeah, must have had some kind of entrance --

INT: Okay.

EL: Over here, somewhere.

INT: Okay. And your barracks?

INT: Yeah, do you remember where you lived, where your barracks were in relation to all

this?

EL: They were more like this, over here.

INT: Okay.

EL: More like this.

INT: Got it.

EL: The swimming pool was close, was around here. Well, I can't --

INT: Right. Do you remember where the prisoner [13:41] facilities were, in relationship to all this?

EL: I don't remember.

INT: Okay.

EL: They were over here somewhere.

INT: Okay. What about the mess hall? Do you remember where you would go to eat? Was that --

EL: The mess hall was over here somewhere.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think [14:00]. Anyway, that's the pool, that was much --

INT: You said that was the pool, and that was your barracks.

EL: Oh, the barracks. The mess hall, yeah. That was the pool. Take a look. The mess hall. The latrines were here.

INT: The latrines were there? Okay.

EL: Yeah.

INT: So, you would have to walk from the barracks to the latrine.

EL: Right. And the mess hall was somewhere over here. Just not -- somewhere over here.

INT: Okay. Do you -- could you see -- did you ever see the gun batteries from where you were at, or do -- the old big concrete gun batteries from the war?

EL: They were over here.

INT: Okay.

EL: I know that they were over here. And we were monitoring in here. That was right where -- under the batteries. It was a kind of [15:00] cave. I don't know, it's a cave. It's a basement of the batteries. It's part of the batteries, down below. That's where we were working. Over here somewhere.

INT: So, you would actually do the monitoring inside the -- you'd go in, underneath the gun batteries, or something like that?

EL: Yeah, it was kind of out there.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think they were thick walls. I don't know if they added something or not. But it seemed that we were below the batteries.

INT: Okay.

EL: Or connect to the batteries.

INT: And -- so, most of your days were in the dark? You were -- I mean, there was light in the room, but it was basically -- there were no windows?

EL: Yeah, it was dark, yeah. It was dark. It was like being in a basement.

INT: And you remember actually having to go up and down steps to go to where you were monitoring [16:00], like it was underground?

EL: I think so. A few steps. I don't know. I think there were a few steps.

INT: And so, it was not attached to where the actual prisoners [16:08] were?

EL: No.

INT: So, there were --

EL: No.

INT: -- tables or something?

EL: [inaudible], I don't know. No, there were not.

INT: Okay. Do you remember the cabins that were -- some of the --

INT: Cottages?

INT: -- cottages were?

INT: Where folks like Hilger [16:24] and other folks were kept?

EL: I don't remember.

INT: Okay.

EL: But they were kept. And I know I visited Hilger [16:31], and there were [unintelligible].

But I don't remember them.

INT: Well, this was fantastic. This was great, because -- and some of these, we think we know where some of them were, and they line up very closely with what you just told us.

EL: Yeah.

INT: So, that's --

EL: That's [laughs] --

INT: Because your memory is 100 [laughs] --

INT: Like I said, you're not going to be graded on this. Don't worry. That's very, very helpful. That's [17:00] fantastic. And also, around the camp -- I guess we should go back to this little sketch real quick. The borders, I guess, of the camp were kind of like this. Do you remember --

EL: No, it was much bigger.

INT: Oh, even bigger than --

EL: Not here.

INT: So it went much, much further over this way?

EL: Yeah, yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: Much.

INT: And do you remember what was over here, if it was -- you said that -- do you think --

EL: Probably the [unintelligible] -- the prisoners [17:33] were there.

INT: Okay.

EL: I think so. But I remember vaguely, but I never went there.

INT: Okay.

EL: Don't know.

INT: Okay. Do you remember what the perimeter of the camp looked like? Was there -- was it just a line of trees, was there a fence, walls or anything?

EL: No walls, I don't think there were walls. But there might have been a fence. But I don't know.

INT: Do you remember if it was a high fence, or low [18:00], or barbed wire on top, or anything?

EL: I don't know. I'm pretty sure there was a fence. I should remember, but --

INT: Don't worry about it.

EL: Because you'd walk outside. Yeah --

INT: Was there really only one way in and out of the fort, or were there multiple entrances?

EL: I don't know. Probably more, but I don't know.

INT: Okay.

INT: You were part of -- or our understanding is, the program you were there for there at Fort Hunt [18:46] was known as the "Military Intelligence Service," MIS [18:50].

EL: Yes, that's --

INT: But the Y program. Did you know that it was --

EL: Y, I don't know, but MIS.

INT: MIS. Did you just -- did you [19:00] refer to it as MIS [19:01], or as "MIS," or just -- did you abbreviate it, or --

EL: No. I didn't talk about it.

INT: Okay, sure, sure.

EL: We -- I referred to it as 1142 [19:13]. That's what I --

INT: Did you even know that it was -- where you were at was called "Fort Hunt [19:18]?" Or did you only know it as 1142 [19:20]?

EL: I don't remember now. Fort Hunt [19:25] came up after the war, and I was there, once, for a picnic. And so, the -- I remember everybody said, "Fort Hunt," then. And none of the barracks were left or anything like that. It was a wonderful picnic [phonetic].

INT: When was this?

EL: In the '50s, I think. It was already the Park Service. I was invited to a picnic [20:00]. It was strange to walk around there [laughs], obviously, after a few years. But lots of kids and a picnic. It's an office picnic.

INT: Did you -- when you were there for the office -- did you tell folks that you'd been --

EL: No, no. I told my wife.

INT: Sure.

EL: I did.

INT: Going through, kind of chronologically, we've covered a lot of your time at 1142 [20:36]. At the end of the war, first of all, what was your reaction when you heard that Germany [20:43] had surrendered?

EL: That's a good question. I thought, very clearly, too late. I was thinking of the Holocaust [20:57]. All the people, all the other people who died [21:00]. It was too late.

INT: Did it come as a surprise that the war was over?

EL: No.

INT: It was expected --

EL: We expected, yeah. I was reading The New York Times [laughs], the newspapers are posted. So, there was a lot of news and, no, no.

INT: Did -- were you ever in doubt as to who would win the war?

EL: I was kind of worried when I read about the [unintelligible] and Fort Hunt had all that information about the wonder weapons, and so on. And of course, I didn't know much about the nuclear bomb [21:51] and so on. But I was worried that the Germans [21:54] would be able to do something like a nuclear bomb. I didn't know, really [22:00]. And that the United States [22:02] might be forced to surrender. I was thinking of that. So, to answer your question, yes, I was worried at the time, that we could possibly lose. Of course, because of some weapon that we didn't know about.

INT: Was there much talk among your coworkers about the progress of the war?

EL: Yeah. Sure, to some extent. There was some talk about, "What are we doing here?" Did you see -- you described as a great [unintelligible] but there was talk among us. "What

are we doing here? We are kind of out of the war, really.” And [23:00] we talked about the progress of the war. We knew that so many American soldiers were dying [unintelligible] and so on. And we were, so very privileged country club. So, that -- we talked about that. And some of my friends felt pretty bad about it.

INT: Do you know if anyone that you knew at 1142 [23:27] had siblings that were in combat?

EL: No. I don't remember. There must have been, but I don't -- we didn't talk about it.

INT: What about -- the war with Germany [23:43] ended, but, of course, the war against Japan [23:47] was still going on.

EL: Yeah.

INT: Did you have any impressions about what your role at 1142 [23:54] was going to be if the war with Japan kept going on?

EL: Yes. The answer is [24:00], we turned immediately to intelligence about Russia [24:06]. As soon as the war against Germany [24:11] was over, all of -- we got instructions to find out anything we can about Russia. So, the Cold War [24:21] had started at 1142 [24:24] much earlier because we were very close to the Pentagon [24:32], and the thinking there was -- the danger was Russia [24:38].

INT: And is that how you got involved with folks like Hilger [24:42]?

EL: Yeah, that was part of the picture. Of course, we were pretty interested in Hilger anyway, because he was an important man, very interesting. But the thing is that Hilger [24:54] knew a lot about Russia [24:55], so he was very welcome [25:00].

INT: Do you remember hearing anything about Reinhard Gehlen [25:02]?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: I remember reading about it in the newspaper somewhere, and he -- I didn't know he was at 1142 [25:14]. I knew later on, years later. Several years later [laughs], who he was, and what he did, and so on. I didn't know. Never heard of him. So, security was pretty tight. There were some famous people who came through, and nobody mentioned it.

INT: Or, Wernher von Braun [25:37]? Did you ever --

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: Never heard of him. So, it's interesting that none of the people I dealt with there are mentioned, that people are famous, were already famous then.

INT: Right.

EL: Nobody mentioned it. They [unintelligible] I did hear.

INT: And [26:00] the war against Japan [26:03] suddenly came to an end with the atomic bombs [26:06] going off. What was your reaction, both to the atomic bomb and the power of the atomic bomb, and the fact that the war itself was finally over?

EL: Well, it came across as a surprise. Everybody -- well, I had my doubts about the bomb [26:24], yeah. I don't know. My own reaction, personal reaction, was that something could have been done to get Japan [26:38] to surrender without the bomb. That was my personal reaction at the time. Though I was glad the war was over.

INT: Did you think that you were going to be immediately discharged when the war with Japan [26:57] ended, or were you told that you were going to be [27:00] kept on for a little while there at 1142 [27:02]?

EL: Yes. I don't know what I was told, but I knew that I would stay a few -- well, I stayed a few months more, longer.

INT: Do you remember just how much longer you stayed when --

EL: Through March.

INT: Through March of '46?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay. And so, the focus in that time period, then, you said, was primarily on the Russians [27:25]?

EL: Yes.

INT: To find out information about --

EL: I had nothing -- yeah, after Japan [27:29] was over, and the -- yes, it was on the Russians.

INT: Okay. And so, you were discharged in March of 1946?

EL: Yes.

INT: Were you discharged directly from 1142 [27:41], or did you go somewhere else?

EL: We went to Fort Meade [27:44], near Baltimore. That's Fort Meade, yeah. And we were discharged there.

INT: A whole group of you from 1142?

EL: Yes, a whole group -- not all of us, but a whole group, for one reason or another, we were together [28:00], because we were enlisted at the same time. I really don't know. But there was a whole group from Fort Hunt [28:08], 1142 [28:10], which was sent to Fort Meade [28:16] to be discharged. I remember Dallin [28:18] was there. A few others. Several of my friends.

INT: And so, you were discharged in March. Did it seem like a sizeable number of folks remained behind at 1142 [28:36]?

EL: Yeah, that's right.

INT: Okay. So --

EL: There were some who stayed behind. I didn't know the size of it, but there were some people.

INT: So, you got the sense that operations were still continuing, even when you left?

EL: Yes, I did.

INT: Were you ever approached or asked to stay on and continue working at Fort Hunt [28:54]?

EL: No. Nobody asked me.

INT: Okay.

EL: No. That I would remember.

INT: Or were you ever approached [29:00] by any other folks, even outside of the military, you know, with the CIA [29:07] was being formed a few years later, since you had experience in intelligence, were you ever asked to participate in any other government intelligence agencies?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: But I joined -- that's what I did on my own, really. I mean, I wasn't really asked. I joined an intelligence reserve outfit.

INT: Okay.

EL: And I joined that, and I applied also to be officer there. That didn't work out. I was in an intelligence reserve group [29:43] for a little while.

INT: And this was immediately upon being discharged, you signed up for that, or --

EL: Pretty soon after that, yeah.

INT: Okay, okay.

EL: But we didn't do anything. I mean, was just a reserve.

INT: What was your rank upon mustering out?

EL: I was a sergeant [30:00].

INT: Sergeant, okay. Okay, we'll go ahead and stop right now, because we're about at the end of our tape.

[End of Tape 4B]

[Beginning of Tape 5A]

INT: -- at this point. Okay, this is National Parks Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as Sam Swersky, part of the Fort Hunt [00:16] Oral History Project, here continuing our conversations at the home of Mr. Erwin Lachmann, who is a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 [00:25]. Today is March 13th, 2007, and we're going to go ahead and pick right back up. We just had left off talking a little bit about being mustered out at the end of the war, and what you -- and I wanted to talk just real briefly about what you did after the war. If you just -- so that we can kind of complete the story, would you mind telling us what you did after -- did you go back to college?

EL: Went back to college. I was a student at the University of Pennsylvania [00:57] and was studying [01:00] economics. And I went back there for a year.

INT: Okay. And that's all you needed, was one more year to complete your degree?

EL: Yes, yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: My BS in economics.

INT: And at that point, did you -- you looked for work at -- this would have been in 1947 or

so?

EL: Yeah. At that time, then I went to -- for a master's degree. I went to George Washington [01:28], here.

INT: Okay.

EL: And then, I got, as I mentioned [laughs] -- then, after I finished there, almost. I mean, I didn't quite finish. I didn't write my thesis. I met Bill Hesse [01:45] in the street. And he told me that the Army Map Service [01:49] is hiring people who know languages. And so, I followed his advice and went to the Army Map Service and worked there and also [02:00] in intelligence, same kind of thing. I mean, not the same kind of thing at all, because there was no monitoring or anything like this. But we looked at documents.

INT: And how long was your -- is that where you worked for the rest of your career, or --

EL: Oh, no, no. I went to the Army Map Service [02:23], and then I took off for a little while to finish my thesis. And then, I got a job in the State Department [02:29].

INT: Okay.

EL: And that -- the State Department was [unintelligible] intelligence and research. And that was a very interesting time, that we -- for five years or so. And then, I transferred to AID, Aid for International Development [phonetic], where I -- and I did all kinds of things there. Nothing -- no intelligence whatsoever. Because AID didn't want --

INT: Oh, okay.

EL: There're assistance programs for various [03:00] countries around the world, and didn't want to have anything to do with intelligence. So, that's -- then I retired [laughs], after many years.

INT: So, it sounds like you worked in intelligence for a while, there, and then you moved over

to AID [03:17].

EL: Yeah, I was in INI [phonetic] in the State Department [03:21].

INT: And throughout your career in the State Department, and in Army Mapping [03:27], would you run into other folks from 1142 [03:30] from time to time?

EL: Yes. I -- John Dean [03:33], I ran into him, kind of Nazi [03:35] [phonetic] [unintelligible] ran into other people. I might have met Tumhauer [phonetic]. My brother mentioned he ran into somebody in AID [03:46]. I've forgotten now who it was, but I remember my brother mentioning that he -- there was a guy there who had been in 1142 [03:56], but I've forgotten his name.

INT: Did your brother [04:00] work for AID [04:01] as well?

EL: Yeah, he did for a time.

INT: Okay.

EL: Then, he worked for the World Bank.

INT: Okay.

EL: He was also economist.

INT: Do you know if he was ever approached to continue working in intelligence, since he'd been an officer?

EL: No.

INT: Okay.

EL: Well, I don't know. I don't know. I think he was also the reserve. He might have been. I really don't remember. I think there was something he mentioned, but I don't --

INT: And in the reserve -- so, you were in this intelligence reserve [04:40] for a short while?

EL: A short while.

INT: And do you know, what exactly did that entail? Was it just --

EL: Nothing. I didn't attend a single meeting. I was very inactive [05:00].

INT: That's about all I have before we go on to talking about names and people. Is there anything -- okay. With that, I think we might go ahead and switch over and -- unless, do you feel there's anything else, specifically about 1142 [05:16], that we haven't covered?

EL: I don't think so. I -- if I remember something, as I did remember one of those newspaper, you know --

INT: Right.

EL: I -- certainly, I'll tell you about it.

INT: Great.

EL: I can call you.

INT: Fantastic. And if anything, do you want to -- before we switch gears, do you have any thoughts about just the importance or the role that Fort Hunt [05:41] may have played in World War II [05:45], in winning World War II, and in going on forward into the future?

EL: Well, I wish that -- there would be articles in the Post, and in the French [05:56] newspapers, I thought, were highly exaggerated. I mean [06:00], they -- it was hyped, I think. The newspaper people had hyped it. I -- frankly, I don't think we played a very important role. We might have, but I was not involved. Of course, what the other people who were there, with whom I didn't know, the Germans [06:22] who were there, the famous -- like Gehlen [06:23], and so on. It might have played a role later on in the Cold War [06:30]. But von Braun [06:32], and that -- but actually, in the war itself, I had my doubts it was that important, unfortunately [laughs]. I would have felt better, you know, if it were very important. I really think so -- it was marginal, to some extent, at least.

INT: Well, just from our perspective, you know, we spoke occasionally with folks, and veteran -- military intelligence today [07:00], and actually had the opportunity to meet, just last week, with a gentleman who wrote his master's thesis on the MIS [07:11], Military Intelligence Service --

EL: Yeah, right.

INT: -- but with the Y program, the interrogation program. And he wrote a good bit on Fort Hunt [07:17], and he's still, to this day -- he's actually a colonel in Air Force intelligence.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And he wanted to impress upon us that what went on at 1142 [07:32] was extremely important, and a great deal came out of that, some of which may still be even -- bits and pieces, the importance of which we may not fully be able to grasp or understand. That it really played a significant role, and some of the information that -- not only the information that came out of there, but in setting the structure of interrogations and intelligence for the future [08:00]. It, essentially, has served as a role model for the last 60 years for military intelligence.

EL: Yeah. That I hoped we would be able to see, because I was away. And probably the scientific element was -- might have been very important. I was not involved in the scientific intelligence.

INT: Well, with that, why don't we shift gears and look at some of the names and photographs -- first, in fact, we can even look at some photos, if you'd like.

EL: Sure.

INT: I brought some along.

EL: Sure, sure, I'd be delighted.

INT: And I think we've given you copies of --

EL: Yeah, this one --

INT: -- some of these.

EL: This one I --

INT: Let me bring the camera around. This will take a second, a little doing.

INT: Sure thing, and we'd like to have you do is to -- if you can, go through, and if there's anybody that you remember in here, or if you could point yourself out.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And Sam's going to take the camera around over your shoulder [09:00], so we can record that. Would you like me to hand it to you, do you want --

INT: I wouldn't so [unintelligible].

INT: Okay.

[beeping]

INT: I've turn things on and off several times.

INT: Unless -- do you think it'd be more helpful to go through the list of names first?

EL: Yes, I think so, because I'll remember the faces, but I won't remember the names.

INT: Okay.

EL: So, it's -- I remember -- I know some of the faces, but not --

INT: Well, then, perhaps if you think it'd be better to go over the names first --

EL: Yeah, I think so. If that's -- we can --

INT: Fantastic, I'm so sorry.

INT: No, it's okay, it's --

INT: I did this and it dawned upon me.

INT: [laughs]

INT: And so -- is there a -- have we given you a copy?

EL: Of -- yes.

INT: Of this [10:00]? Okay, great.

EL: Let me see what I have. I had a file here.

INT: There you go, fantastic.

EL: That's --

INT: Yeah, that's the same thing. That's the exact same thing. But --

EL: Photo, too, yeah.

INT: The first six pages are just officers. And then, the next six pages are the enlisted men.

And I don't know how well you can make out the --

EL: I'll take my glasses off, and look at the officers, because they're not in alphabetical order.

It's difficult.

INT: Yeah, it's actually in the order of which they were -- they arrived at Fort Hunt [10:41].

EL: So, in the beginning, I wouldn't know them. And then -- oh, here is -- they go this way. '43, '44, '43 --

INT: Yeah, this is the date that they left Fort Hunt [10:54]. So, some of these ones -- this report, so you know, was published around the end of 1945 [11:00]. So, if there's a gap there, it means that in -- at the end of 1945, they were still there. They had not left yet.

So, in this case, like, this William Hershberger [11:13], he would have still been there.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And Julius Wadsworth [11:17], he would have still been there.

EL: I -- [Newton] Holbrook [11:22] I think I remember.

INT: Holbrook?

EL: Yeah, but I don't know who he was, really. The name, somehow.

INT: Okay.

EL: And Kretzmann [11:30], I remember somehow, yeah. I don't know what he was doing. And I mean, you -- sometimes, you just remember the name.

INT: Sure.

EL: And that's all about him. I don't -- and we will turn the page, see what happens there. These are still officers. Commanding, yeah [12:00]. No, no, I don't -- ah, [Stephen] Szlapka [12:05] I remember. He was a major.

INT: Yeah -- you're good -- yeah, I believe you're correct. He would have come in as -- I guess, as a captain, but must have been promoted shortly thereafter.

EL: Yeah. And he was the -- I told you that I worked on documents first, and he was my boss.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: Szlapka. And he fired me, because I was typing so poorly. I told you that.

INT: Yes, I -- you were only doing documents for a short while there.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And do you remember anything about Szlapka [12:39], or where --

EL: I think he was a lawyer. I may be wrong, but he was a lawyer, I think.

INT: We actually -- I'd forgotten about that. We actually have some photographs of him that I don't think I brought, which I should have, because I totally forgot about that connection.

EL: You don't call -- you don't mind if [13:00] [unintelligible] -- no, no, no. [Gustav] Ringwald [13:12] I remember, but really -- the name -- I'm not sure. There's another

Holbrook [13:22] here.

INT: And maybe the same one. Because, in some cases, they left, and then they came back.

EL: Yeah, I see, yeah.

INT: So, they'd be listed a couple of times.

EL: Habtok [phonetic] [13:32] I remember.

INT: He was?

EL: I don't know what he -- really, I don't know very much about him. He was of Dutch background. I remember that. And we talked a little bit about this and that. Habtok, but -- well, he -- I think he was interrogating, but I -- but I remember him. So, I can't really talk [14:00] much about him. He was a good officer [phonetic]. Kubala [14:18]. I think he was in the MPs [14:24]. He was sergeant of the MPs. Captain Kubala. Well, [unintelligible]. Here's my brother. See one again here, must have been the same who came back [phonetic]. My brother was there from 6/12/44. He came after I was there, yes. That's correct.

INT: What type of work did your brother do?

EL: He was interrogating.

INT: He was an interrogator [15:00]?

EL: That I know. How about [Heinz] Winkler [15:12]? There was a Winkler, was a soldier, but not [inaudible] -- Aikman [15:28] [phonetic], I'm remembering his name, too, but that doesn't mean much. I mean, I just remember the names. I can't read it [laughs], anyway [16:00]. And so, here are the --

INT: That should be the beginning of the enlisted men, so it sounds like you don't remember a great deal of the officers.

EL: No, no, I don't. [unintelligible] Schuette [16:24] I remember.

INT: Schuette?

EL: Schuette, yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: He's in that -- the picture, too, the picture.

INT: Okay.

EL: He was -- if I remember right, he was -- he was not a refugee. He was American of family with German [16:49] background.

INT: Do you remember what he did there, if he was an interrogator or a monitor?

EL: No, he was a monitor, I think. Schuette [16:58] was a monitor [17:00]. George Frenkel [17:11]. I knew George Frenkel in town [phonetic]. Not there.

INT: And we're in touch with him. He lives about -- probably three miles or so from here.

EL: Oh, I see.

INT: And we've interviewed him as well.

EL: Yeah. He might be the same I knew later on, saw other -- you know, the George Frenkel [17:33] I knew quite a few years later, but I don't know if he's the same.

INT: And he worked for a while, I think, in -- I don't know if it was Army Mapping [17:43] or -- but he worked doing some level of intelligence work.

EL: Where does he live now, in -- can you tell me the address? Because the George Frenkel [17:58] I knew later on, I think I [18:00] -- I don't know, may lived up by 16th Street. Near Walter Reed.

INT: He now lives right off of Chevy Chase Parkway, near Kensington.

EL: Oh.

INT: Just on the other side of the beltway. Now, he may have lived there earlier.

EL: Yeah. But I met -- if it's the same, I met him many years ago. Colonel Carl Aharden [phonetic]. I think I remember also --

INT: And do you remember anything about him?

EL: No [19:00]. I just remember he was -- he's also on there, I think, in that group of -- [inaudible] Jeanie. Yeah, I remember him, too. But I don't know what he was doing. Sounds familiar, Jeanie. Remember [unintelligible] I think I remember him, too. Can't tell you much about him [20:00]. [Leslie] Klieforth [20:04], yeah.

INT: You remember Klieforth?

EL: Yes. Did you talk to him, or --

INT: No, we haven't.

EL: Is he -- I don't know if he's alive -- no, he's not alive anymore. Someone -- was it you? Somebody told me --

INT: It might have been us. I'm not certain. I don't have the --

EL: Well, Klieforth [20:20] I also met later on. He was -- I can tell you about him. He was the son of an American ambassador to Canada [20:29]. That's one thing. And he -- afterwards, he -- when he left 1142 [20:41], when we catch up, years later, he tried to find a job here in Washington [20:44], and he worked in a bank. I saw him in a bank, I think. And -- but then, he went back to what he would normally do. He went into the Foreign Service [20:57] or the State Department [20:57]. I don't know if -- I believe it was Foreign Service [21:00]. And I saw him several times in the State Department [21:05]. Several times. And actually, it was in a house. I invited him, and so on. So, I knew him after the war. And he had a career in the State Department. And somehow, I have the

impression that he died a few years ago.

INT: Do you know what he did at 1142 [21:30]?

EL: Yes, he was a monitor.

INT: Okay.

EL: Of course, I remember I talked to him [phonetic]. He was of, I think, a Hungarian [21:43] background.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: [unintelligible] Hungarian. And he talked about that sometimes. Now, the next one is Andreas Heuser [21:53]. He is very -- I knew him well, and he was also [22:00] in the house after the war. My wife would [unintelligible] too. He was an interesting man. He was handsome, and liked the theater. And always talked about the theater. He wanted to be an actor, and so on. And after the war, I asked him about that, and he was still interested in organizing theaters and so on. And he had a brother who was high in the administration as an economist, if I remember right. And they're in Georgetown [22:43]. We went to Georgetown from time to time. And so, he was a little bit different from other people. Well, he was similar to me, really. He had a brother who was also in town [23:00]. And so, that's what I remember, mainly. And [Paul] Floersheim [23:11], I remember, too. I think -- somehow, I thought he was connected with the family that shoes [phonetic], but maybe not. And I don't know what he did after the war.

INT: Do you know what [Stephen] Toth [23:32] and Floersheim [23:33] did at 1142 [23:33]?

EL: They were monitors.

INT: Monitors?

EL: Floersheim was definitely a monitor. He might have done other things, too. As far as I

know -- and Floersheim [23:44], too, we were going in the same group. Now, I -- there is Bill Hesse [23:52]. And Heinz Rickenauer [phonetic], I might remember him too, somehow [24:00].

INT: And both -- they both live up in Leisure World.

EL: Oh, yes.

INT: And they both live up there, actually.

EL: And they know each other?

INT: [affirmative]

EL: They --

INT: They've actually, apparently, lived within a mile of each other their entire lives.

EL: Oh, really?

INT: And Heinz moved, and Bill [24:18] moved shortly thereafter. So, they've kept in touch, and we've met with both of them and done interviews with Bill Hesse. What do you remember about them from 1142 [24:31]?

EL: They were monitors, unless they'd had some special assignments. You know, many monitors had special assignments, like I had with Hilger [24:40], and they did, too. And so, there were -- however work is concerned, we were monitors. That's all I remember. They might have done [25:00] something else, too. Then, there's [Nicholas] Milroy [25:05], who was unusual, in the sense that he was of Hungarian [25:14] background. And I met him later on. He was very funny, and very nice guy. And it was later on in USIA [25:27]. I think -- because I met him in the cafeteria of the State Department [25:32]. He was with his wife, who was a very attractive woman. I remember that. Also Hungarian [25:43]. He had known her before the war. I know, somehow, he mentioned

it to me. And he was -- he was with USIA [25:59]. I don't know what he did [26:00], but he was different from other people, like -- he was Hungarian [26:07]. He was not German [26:07].

INT: You said Toth [26:09] was Hungarian as well?

EL: What?

INT: On the previous page, Toth?

EL: Yeah.

INT: He was Hungarian?

EL: He was American, of Hungarian background.

INT: Okay.

EL: If I remember right.

INT: Whereas Milroy [26:19] was --

EL: He was Hungarian, yes.

INT: He was Hungarian, okay.

EL: He had lots of stories about Budapest. He was a little bit older.

INT: Okay.

EL: And had lots of funny stories about Budapest. Also, a theater-goer, whatever.

INT: Were these all refugees, then, from Europe?

EL: Milroy [26:36] was a refugee, yes. Not all -- Toth [26:41] was not -- he was from New York City [26:43], I think. And -- let's see. The others, I talked to -- Milroy [26:48] was definitely a refugee. He was talking about Budapest before the war, and so on. And he was a bit older. He -- then Kostner [27:00] was -- I knew him too, very well, but well. He was actually a relative of mine, somehow. An aunt in New York [27:08] knew him

well.

INT: Really?

EL: Yeah. It was a -- he was a refugee, but he was from Berlin [27:14]. And I didn't -- he was older. He had been a judge, I think, in Germany [27:23]. He was quite older, and had been a young judge, I suppose. He was a refugee from Berlin [27:32]. And he was a distant relative of mine. My aunt in New York [27:36] said she knew him. He was -- in other words, he was family, somehow. I don't know how. Now, the next one is interesting. You ought to interview him if he's still around. He was William Streep [27:52], was the man in charge of documentation. After I was.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: And he was Dutch [28:00]. A refugee from Holland. And he was, for several years -- I mean, months and months, I think. So, he ought to know a lot about the documents.

INT: Okay.

EL: If you can get in contact with him, hear from different angle, you see. I was in charge of the documents only a short time. But here, he was for months and months.

INT: He took over after you?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: Exactly.

INT: Yeah, and I don't recall -- we're not in touch with him.

EL: Yeah. He typed better than I did.

[laughter]

INT: Well, you said -- Mr. Lachmann, when you said that they were refugees, are you also

saying that they were Jewish, or not necessarily?

EL: Not necessarily. That's a good question. I didn't know -- I think Milroy [28:52] was Jewish, and -- I mean, he was Hungarian [28:54]. Kostner [28:54] was, of course -- my family, basically. I don't know the details [29:00], but he was definitely Jewish.

INT: Were Milroy [29:04] and Kostner [29:04] both monitors as well?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay. But Streep [29:09] was --

EL: Definitely was, I don't know, but [phonetic] Kostner, and he monitored with -- he had the same shift that I was on.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: Yeah. There were different shifts. I remember that, definitely. But Streep [29:21] was not. And he was -- I think Streep was Jewish, but I really don't know. Let's go down the list. Let's see, Streep, Hapon [phonetic] -- I don't remember him -- vaguely. Mayers -- Harold Meyers, no, there was another -- Arno Mayer [29:46], there was an Arno Mayer. Anyway, I can tell you about him when we get to him.

INT: Great.

EL: Yes. So, there's some Italian [29:58] names, Silvio Bedini [30:00]. I don't remember that, though. Just before my time, I suppose. No, he was in my time. He --

INT: Does --

EL: I really don't know. I just say he's Italian [30:12].

INT: And just -- and to let you know, he was one of the folks who was actually in the X program [30:20], the other program that was going on. Because there was another program going on at Fort Hunt [30:23] that was called -- that was "Super top secret."

EL: I see. But --

INT: And they were separate from the Y [30:23], and he was part of that. He actually is still living here. He lives right off of Connecticut Avenue, actually.

EL: I see. So, I didn't know what they were doing really [31:00] [inaudible]. There's a Paul Huss [31:13], there is -- these include also the MPs [31:39]?

INT: We're not sure.

EL: Yeah --

INT: We're really not sure. We think it is just the -- it's just folks actually involved in the program, in one way or another, you know, either as monitors, or somehow involved in intelligence.

EL: Because there's so many that I knew later on [phonetic].

INT: And also [32:00], if you look closely at the dates, many of these people were only at 1142 [32:05] for a matter of a few weeks.

EL: I see, yeah.

INT: And so, we tried to figure out what exactly they were doing there. We've actually spoken with one who was assigned there completely accidentally.

EL: I see.

INT: And he sat there on a bunk for a month and a half, and didn't do a thing, and then was sent somewhere else.

EL: I see.

[End of Tape 5A]

[Beginning of Tape 5B]

EL: Of course, Pete's [phonetic] knew all about him.

INT: Right. Were you close to -- did you know Rudy [00:08] well when you were there?

EL: Yes.

INT: You were -- okay.

EL: Very well.

INT: Did you ever run into him after the war?

EL: No -- yes, once. He came to Washington [00:17]. And he came with a friend from his university. I've forgotten which one it was. And he was going to join the CIA [00:27] and be assigned to Berlin [00:29], he told us. He told me -- I mean, that's -- I don't think he was -- I don't know where I met him. But I'm sure I talked to him after the war, when he came through -- it might have been a restaurant or someplace. I -- I don't think he was -- he was in our home. It must have been before I was married, I think, [inaudible] [01:00]. So, you know all about him. Now, I see my name has been misspelled.

INT: Yes [laughs]. We were lucky to find you. Actually, you found us, I guess, so --

EL: Yeah. DeTrey [01:19] I knew. Now, Bader [01:21] and DeTrey, and they came at the same time. Or did they -- yeah, '44, '45. They came together. Now, they both were -- they were different. Because they were both from Switzerland [01:37], and both not Jewish, and so, Bader, for example, was from Geneva, and I talked to him. He talked really good French [01:51] with -- but he knew German [01:54], too, I'm sure. DeTrey [01:57] was also from Lausanne [02:00], I think, Switzerland. We talked about it, because he was from the same area where I spent a lot of time in my youth. And so, they were, in that sense, rather different. So, neither one -- not Jewish.

INT: Here, it has Bader's first name as Pere [phonetic]. Was it Pierre, or Pere?

EL: No, it must be Pierre.

INT: Pierre, okay. I wasn't sure if it had been mistyped.

EL: Yeah.

INT: Just like they mistyped your name.

EL: Yeah. And there's Klieforth [02:32] again. And now, next one, is Schidlovsky [02:38]. He was with that -- and the other Russian [02:43]. And he was -- I don't know where -- he was from New York [02:49]; no, I don't know where he was from. But he was very Russian. He was not Jewish. It was -- he liked very much [03:00] to act as an old-fashioned Russian [03:05]. This was very funny, because he took an American cap -- first of all, he had a mustache like an old-fashioned Russian officer. And he liked to play it; I mean, the way he acted, walked, and so on. But the funniest thing was he put on an American army cap, and he put it in such a way that he looked like a Tsarist officer. It's amazing. He was a good actor. He put it on, and amazing [laughs]; I mean, anybody seeing Tsarist officers in pictures could see that this is a Tsarist officer. He had the face, and the mustache. He had the accents too; he talked -- and I met him again. He was working for the World Bank. And I met him in the street again. I mean, not socially, but in the street, and we talked a little bit [04:00]. Because my wife worked with him for the Monetary Fund. And I left, and I -- so, I was often in that neighborhood, and I saw him several times.

INT: And do you know what he did at 1142 [04:16]? Was he a monitor, or did they use him in interrogations because he was Russian [04:19]?

EL: I don't -- he was also a monitor, I'm pretty sure. But he might have been -- he certainly must have been used for -- to interrogate Russians. But -- Dallin [04:33] was also an interrogator, but he did many other things. Christopher Craig [04:38], yes, I knew him

well. He has a very interesting background. Have you been in contact with him? He is American --

INT: No. We've tried, and I have a little note here on my sheet that there's a lot of people named -- it's a popular name, Christopher Craig [04:56].

EL: Yes.

INT: And so, we haven't been able to --

EL: I'll tell you about him [05:00].

INT: If you know where -- or, if you know where he was from or anything.

EL: Yes, I'll tell you about him. He came from a very wealthy American family from Chicago. They were so wealthy that they had a palazzo in Venice. And he spent some time in the palazzo, with the -- first thing I knew about him, I mean, he told me about his life in Venice. And then, when the war started -- so, he was a little bit older, because he was already living in the palazzo by himself. He was not a kid. And the family wanted him to come back. And so, he kept to -- he came back to -- he stayed first in Zurich [05:52] for a time, and then, new to the place [phonetic], not Italy [05:58]. And then, he came back to [06:00] Chicago. And the family didn't know what to do with him. And so, they remembered that they had a large tract of land in New Mexico [06:11]. And so, they sent him there. And he was very good at languages, because he -- of course, he knew Italian [06:20], and German [06:22], and French [06:23], and so on. And so, he learned Navajo [06:26], and became an agent. That was all in the late '30s. I mean, war had started. The early '40s. '34 [phonetic] was in the army. And he had -- he told a very funny story, how, as an agent, he was asked by the army to organize teams to build a road. I think it was to -- what is the name again [07:00]? To Los Alamos [07:01]. I

think. But I'm not sure. But he said the road had to be built. And so, the colonel in charge said, "Why don't you take 100 Japanese [07:13] prisoners, and 100 Navajos [07:17]?" And had -- do you know what happened. The Japanese [07:21], the roads [laughs], they started on one side, the Navajos [07:26] start on the other one. And the Japanese finished the road, the Navajos just finished a little bit. Because whenever they think they have enough money, they sat down and stopped working. You see, they have another culture, you see. You know. And the Japanese [07:49] worked and worked, and -- anyway. That was the story he told me. He had lots of stories. He was a very funny guy. So, he might [08:00] -- it's rare to -- so, he might be a good source.

INT: And you said you remember he was just a little bit older than you, you think? A few years older?

EL: Yeah, a bit older.

INT: Okay.

EL: But I don't know whether -- and you might find him through his family in -- probably well known in Chicago. So, that might be a place to look.

INT: Great idea.

EL: So, this is a group that I was -- where was it -- Craig [08:34]. Schuette [08:35] was an American from German [08:38] background, I think. From New York [08:40].

INT: Now, there's a couple Schuettes. This is William Schuette. Before, you had seen, there was a Lawrence Schuette [08:47].

EL: Yeah.

INT: Do you remember both of them, or --

EL: I think it was William [Schuette] [08:52], but I don't know.

INT: Okay.

EL: If I see a picture, I could --

INT: Sure.

EL: -- recognize him. Koch [09:00]. Hans Koch [08:59] [phonetic] was also [09:00] -- Koch, I think it was pronounced -- was also American. He was older. Much older. Very settled in his ways. He had been a teacher, professor, I think, somewhere. And he was also American of German [09:19] background. It was -- John Wall [09:22] [phonetic], he was -- I knew him well. He was from Germany [09:30], and had lived as I did in Switzerland [09:32]. He had lived in France [09:34].

INT: Okay.

EL: So, he spoke French [09:39] fluently, and he was from New York [09:39]. I saw him in New York, I think, after the war, once or twice. His name was Vlarnefreund [phonetic] which he changed to Boler [phonetic], in French. And he was younger. He was quite young. He was one of the youngest, so [10:00], I don't know what happened to him. I saw him in New York [10:03] a year or two -- in the early '50s.

INT: And was -- he was a monitor?

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay. In fact, we've seen his name on a lot of the monitoring documents.

EL: Ah, yes.

INT: But we have not been able to track him -- we haven't been able to find out if he's alive or not. We haven't --

EL: Well, he was from New York [10:20]. And Ernst Koch [10:26] was also a monitor. They were all monitors. All the people I -- in this group there.

INT: Okay.

EL: Oh, I got mixed up [Henry] Van Dam [10:37]. There's another Dutchman. Now, who's -  
- who was the veteran for 6,000 of the documents. Steep [10:47], I think, was. Or it was  
Van Dam [10:51]. I'm sorry, I got the names mixed --

INT: That's all right.

EL: -- there were two Dutch people, and they were both tall, and heavy [11:00]. So, it -- Van  
Dam [11:09] might have been the documents man.

INT: Okay.

EL: I know they were Dutch, both of them.

INT: So, you think it was either Streep [11:17] or Van Dam?

EL: Or Van Dam. And they -- and one of them was a monitor.

INT: Okay.

EL: Then, there was Hans Winkler [11:27], who was German [11:30], but not Jewish. And  
very German in his ways. And I don't know why he was a refugee, but -- I mean, there  
was quite a few Germans who were not. And I don't know his story. So, the -- that's  
Winkler [11:52], yeah. Daniel Buck I don't know. Must have met -- Rolf Bie [12:00],  
who was much older. He was in his 40s. I knew him well. Bie, I think, it was -- just like  
your name --

INT: It has it written just B-I-E.

EL: B-I-E, Bie. No, I suppose they're right, Bie.

INT: Okay.

EL: Bie. He was older, and he was kind of funny and amusing, and I never learned much  
about his background, because he always talked about women. So, he really wanted

[laughs] --

INT: Do you know if he was married or not?

EL: No, he was not married. I know that. He was very active in that field. He was not married, as far as I know, of course, he wouldn't mention it. And Carlo Weiss [12:46] was a very good friend of mine, he was my best friend at the time. And he went back to Italy [12:54]. He's -- he was from Trieste, Italy. And his father [13:00], his parents lived in New York [13:02]. They were refugees from Italy, Jewish refugees. They lived in Trieste. And then, he went back and lived in Milano. He was head of a bank there, was a banker. His father was very well connected, and then stayed back and got the job as manager of a bank.

INT: And do you know if Weiss [13:12], if he was also a monitor? All of these folks are still -  
-

EL: Yes.

INT: Okay.

EL: Yes, definitely.

INT: Did you keep in touch with him after the war?

EL: Yes, to some extent, I did, but not -- after a while, we lost touch.

INT: But last you knew, he was back in Italy [13:47]?

EL: Yes, in Milano. He married an American girl. He studied in Geneva. And then, went back to Italy. And [14:00] he had several children with his American wife. Yes, Dallin [14:09], he knew, yeah, about Dallin. He's not alive anymore.

INT: No, he passed away in 2000, I believe. 2000 or 2001. So, fairly recently.

EL: So, you didn't talk to him?

INT: No, never spoke with him. Although everyone seems to remember him quite well.

EL: Yeah.

INT: It sounds like he was pretty accomplished after the war as well.

EL: Yeah, well, he was a professor at Columbia [14:31]. He wrote a couple of books or more. His specialty was Russia [14:39], of course. And he wrote a book specifically about the Russian/German [14:52] relations. That was his specialty. History, of course. His father had been a deputy [15:00] representative in the last дума, which is the last parliament that Lenin [15:09] surrounded by sailors and [phonetic] dismissed. And he was a Menshevik. That's not a Bolshevik, it's a Menshevik. And they were moderate socialists. That's what they -- modern Communists. They were moderate, and Stalin [15:30], of course, was a Bolshevik. And so, I know a lot about him. And he taught at Columbia [15:41]. I went on a vacation with him after the war. We went together. And we didn't know what to do. We were in New York [15:48], and we went to somewhere in upstate New York. And so, I know a lot about him, and he also visited us. He was in Washington [16:00] doing research for his books, and so on. He was -- my wife met him also. So, he was rather close. But the last time I saw him -- it was the funniest thing -- you remember, in the '60s, there were upheavals at Columbia [16:19] about the students, about the Vietnam War [16:24]. And they got pretty rough at the time. And the last time I saw him standing, he was representing the faculty, and he was trying to calm down the students, but he was there [laughs], surrounded by red flags, of all things. I thought -- he was on television. It was very funny, you know, that he worked all his life about the Russian Revolution [16:48]; his father was involved in the Russian Revolution. And then, he was always writing against, you know, the communist regime, and -- but then,

the last time I saw him was surrounded [17:00] by red flags at Columbia [17:02].

[laughter]

So, that was a strange thing. So, now, I -- do you want me to go on?

INT: Oh, please do.

EL: Richard Winter [17:14]. I knew him, too. Pretty well. And he was also in our home after the war. He called us, called me, when he was coming to Washington [17:24]. He was in textile business in New York [17:28]. And he was from Vienna. He was Jewish, and he was in the textile business. That's all I remember, but he was in our home, and we talked about that and so on; the next one is Dean [17:47]. Of course, you know all about him.

INT: You said you had a story about --

EL: Ah yes, three stories, I've got -- he was among the youngest of us. Of us [18:00] four [phonetic], and John Boler was also very young, I think. But I think Dean was the youngest. He was over 18, though. Something like that. And we all talked about what they wanted to be -- who they want to be. I didn't know what I wanted to be, but some had ideas. Well, Dean [18:03] said, "I am going to be," not "I want to be." "I am going to be U.S. ambassador." And we thought it very funny. He was a refugee from Germany [18:38]. He was hard to talk [phonetic] -- he would suffer what happened [phonetic], he had finished up [phonetic]. He taught him how to talk [phonetic], went more into details. But anyway, he said, "I am going to be U.S. ambassador." And, amazing thing, he became an ambassador three or four times, you know. This is the real interesting story [19:00] [laughs]. Now, Alexander Kiefer [19:06] was -- he was different from most of us. He was -- Kiefer was, I think, a Mennonite.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: From Pennsylvania. And he knew some German [19:19]. You know they speak German. So, he knew some German. I don't know -- maybe his German is quite good. I don't really know. But he was a Mennonite from Pennsylvania. It's quite a group, you know, but it varied. Kern, Carl Kern [19:33]. Alan -- now, Barry [phonetic] was also from Pennsylvania, I think. But I didn't know him well. There's a Japanese [19:46] name. Ah, two Japanese names. I didn't read it -- [unintelligible] Michael, Nash, [Leonard] Weisberg [19:55], I think I know -- I met him in the camp [unintelligible] [20:00]. Gunter Liben, I know him, too. Herbert Hirsch [20:10]. Leonard Weisberg [20:14], Arno Mayer [20:16], yes. His -- I knew him vaguely. Not very well. He came late. '45, he'd arrived -- '45, 7/45. He was late. But what's interesting about him, he was interviewed by Studs Terkel [20:35]. And I guess you read this.

INT: Yes, we have -- we didn't know about it until after this project started, actually.

EL: Yeah.

INT: But we've spoken with him.

EL: Yeah.

INT: We haven't sat down and done a formal interview with him yet, but we have some --

EL: You ought to, because he feels very strongly about the later part, when we moved into Cold War [20:57], Cold War strategy [21:00]. And he's -- a Terkel story -- Terkel's story, I think, is -- he complained about that. I remember that. Let's see. When you have a mark -- did I do that? Because when I went through --

INT: Oh, you may have, because --

EL: I may have.

INT: -- that's not on the record.

EL: I looked, quickly, through this, and I mentioned the names I knew. But all --

INT: And had you -- right below Mayer [21:38] is Ernst Solomon [21:39].

EL: Yes, I knew him, too. I knew him well. And somehow, he was a good friend of my brother's.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: I don't know how or why. And so, I met him at my brother's, actually. And I don't know how they got together. And he was a short fellow [22:00], who was kind of funny, and knew everything better, that's what he can remember [phonetic]. But anyway, what I remember -- he was a nice fellow. He knew -- he seemed -- he always said well the people who [phonetic] -- that's not my brother, you know. That -- to generals, like Eisenhower [22:26], and so on, they'd know what they were doing, and so on, he would know better.

[laughter]

That kind of thing, we rather thought it was ridiculous, but he was fun, anyway.

INT: Do you know if he was a monitor?

EL: Oh --

INT: If Solomon [22:42] was?

EL: Yeah, I think so.

INT: Okay. Was he --

EL: He might -- I don't know why he wasn't close to my brother. He might have been an interrogator.

INT: Was he older, or was he young?

EL: No. He was not older.

INT: Okay [23:00].

EL: I don't know. He might have been an interrogator. But I don't remember seeing him when we were working. Going into the office, or out of the office. I think he was a monitor, too, but maybe did other things, too. Aaron Prost [23:31] [phonetic], I think, could be -- well, getting to the end. Here's quite a few Japanese [23:37]. Well -- ah, Bernaut [23:43] I knew, too. Roman Bernaut. I knew him, too. And I met him in AID [23:49].

INT: Oh, really?

EL: I was working at AID. Then, I met him there. We didn't talk much about it, but he -- I was under the impression he was not German [23:59], he was Armenian [24:00]. But I'm not sure. But I met him there, and we talked about 1142 [24:07].

INT: Well, I think that's the last page. Since we've done that, do you want to go over the pictures?

INT: The pictures?

EL: Yeah, well, sure.

INT: Okay.

[audio break]

INT: Okay, you can go right ahead, as you start to recognize folks.

EL: Well, I won't remember their names now; I know several of them. Some names I remember.

INT: Think it would have done [phonetic] --

EL: Go ahead?

INT: Yes, go right ahead, please do. I must just --

EL: Yeah, sure.

INT: -- point, as --

EL: This is Solomon [24:53].

INT: This right here?

EL: Yeah.

INT: Okay.

EL: And this was one of the American [25:00] -- from New York [25:02]. Might -- Schuette [25:04], maybe. And that was, as far as I -- I won't remember his name. All there -- it's also one of the boys from New York [25:17].

INT: This one here, with the glasses? Okay.

EL: Yeah. And this -- I remember very well, this one, but I've forgotten his name. He was a staff sergeant.

INT: That's -- is that Sharp [25:27]?

EL: No.

INT: Or [Clarence] Ost [25:29]?

EL: Maybe. I don't remember.

INT: Okay.

EL: Let's go down the list. I remember him, too, but I don't remember his name. Now, there -- isn't that -- oh, yes, Pins [25:44].

INT: That was Rudy Pins?

EL: Rudy Pins. These I didn't know.

INT: I think a lot of these folks were actually in the evaluation section with Major Szlapka

[25:53].

EL: They might be. I -- Szlapka [26:00] was in evaluation later on, right?

INT: Yes, yes. And we knew this is a fellow named Ralph Jackson [26:06], who was with them.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And I can't remember his name. But they were in the evaluation section.

EL: Yes, Pins [26:14]. That's Bader [26:18].

INT: That's Pierre Bader [26:19]? Oh, with the --

EL: Pierre Bader.

INT: And he's the one that would -- was he the one that would go around with the -- looking like the officer?

EL: No.

INT: No, that's somebody else.

EL: No, he has a mustache, too. Schidlovsky [26:28]?

INT: Schidlovsky, okay.

EL: I don't know. There's Carlo Weiss [26:34].

INT: Right there?

EL: Yeah, right there. Now, I remember the -- there's Dallin [26:42].

INT: Right here?

EL: Yeah, that's him. He's in office -- this one, he's an officer, isn't he?

INT: Yeah, he looks like an officer [phonetic].

EL: And he was in [unintelligible]. There's [unintelligible]. I remember his face, but I don't remember -- maybe a many things [phonetic] [27:00]. That's me, I think.

INT: That's you right here?

EL: Yeah, I think so. I'm not sure, but [laughs] I think so.

INT: Do you remember this photo being taken?

EL: Vaguely, yeah. But I'm not sure. I'm not sure. It didn't come out well, though.

INT: Yeah, it's kind of faded there. But you can tell he's wearing glasses.

EL: Yeah, I think it's me. And that's Dallin [27:40]. I mentioned that before.

[unintelligible]. That might be Schidlovsky [27:48].

INT: That there?

EL: Yeah, yeah, might be. Oh, no. That's not me. That's --

INT: That's you, there.

EL: That's me. I [28:00] got mixed up.

INT: Here.

EL: Yeah.

INT: And so, you're fairly certain that's you?

EL: Yeah, that's me. That's me. Yeah, that's me. And then, last one, now [phonetic]. And there's Bauer [28:26]. Didn't I say that? No, that's Bauer.

INT: That's John Pierre Bauer [28:31]?

EL: Yeah.

INT: That one, okay.

EL: That's him here. No doubt. And that's Solomon [28:40], there. That's it. I don't remember any others.

INT: No, that's great. Well, let me pass a couple others to you, and you may or may not recognize anyone in any of these. This is another group photo of folks. And our

understanding is that that's Arno Mayer [29:01] there.

EL: Yeah, that's right, I remember him.

INT: Okay.

EL: That's Arno Mayer [unintelligible].

INT: We actually -- we know who everyone in the top row is.

EL: Yeah.

INT: We don't know who anyone down here is.

EL: Oh, these are officers, of course.

INT: Yeah. I think a few of them are officers. They're all enlisted --

EL: Oh -- I remember that face, but I don't know -- no, I don't know -- who is this? Do you remember --

INT: That's George Mandel [29:31], and he's here in D.C. [29:35]. This is Peter Weiss [29:37], who lives in New York [29:40]. That's Eric Kramer [29:41], who also lives just outside of New York. That's Arno Mayer [29:46].

EL: Yeah.

INT: And that's Leslie Willson [29:48].

EL: Oh.

INT: And I don't know if you're -- you would recognize anyone there. Okay, that's just a shot of folks there [30:00] in the parade ground.

EL: Yes. This was a master sergeant.

INT: On the end?

EL: Yes. And I've forgotten his name. He must have been on that list, but I've forgotten his name. He was from Philadelphia.

INT: Oh, really?

EL: And he was running the show. I mean, for the enlisted men. He was a master sergeant.

And -- no. He was -- this one here, I remember --

INT: See, and then -- just running out of film. Yeah, that's -- no, got another minute or so.

INT: Okay -- just left a pause --

INT: It's probably -- I wouldn't even bother taking --

INT: No, it's okay --

INT: No, because he's not going to make anybody out on this. This is just -- and you can keep all of these.

EL: Oh, yeah?

INT: That's -- this is -- I'm sure you won't be able to make anybody out for that one --

EL: No, I can't [unintelligible] --

INT: So, if [31:00] this --

EL: If I can seem to remember anyway.

INT: So, that's the parade ground, correct? Where they're out there? If that's the parade ground, do you know -- could you give reference of where this picture was taken? You know, where they would be standing?

EL: Where did I -- parade ground, here, yeah. It must have been taken from here somewhere.

INT: So, they're -- are they lined up?

EL: They're lined up like this.

INT: Oh, okay, they're going across that -- okay.

EL: That's what I think.

INT: Okay.

EL: And then --

INT: No, that's great.

EL: I think so.

INT: Here's a group picture that we have of folks, but most of them have been named. But we don't know exactly which name goes with who --

EL: Just the -- who did -- ah, Schuette [31:52] -- Schuette, I remember the name; who is Schuette there?

INT: Well, we're not so -- we're not sure [32:00].

EL: If it was me san marsh [phonetic] -- Chenia [phonetic], I remember Chenia, too, but I doubt I'd know his face. And I -- oh.

INT: That's it, we need a tape.

EL: There are two Schuettes, so there might be the other one.

INT: But you don't --

[end of transcript]

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