

Fort Hunt Oral History  
P.O. Box 1142  
Interview with Henry Kolm  
by Brandon Bies and Sam Swersky  
May 7 & 8, 2007

HENRY KOLM: -- [unintelligible] I knew about.

[laughter]

BRANDON BIES: We good? All right. I'm just going to give a brief introduction, and we'll go ahead and get started since the cameras are rolling. This is part of the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. We're here at the home of Dr. Henry Kolm, just outside of Boston, Massachusetts. Today is May 7, 2007. This is National Park Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as Fort Hunt Oral History Project team member Sam Swersky. With that, we're going to go ahead and get started. So as we were just discussing, if you don't mind just starting off with a little bit of background about your family in Austria, your parents, if you had any siblings.

HK: I was born in Austria in 1924 near Vienna. I had one younger brother named Eric. My father was a physician and a teacher [01:00] at the Boston Medical School. He worked for the man who invented endocrinology, the science of the endocrine gland, and precursor for everything we know now about the glandular systems. We lived in Vienna until a year or so after the annexation, invasion, we call it, or after the annexation. My father wisely decided his life wasn't worth all the property. He left everything instead of -- he signed away all his property to the Nazis [01:45], is essentially what it amounted to, and he left for Czechoslovakia, which was then Moravia, part of Austria, trying to persuade our relatives to leave also. My grandfather [02:00] had been a physician in a small town. He had died quite recently, and his widow saw no reason to leave. What would they do to harm the poor widow of a beloved physician who has raised three generations of kids? Well, she wound up in Theresienstadt, and her son, who was a

cavalry officer in the Army, wound up in Auschwitz. So.

BB: Had your father been involved in the First World War?

HK: Yes, my father was a medical officer during the First World War.

SAM SWERSKY: For the Austrian --

HK: For the Austrian Army, yes, another reason why they thought nothing would happen.

Yes. So we saw Hitler [02:48] march into Vienna in 1938, I think it was, from downtown, where my father had a small pharmaceutical factory [03:00]. By the time we had left the Czech Republic, we went to Prague and we were fortunate enough to watch Hitler [03:12] march into Prague, so I saw him marching twice, tanks roaring down Ringstrasse in Vienna and down the main street in Prague. An uncle of mine who had fled to Prague was promptly arrested by the Gestapo, which already had cells working in Prague, and I'm proud to say he wound up shooting eight Gestapo agents before he shot himself. There were nine rounds in his Ross pistol. So here we were in Czechoslovakia with no way to get out of Germany without going through Germany.

BB: And this was '38 still?

HK: This was '38 still, yes. Well, we had a visa issued by a consul in Budapest who was [04:00] known to issue visas to Jewish and other people trying to escape the Nazis [04:08], but by the time we got to the German border in Aachen, which is near Cologne or Aix la Chapelle, word had gotten around, and we were pulled off the train because of having a false visa, a [unintelligible] pour faux visa. So here we were in Aachen with hardly any money, the clothes on our backs and a small suitcase, and sure to be sent to a concentration camp, because anybody who had no place to go. Well, my father arranged for us to be smuggled out of Germany into Luxembourg by paying whatever money he

had to a group of smugglers, and so one cold night -- it was March, middle of March, as I recall [05:00] -- we were driven up to the woods and walked up a hill and crawled under the barbed wire, waiting for the German patrols to go by, down the other side of a hill into what was Luxembourg, wound up on the roof of a farmhouse, with a farmer's -- that was a smuggling route that was well known. The farmer and his wife gave us warm milk and took care of us, and then we were taken from there into Luxembourg by the same smuggling operation supported by HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society], the Hebrew agency at the time, and we wound up in Brussels. In Brussels we had a cousin, and my father was well known in his field, and he promptly got a job at the university and he also worked for a pharmaceutical company developing [06:00] enzymes and things. We lived in Paris for about -- almost a year. I went to school. Fortunately I knew French. I was fluent in English and French as well as German, which was quite standard for educated people in Europe. I worked for -- we had a landlady who had an old air-cooled Renault car, and I helped her get it started and keep it running and earned a little pocket money. The Germans then invaded. The war started seriously in '39, and we had to wait for an American visa, but we got it just in time and ultimately we wound up leaving on the last ship that crossed the Atlantic. We saw mines, actually. It was the Statendam[07:00], a ship of the Holland-America Line.

SS: And where did you sail out of?

HK: We sailed out of Amsterdam -- Rotterdam. Sorry. We sailed out of Rotterdam. And one of my who's who colleagues at [speaks foreign language] in Brussels was the son of the chief captain of the Holland-America Line, Paul Perimons [spelled phonetically] [07:28]. I remained in touch with him for quite a while, and he told me how the Germans had

strafed a long line of refugees that were leaving Belgium for Paris along the highways, and they just strafed the whole just queue of people, quite innocent people, just for fun. It was a nightmare. Well, we arrived in New York on the 9th of December [08:00] 1939. Fifth. I'm sorry. The 5th. We must be correct. We stayed with friends and relatives, and I finished high school.

BB: At this time you were living in New York City?

HK: We lived in New York City for about three months and then my father got a job at Philadelphia University, a big medical school, not Drexel.

SS: Not Penn, University of Pennsylvania?

HK: No, no. I'll think of it.

SS: Thomas Jefferson?

HK: No, right downtown.

BB: Downtown. I'll think of it.

SS: Temple?

HK: Temple. He got a professorship at Temple University and did research there, while I finished high school and worked in a garage at nights in a gas station [09:00] and bought my first car. It was a great year. Then I worked for a testing-engineer firm for a while and then I was eligible -- I enlisted. I was about to be drafted, but I thought by volunteering, I might get the service branch that I liked, Air Force. But it didn't work out that way. I wound up spending a summer in Georgia getting basic training.

BB: If we can just back up for a quick second before we get to that, what year did you graduate high school in?

HK: High school I graduated in '41.

BB: Okay, and this would have been in Philadelphia?

HK: Philadelphia, yes. Gratz High School in Philadelphia, Simon Gratz High School.

BB: Did you have any college schooling before you went into the military, or did you just work for [10:00] --

HK: I was sent to Drexel Institute to learn basic engineering, which was a program during the war. They needed technical people to serve as inspectors and engineering assistant, so that was my first college education. And I served in the military.

BB: What do you remember about the bombing of Pearl Harbor [10:25] on December 7, 1941? Do you remember where you were or hearing about it for the first time?

HK: Yes, I was in Philadelphia.

BB: Did you -- were you surprised that we were at war, or did you think it was just kind of a matter of time before --

HK: It was just a matter of time. We all knew this would happen.

BB: At this point you were still not an American citizen, correct?

HK: Correct. I was not an American citizen. I had my first papers and permission to work and so forth [11:00]. During basic training I received my American citizenship as was standard procedure, in Macon, Georgia.

SS: So you went to Fort Wheeler [11:15]?

HK: Camp Wheeler is where I got my basic training, yes, infantry.

BB: So you said you were about to be drafted, but you went ahead and enlisted ahead of time?

HK: Yes.

SS: Do you remember about when that was, what year it was?

HK: It was March 26, 1943.

SS: So you went from there and so your first training was at Camp -- so you'd said you hoped to be in the Air Force, though, correct?

HK: Yes, but they didn't respect our wishes that much. I wound up in the infantry, and I had basic training in Camp Wheeler [11:59], Georgia, and then I was [12:00] sent to Rollins College as part of the Army Specialized Training Program, because I knew languages, and they wanted to take advantage of the knowledge. They stopped that program eventually, and we were sent to various active units. I was sent to the 220th Armored Engineer Battalion [12:22], which was part of the 20th Division of [George S.] Patton's [12:32] Seventh Army. We, the 20th Division [12:38] and the 14th Division, were training in Kentucky to invade the German Siegfried line. They had made a dummy Siegfried line with bunkers and everything, and we were trained how to attack bunkers. As a member of the forward unit, I was a staff sergeant [13:00], head of the Military Intelligence Division [13:04] of the battalion. I was also sent to demolition school, but that happened later. It was our job to get tanks out of the mud if they got stuck and to carry flamethrowers to attack pillboxes and shape charges and slate, which was a device for blowing a trench through dagger's teeth. Dagger's teeth were fortifications against tanks. We were testing all the new weapons that happened to be developed, and all the generals came from Washington to watch them and see how they worked out, and it was my job as the driver for the Intelligence Section [13:55] to take them all to the front lines, so it was mud and everything else [14:00]. And I remember driving [Dwight D.] Eisenhower [14:02] and Patton [14:03] and a few others.

SS: Brandon, I'm sorry. Mr. Kolm, is there any way to turn off the lights here?

HK: Hold off the switches on the wall.

SS: There's a little bit of glint on your glasses. I'm just trying to get --

HK: Are you paused?

SS: Huh? I am now.

[audio break]

BB: All right. So you were just talking about the jelly gasoline.

HK: Yes. One of the new inventions was the jelly gasoline flamethrowers. It required carrying an oxygen tank and a gasoline tank on your back and a handheld nozzle which mixed the two and sent jelly gasoline capable of melting the one-inch armor plate on the hatch of a German bunker. The gasoline just [15:00] clung to the hatch and melted it, but you had to crawl up to the hatch, and that was an engineer's job.

BB: So did you get to do that?

HK: I got to do that. I also got to carry up what they called morow charges, satchel charges. They were hollow-pointed charges that blew a hole through 12-inch concrete walls. Of course, you had to duck out of the way. One of the other things was, the Germans had the -- we had tanks, the main battle tank, which was known as a Sherman M-7, had the first 95mm rifles and then they went 120mm, and the Germans had those famous 88, what you call those rifles which put holes through our tank. We hit upon the idea of taking what we called the [16:00] preacher on the pulpit. It was a tank chassis without the body, so it could carry a 155mm Howitzer, a rifle. There was only a waist-high shield along the top, so the gunner was quite vulnerable. But the tank was capable -- the preacher was capable of going wherever a tank went and piercing a hole at a two-kilometer distance through a German tank. It was really technology that won us the Siegfried line.

SS: It sounds like this all left quite an impression upon you, since you remember all the specifications.

HK: I remember all that, and I also remember that I was always interested in automobiles, and I knew a lot because I had made friends with my grandfather's chauffeur, who was a car buff [17:00]. So I made friends with the sergeant in charge of the motor pool, and Saturdays and Sundays, when other soldiers went to town to have a beer, I would go to the motor pool, and the sergeant would let me drive all the vehicles the Corps of Engineers [17:17] used, from graders to bulldozers to tank-dozers and to tanks. I had a license that had checked off every vehicle in the arsenal. I was very proud of that. And the sergeant was a very nice guy. He was very flattered that I liked his cars. I enjoyed my military career in many ways. You know, not everything is fun, but I really did, and I enjoyed being able to do something to beat the Germans. Well, then I was sent to Officer Candidate School [18:00] at Fort Belvoir [18:02], called Engineer School, and I ran through one cycle, but I didn't make it. I was going to be washed back to another cycle. That's how it works. If you don't -- if you graduate with not enough recommendations to get commissioned, you go to the next cycle and catch up and then you get permission. But during that period I was driving school buses to take soldiers to the rifle range, I decided that an 18-year-old wonder was not going to be very much success in the first-rank Corps of Engineers [18:39], although I enjoyed it. I was in charge of building a Bailey bridge one time. It was fun. So I decided I would try for intelligence, and one day -- it was my job to drive -- I drove a bunch of officers to the Pentagon [18:57], where they were going to meet with somebody or other, and while they were meeting [19:00], I talked my way into the innermost circle, innermost Pentagon [19:06], which is where



General Staff had its officers, and I went to G-2. G-2 is intelligence. G-1 is ordnance -- is quartermaster, G-2 intelligence, G-3 is quartermaster, G-4 is artillery and so forth. G-5 is, I forget. At any rate, I talked my way into the G-2 office, and I told them that I had linguistics skills and I would like to serve in military intelligence. And, "How did you talk your way into here?" They were about to show me the door when the inner door opened and General [Clayton] Bissell [19:47] came out, and he said, "Wait a minute. This is the sort of guy we don't send away. You want to get into intelligence? We will send you -- send this man [20:00] to Camp Ritchie [20:02]," Fort Ritchie. And by the time I got back to my unit at Fort Belvoir [20:08], there were orders for me to report to Camp Ritchie. So that's how I got into intelligence.

BB: So I guess you were -- it sounds like you were rather excited about this prospect.

HK: Oh, yes, I certainly was. That was my chance to parachute jump and all kinds of things. Well, so I wound up at Fort Ritchie [20:31] along with a lot of other, us Ritchie boys. You did see that film?

BB: Yes.

SS: In fact, we even have a copy with us, I think.

HK: So I wound up at Fort Ritchie going through the military intelligence training. We learned to fire and take apart all the weapons of the Japanese and the Germans, and we learned aerial photograph scouting and interpreting, which is quite an art, too, and looking at stereo pairs [21:00] taken 50 miles apart, which shows the difference in elevation between things, so that you could see a camouflage net which is not at ground level, for instance. It was a very exciting experience. And navigating on the ground and being dropped unknown places and finding your way back. I enjoyed that too. When the

training was over, we then graduated. They suddenly picked half a dozen of us, maybe a dozen, and said, "We are going to send you to an assignment which is classified. Be ready tomorrow morning." The next morning they took us in a staff car to P.O. Box 1142 [21:57]. The instructions were, "You are not to tell anybody where [22:00] you are. The address will be P.O. Box 1142, and this is highly classified." And we got briefed on what the place was all about and so forth. We lived in the bachelors' officers' quarters and --

BB: Before we get to that, I want to speak a little bit more about Ritchie [22:20] and what your training was like there. Do you remember how long you were at Ritchie for, how long the training took place?

HK: It was on the order of five months, six months, maybe. Yes, it was six months.

BB: And was your understanding that you were being trained to be an actual interrogator?

HK: No, I was trained to be a military intelligence agent, to be dropped behind the lines, and we had parachute training. No, nothing was mentioned about interrogation.

BB: Did they actually give you [23:00] parachute training at Ritchie [23:02]? Did they drop you out of planes there or just --

HK: They dropped us out of towers. I don't think probably it was there or later at Belvoir [23:12], but at Ritchie [23:14] we got dropped off of jump towers. We learned from the landing. In those days parachutes were not as {unintelligible} as they are now.

BB: Was it a large place? Do you remember that there were a lot of people there, or a select group? Any idea?

HK: There were cycle groups like there are at every military training camp, and my group contained about 30, 40 people, and there were some people there from the 10th Mountain Division [23:43], a tough bunch whom I got to respect very much. They were the ones

who did the Anzio -- the famous Anzio beachhead breach.

BB: In terms of the background of the folks who were there, were they all [24:00] immigrants like yourself, or was it a mix? What sort of people were there?

HK: It was a mix. They all had some linguistic skills or some geographic knowledge, and there were some who had grown up in Japan or Asia or China or Mongolia. There were people who had grown up in Europe and spoke languages, but not necessarily refugees.

BB: Did they teach language skills there, or just they assumed you already knew the language and taught you other intelligence skills?

HK: Yes. We didn't have language skills. We learned the order of battle. We learned the makeup of the German Army, how to interpret their order of battle. We had to memorize a lot of that.

BB: But weren't -- you don't remember being taught any specific interrogation [25:00] skills or anything like that? Or was that part of the training?

HK: Only in the basic sort of way.

BB: Okay. What sort of a sense did you get when you were at Ritchie [25:17] that -- did you have any sense where you were going to go next? You mentioned earlier you thought you were going to be like an intelligence agent or something like that. Did that seem like that was the point of Ritchie [25:28], that everyone was being trained to be some sort of an intelligence agent?

HK: We were trained to be an agent in the sense of eventually being dropped behind the lines, hence the parachute training and the orienteering we had, you know, being dropped in an unknown place and finding your way to another place, map reading and photography interpretation. That figured very prominently, aerial photography interpreting. But, yes,

we were [26:00] trained to be dropped behind the enemy lines. That was true of everybody.

BB: Do you have any other Ritchie questions?

SS: Must've been -- you -- everyone was expected to be dropped behind enemy lines then, after completing Ritchie [26:27]? Was that the expectation?

HK: That was the expectation, yes.

SS: It's, I think, a different experience than a lot of other soldiers that you must have come across before then.

HK: You mean at Ritchie [26:47]?

SS: Yes. Must've been a different -- was there a different -- could you talk about the -- maybe the camaraderie that was there that was maybe different from other parts of the Army that you had experienced [27:00]?

HK: Well, whenever you go through tough training with a bunch of other soldiers, you develop a brotherhood feeling, a bond and so forth. Yes, that was definitely a part of it. If you were a group among six who were dropped in the middle of nowhere and had to find your way out, you got to be friends. It was not like infantry basic. It was definitely a frontline preparation.

BB: And a higher-level sort of training?

HK: Yes.

SS: Do you remember anything about the instructors? Do you remember if the instructors at Ritchie [27:42], had they already had combat experience?

HK: Most of them. And they showed us combat films, some of them quite bloody.

SS: Was it particularly difficult [28:00]? Was it extremely challenging, the sort of training

you were getting? Both physically and intellectually, was it rather demanding, or was it just --

HK: It was rather demanding because we had to remember a lot of battle things and be tested over the next day. We had to learn how to look at aerial photos with a stereoscope and also by diverging your vision. In fact, that left my vision somewhat damaged. You had the habit that you put your thumb on two photographs and then you moved them apart and let your eyes diverge, so each eye sees a different photograph, but this way you have a great stereoscopic view of the ground that distinguishes between forage and the camouflage net. But unfortunately, when you disturb the convergence ratio of your eyes, it doesn't come [29:00] back to normal, and so after I got out of the Army I wound up with a year of training in a military hospital to get my vision back without getting a headache from reading.

BB: Wow.

HK: I wasn't the only one.

BB: It's interesting; in other interviews we've done with veterans who went through Ritchie [29:22], a lot of them do -- a few others do remember looking at the stereo optics and stereo views and whatnot.

HK: And getting their focus conversion ratio?

BB: You know, I'm not -- I'll have to go back and look at that in terms of people actually having that kind of problem. I think I do remember Fred [Frederick J.] Michel [29:43] mentioned that when I interviewed him. This gentleman, he remembered that very specifically, just as you told it, actually.

HK: Well, and one of the things was we got aerial photographs from the actual field and were

told to find enemy [30:00] emplacements, and we got graded on how many we missed and how many we found. It got to be quite a -- and we had airplane identification. We went to a dark room and they flicked five-second pictures of different airplanes, and we had to learn how to recognize them, the difference between a Typhoon and a -- I forget. But, yes, that was part of it.

BB: You were an enlisted man while you were at Ritchie [30:35]?

HK: Yes.

BB: You weren't an officer.

HK: No, I was a staff sergeant.

BB: Were there officers being trained as well, or was it all enlisted men, from what you recall?

HK: What I recall is we were all enlisted men. I may be wrong.

BB: Were the instructors officers?

HK: Oh, yes. The instructors were all frontline-hardened veteran officers, old-timers, tough bunch [31:00].

BB: Were most of the students there young like yourself, or were there some older folks? Was it a good cross-section of ages?

HK: Most of us were quite young.

BB: Which I guess is probably representative of what the Army was like, that they were mostly young folks.

HK: Yes.

SS: What was your age at that point? How old were you at that point?

HK: How old was I? I was 18. I enlisted in '43, I think it was. I was 19.

BB: So do you remember what year you were at Ritchie [31:44], in '43 or '44?

HK: End of '43 to spring of '44.

BB: Got you. Okay. So I guess that's about it for Ritchie.

SS: Did they have [32:00] enactors, I mean people who -- did they try to recreate the battle scene?

HK: Yes, we did. That was also part of it. We had the blue team and the red team. We didn't have paintballs which they do now, but we had --

(End of Tape 1A)

(Beginning of Tape 1B)

[talking simultaneously]

BB: Exactly. That's what we figure, exactly. So you were saying, so they did these mock battle reenactments.

HK: Oh, yes, all the time. Every other day we had mock battles.

SS: Did they have enemy troops or people pretending to be?

HK: Yes, we had the blue team and the red team; this is the way it worked. We had gun installations and machine guns that fired blanks. We didn't have infiltration courses at Ritchie [00:33], as I recall. We had those at Wheeler [00:36], where you crawl under live fire. That's considered basic. But, yes, we had battle enactments and patrols and use of all the field radios they had at the time.

SS: When you were in Camp Ritchie [00:57], were there other refugees who you spoke with who basically [01:00] had a similar life story that you had?

HK: Yes. Oh, yes.

SS: Do you remember any of them, any of the people that you met?

HK: I remember Arno Mayer [01:10]. Ritchie is where I met him and, I guess, Peter Weiss [01:17] and Leslie [A.] Wilson [01:23], I think. I didn't know Leslie at Ritchie [01:29]. I don't even know whether he went through Ritchie.

SS: I'm not certain. I don't remember offhand.

HK: But, yes, but there were lots of people with my background and even some that came from where I was in Austria. I remember Belgians too.

BB: Did you have friends at Ritchie who were not transferred to 1142 [01:56]?

HK: Oh, yes, lots. Most of them were not. Out of my [02:00] class of 30 or 40, seven or 10 maybe went to P.O. Box.

SS: Have you kept in touch with others? Actually, first could you elaborate a little more on how there's a similarity in background between you and, say, Peter Weiss [02:20] and Arno Mayer [02:22]? Could you talk about how you all got to know each other and what you talked about, maybe?

HK: Well, we didn't talk about much that wasn't part of the curriculum. We had to talk about aerial photographs and remember everything, and we talked about, you know, the Browning automatic rifle, which is a British weapon, and the German [unintelligible] gun, which is a very impressive weapon [03:00]. We had to learn how to use and disassemble most of the foreign weapons that were in the field at that time. That was part of the training.

SS: Was there any particular weapon that you preferred over another?

HK: You mean to use or to learn?

SS: Both.

HK: Well, I admired the German, the [unintelligible] gun, a very ingenious device, and we got



to fire it and so forth. Oh, yes, we also fired at targets. We fired at the socks.

BB: At socks?

HK: Sock is like a windsock towed by an airplane.

BB: Oh sure. Oh, okay.

HK: And we have to be able to, with a .30 caliber, live -- we had three main machine guns in those days: a .30 caliber light, .30 caliber heavy, and .50 caliber. And [04:00] I worried about all the money we were wasting, knowing how much each round cost. But, yes, we had that kind of practice, firing at moving targets.

BB: Were some of the targets actually towed by aircraft?

HK: Yes.

BB: Oh, wow.

HK: They were towed by Cessna 119s.

BB: Flying over Camp Ritchie [04:18] over the firing range or something?

HK: Yes. And I got friends with one of the pilots or a couple of the pilots who flew the 119s.

BB: Just out of curiosity, had you ever flown in a plane up to this point?

HK: Yes, I had flown in planes in Europe as a child.

BB: Oh, really.

HK: Yes. I remember once -- I spent summers at my grandfather's place in Moravia, and barnstormers came through and dropped leaflets all over the farm, and my grandfather, as a birthday present, told his chauffeur, "Take Henry to that barnstorming session and let him fly in an airplane [05:00]." That was my first airplane ride, and I've been determined to fly ever since. It was a real experience.

BB: So that would have been, what, around 1930 or so?

HK: It would have been around '32 or '3.

BB: I'm just curious. Was it a biplane still?

HK: It was a biplane. It was a Fokker biplane with two seats behind each other. I sat in the front seat; the pilot sat in the back seat. I sat on a folded parachute so I could see out.

BB: That's great. So anyway, getting back on subject, I love aviation myself, so I can easily get sidetracked.

SS: Of the other -- have you kept in touch with any of the other Ritchie [05:57] boys, and do you know what they did during World War [06:00] II in the European theater?

HK: No, I'm sorry to say that I did not keep in touch with any except the ones that were sent to P.O. Box [06:09]. I just lost track of them. They went every which way.

BB: Well, from our understanding, Ritchie [06:17] was a pretty large place and a lot of people passed through there.

HK: Oh, yes. I mean, my class of 40 or 50 was just one of many cycles. You know how military training works. You have cycles that follow each other but overlap to some degree, so while one cycle will be doing their first step, the cycle behind them are doing their last step. Yes, and we spent a lot of time on the range learning to fire our weapons that were not U.S. weapons. But BAR had become a U.S. weapon by that time and some of the others had not [07:00].

BB: So when you were at Ritchie [07:02], had you told your parents what you were up to? Was Ritchie itself secretive, or was it fairly known as a place where they train you for intelligence operations? Was that public knowledge?

HK: Yes, it was public knowledge. It was not classified. We could tell people we were at Camp Ritchie [07:21].

BB: Okay. Did you ever have any visitors come to visit you while you were there?

HK: No. No.

BB: Or likewise, could you get leave -- could you request leave to go home?

HK: Oh, yes.

BB: So you could go home to Philadelphia. Was your family still in Philadelphia?

HK: My father in Philadelphia, and I drove home occasionally. I made friends with a captain who also went to Philadelphia and sometimes I hitched a ride with him. He drove home regularly. He was one of the instructors.

BB: Oh, okay. Do you recall his name [08:00]?

HK: I will think of it, but not when I'm trying [laughs].

BB: That's fine. It's not a big deal; I just figured I'd ask.

HK: I'll think of it.

BB: So it's just another name to add to our list to see if it's someone else we can talk to. So all of this training for Ritchie [08:26] had left you with the assumption that you were going to be going over to Europe?

HK: Yes.

BB: So could you describe -- you started earlier how you found out that you were going -- were you just being transferred to Washington? Were you told ahead of time what the place -- what 1142 [08:43] was?

HK: No, absolutely not. We were told to be ready tomorrow morning with all our belongings and that was it, and then we were taken to Washington and there we were given the reception, the regular, usual military reception [09:00]. We knew that we were treated very importantly, because we had never before been living in the bachelor quarters,

BOQs, the bachelor officer quarters. Every military post has BOQs for officers that don't have a spouse and are entitled to a private room. Enlisted men usually live in a barracks.

BB: So when you were transferred to 1142 [09:29], you weren't in barracks; you were in these --

HK: That's right. We were in the BOQs.

BB: Do you remember, were there a lot of those quarters there? Because that's the other thing. You may not know this, but after the war, essentially everything was bulldozed. There is very little left of Fort Hunt [09:49] today, and so a lot of the questions that we ask are for you to try to describe what the place looked like, because we have a few photographs but there's really not much [10:00] --

HK: There were three or four rooms of BOQs, which means, let's say, about a dozen rooms in each one, so I would estimate it would be 30 or 50 quarters for officers or interrogators, not more than that.

BB: So you arrived at 1142 [10:25] with this group of, what, seven or so other people from Ritchie [10:30]?

HK: Yes.

BB: And were you sat down and briefed about what the installation was, or did they let you figure it out for yourself?

HK: No, we were briefed.

BB: I guess did they explain the secrecy?

HK: [laughs] I remember the wife of [Daniel R.] Buck [10:50], who liked to go swimming -- he was the cryptographer -- asked whether she could keep her bathing suit [11:00] and towel in my quarters. I remember it. She was very cute.

BB: And so did you let her?

HK: Yes, of course. Of course. So she had a key to my room, and she came in and changed and took a shower after swimming, and we got to be quite friendly. No romance.

BB: And this gentleman, Buck [11:27], who was in the other program, was he an officer or was he an enlisted man, do you remember?

HK: He was a civilian.

BB: Oh, he was a civilian.

HK: But I'm not sure about that now, because it was quite customary not to wear one's uniform. He could have been a warrant officer. My guess is he was a warrant officer.

BB: So I want to real quick, without getting too much off topic, you said it was customary not to wear a uniform. Did a lot of people at [12:00] 1142 not wear uniforms?

HK: Yes, quite a lot. And when we did wear a uniform, we often wore officers' uniforms, because a German officer is not going to feel comfortable talking to an enlisted man. They're very, very rank-conscious, so being interviewed by an enlisted man was not very effective. We generally wore an officer's uniform that outranked the particular guy we were interrogating. Yes, we had a whole collection of insignia.

BB: I want to get onto that, but I have so many other questions. So, let's see. This gentleman, you said his last name -- we mentioned him earlier -- his last name was Buck [12:47], and you said -- so he was not an interrogator, though.

HK: No, he was a cryptographer.

BB: A cryptographer. All right. Did he live in your BOQ as well, or did he live in a different building [13:00]?

HK: Oh, no, he didn't live there.

BB: Oh, he didn't. Okay.

HK: He had access to it, but his office was in Pentagon [13:06].

BB: Okay, so he and his wife lived off --

HK: Yes.

BB: Got you, okay.

HK: Because he had access to 1142 [13:12] and so did his wife, and my guess is he was a warrant officer.

BB: Okay, got you. So you got to 1142. We were saying earlier you were briefed on the secrecy?

HK: Oh, yes. We were very much impressed with that, not to tell anybody where we were and so forth and so on.

BB: Did you even know that it was actually called Fort Hunt [13:37]?

HK: Yes, we knew that. There were signs all over. We also knew it was right next to Washington's headquarters.

BB: Okay, okay, yeah. When you were there, did you ever go down to Mount Vernon?

HK: Yes. Yes, we went into town too.

BB: So you arrived at 1142 [14:00] and you were briefed on the secrecy. What were you told that your role was going to be while you were there?

HK: We were told that we would be called morale officers, and we were to interrogate people in the friendly pretext of a chess game or a Ping-Pong game or a tennis game, because interrogation -- well, they were more likely to talk if they were in a friendly meeting amongst a chess game than they would be if they were herded into a room and told, "You are now being interrogated." We never worked that way. They lived in little cabins

which are probably bulldozed down. But they were a standard cabin and they were all manufactured the same way, and they all had two occupants with doors on opposite [15:00] sides. I can tell you exactly how they were. The toilets in the middle and doors on each side, and they were in the woods. Some were surrounded by a fence, and some of the officers did some gardening. They asked could they have some seeds and grow something. We brought them seeds. You know, we took care of them. It was a friendly thing. Many of these officers said we shouldn't be fighting; we should be worried about the next fight, which is going to be the Russians and the Japanese. They were very conscious of that. The officers generally were not Nazis [15:44]. Oh, there were the Waffen SS [15:47], sure, but you spotted them a mile away. They were real SOBs.

SS: So while you were at 1142 [16:00], was there a wide range of prisoners who were there? I mean, you mentioned that there were some SS [16:08] who were there, but that there were also rather cooperative officers. Were all the prisoners that you remember officers, or were some also enlisted men, and were some not even in the military at all?

HK: The answer is yes, there were some enlisted. Most of them were enlisted men, many of them were officers, more officers than enlisted men. The enlisted men generally stayed in the big courtyards with barrack buildings and with barbed-wire fence. I often spent all day inside that stockade, and that was not a very comfortable feeling, because you were surrounded by guys who would cheerfully kill you. I had a pistol in my sock.

BB: Did you really?

HK: Yes.

BB: Wow. Was that issued to you, or was that something that you had procured off to the side or something [17:00]?

HK: I had procured it through military -- I got it through the military, but I don't quite remember how. It was a little .25 caliber Beretta. Yes, I didn't feel very happy in a courtyard surrounded by barbed wire with 60 German soldiers, prisoners.

BB: Wow.

HK: Most of them were typically friendly and happy, but there were some who were real Nazis [17:33]. You know, I'm Jewish, and they might have known that.

BB: I was just going to ask, do you think some of them knew? I mean, so your conversations with them would have been completely in German, correct?

HK: Yes.

BB: And so do you think they knew that they were being interrogated or spoken to by a refugee from Germany?

HK: Some did and [18:00] some didn't. I told you, I think, about Colonel [Rudolph] Hesse [18:05]. You may have that interrogation report from Hesse. Hesse was Hitler's [18:13] official military advisor, and he was a professional whose idol was [Carl von] Clausewitz [18:23]. Clausewitz is the philosopher of warfare, the German expert on warfare, and Hesse [18:34] had studied Clausewitz [18:36]. He'd studied all his life, and he was supposed to be Hitler's [18:39] personal military advisor, not that Hitler listened to him very much. But he was at almost every meeting between Hitler [18:47] and his staff, Hitler's staff, and he told me some of the habits. He said, "When Hitler didn't want to hear something, when some officer was -- Hitler was issuing orders [19:00] and if some general dared to make a reply which didn't endorse Hitler's [19:06] tactics or strategy, Hitler would turn around, drum on the window while the officer was talking, and then he'd turn back and he'd say, "As I was saying," completely ignoring --



BB: And just cut him off.

HK: Cut him off, right. He was a real pleasure to deal with. [laughs] So Hesse [19:29] was one of my customers, and he knew I was from Austria because my accent is Austrian. He loved to play chess, but he hated to lose. He mostly won, but whenever he lost, it was a major calamity. He couldn't wait for the next game to get back at me. He was very [unintelligible]. And I think I told you one time he said, "You have a beautiful -- Austria is a beautiful country [20:00]. I spent a vacation there one or two weeks there once, and you'd never know where it was. It was in the Alps and it was a little secluded lake at high altitude, and I will always remember that. It was beautiful." And it just so happened, pure chance, that I had been there. And I said, "What's the name of the place?" "The name of the place?" He said, "It's called [speaks German]." And I said, "Oh, did you stay in the Ziglerhof Hotel or the Hotel Zahof?" There were two little hotels up there. They were both tiny little hotels. One is called Zahof and one is called Ziglerhof. And so I said, "Did you in the Zahof or the Ziglerhof?" And his jaw dropped; it was the one time he really -- from then on, he thought that I [21:00] knew everything in his whole life. It was really quite simple to understand why he was there. The place is at the top of the steepest hill in Austria, which is called Pakstrasse [spelled phonetically]. I remember that the Zauer [spelled phonetically] Company, which built military trucks, would use that road to test their trucks. They have motor brakes and all kinds of things, multi-wheel drive and they came in various sizes, all of them big and heavy and very husky, and I knew that the Germans, of course, had bought all of them. And since Hesse [21:41] had been a logistics officer, it's quite plausible that he attended some of those test runs up the Pakstrasse, which brought him to Bavaria. I mean, we went there because it

was a fine resort and my father had a garden. So when I [22:00] recognized the hotels up there, immediately he thought thereafter that I knew everything about his life.

SS: So was that a kind of a purposeful tactic, I guess, to make them think that you knew everything?

HK: Of course. We always did that. That's why we had to memorize the order of battle. We had to be able to say, "You were in such-and-such regiment? What was the name of the regimental commander?" And if he gave the wrong name, we would say, "You're not telling the truth. Try again." But that was part of the interrogation tactics, that you had to pretend to know everything. Then he never knew whether when he answered the question we knew the answer already, and so this Pakstrasse business was really, really great. He was very flabbergasted. I enjoyed it very much.

BB: This was Hesse [23:00]?

HK: Hesse.

BB: Is that spelled just H-E-S-S-E?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay, we'll have to try to --

HK: He was either a colonel or a one-star. I think -- I think he -- I don't know. Don't quote me on his rank, but you can quote me on the fact that he was Hitler's [23:21] personal advisor and that he was a Clausewitz [23:24] fan and that he knew everything about warfare there was to be known and so forth.

BB: So was he there at 1142 [23:32] at the end of the war, I guess? Had he been captured at the fall of Germany?

HK: He was there before the fall of Germany, as I recall. He was there after the Africa

collapse. No, he'd been in the Army before they -- he'd been captured. You might find it --

BB: We can pull his record [24:00], sure. There's -- we just haven't had the time. Again, we were talking earlier about Sam and I are trying to work on this as much as we can, but there's something like around 4,000 prisoners who went through 1142 [24:16].

HK: Oh, I'm not surprised, not surprised at all.

BB: At least that's what we're guessing. We don't know that for certain, but we know that it was somewhere around that number, and most of them have files at the National Archives, and so as you can imagine, we've only been able to pull a handful.

HK: There were also a lot of people there who didn't get interrogated because there was no obvious knowledge they had, but we learned about them mostly after they got there.

BB: And so you had started to mention earlier that there were these cabins versus there was [25:00] kind of a stockade or any area where groups of prisoners were.

HK: Yes.

BB: Can you take a couple of minutes to talk about those and describe the differences, you know, between the stockade and the cabins?

HK: Well, the stockade had dormitories like enlisted men are used to, and it was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, but all of the barracks were wired and monitored acoustically. There were picnic tables around, and they got served food. We always observed the Geneva Conventions [25:36]. They got the same food, same quality, same medical care as American soldiers got. We never violated any of those regulations, despite what you may have heard from Germans. In fact, a lot of them loved it so much here, they came back after the war. Yes, but the stockades were -- [26:00] there were often fights among

the stockade between Nazis [26:04] and anti-Nazis, because they were all mixed up, and there were some Waffen SS [26:08] in there, too, which is why I didn't like to spend a whole day in there. But it was our duty. We took turns and we spent all day in there.

BB: So when you were assigned to the stockade, were you -- were you interrogating -- was this when you were doing a formal interrogation, or were you again doing the morale officer thing with, you know, playing chess or --

HK: Yes, morale officer thing, playing volleyball. They loved volleyball. We had volleyball nets and horseshoes. They never -- horseshoes were not known in Germany, and we had a horseshoe set, and I showed them how to play horseshoes. But I was always careful to keep my back against the wall [27:00].

BB: Okay. Do you think that when you were playing volleyball or chess or horseshoes that they realized that they were at the same time being questioned, or did they -- do you think the idea was just to be having a casual conversation and without even realizing that they were giving information away?

HK: Well, we tried hard not to make it seem like interrogation. We got them to talking, and most of them would talk freely anyway. They didn't care much about the Army, and then there were some of the officers that they didn't like and had complained about. [speaks German] which means, "He is a bicyclist," and that was a German Army slang for an SOB. What it means is from above you see bowed heads, and from below you see trampling feet, and officers that were that way were described as bicyclists [28:00], and I soon learned a few other slang expressions like that. I said, "What did you think of your battalion commander?" He said, "[speaks German]." That said it all. We got friendly with them on that basis, and most of them were perfectly friendly guys. They liked to

play horseshoes, and they liked to learn about America. They asked about America.

They were more interested in America than in being free.

BB: Do you think the prisoners knew where they were?

HK: Yes, they knew where they were. They knew they were somewhere in the Virginia area.

They didn't know they were just outside Washington. I mean, they weren't running around Fort Hunt [28:50] at the riverside. They weren't let out.

BB: Okay [29:00]. Okay. We'll call it quits because we're at the end of the tape right now.

(End of Tape 1B)

(Beginning of Tape 2A)

BB: Do my introduction again. This is a new tape. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project, interview with P.O. Box 1142 veteran Dr. Henry Kolm, here at his home outside of Boston, Massachusetts. It's May 7, 2007. This is National Park Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as team member Sam Swersky. This is the second in a series of interviews. We're going to go ahead and pick right back up where we were. So we were talking about all sorts of things with 1142 [00:38], and you've given Sam and I even more questions to ask than we had before, because we brought up a few new subjects, but I guess you were talking a little bit about being a morale officer and working with the prisoners. Did you refer to them as prisoners or as guests, or was there an official term that you used?

HK: Well [01:00], no, we referred to them as prisoners of war [01:04], POWs, just the way people do now.

SS: And did they -- how were they dressed? Were they dressed in prisoner uniforms, in their German uniforms, in civilian clothing?

HK: They got issued X uniforms, as we called them, which means recycled uniforms. They were very American uniforms or fatigues, either khakis or fatigues.

BB: Were they marked in any way as being prisoners?

HK: No, not really.

BB: But you could still obviously distinguish between them and someone who worked there.

HK: Yes, yes. Some had parts of their older German uniforms too. We didn't care, really. We were concerned with making them feel comfortable and at home and not under pressure.

SS: So [02:00] you had mentioned that you would sometimes wear a uniform of an officer, even though you were an enlisted man at the time.

HK: Yes.

SS: How was that arranged? Did you specifically have like almost like a costume wardrobe, or did you just have an officer's uniform and would you put insignia on it?

HK: Yes, we would put different insignia on it. Obviously a 19-year-old wouldn't be a four-star general [laughs].

SS: Right. That's why I was wondering when you were interrogating and working with Hesse [02:39], you mentioned he was either a colonel or a one-star.

HK: Yes. I was a captain, which was commensurate with my age.

SS: Would you always take the role of an Army officer [03:00], or would it sometimes be Air Corps or Navy or Marines or anything like that?

HK: Mostly Army.

BB: Would you always be an officer or dressed as an officer, or would you sometimes be an enlisted man?

HK: I might sometimes not be in uniform. I might wear fatigues with no insignia.

BB: Okay. Would you ever conduct an interrogation in civilian clothing, or were you always wearing some sort of a uniform?

HK: No, not always. When I was going to visit one of them to have lunch with or play chess with, I could -- I would be in -- I might be in a T-shirt. Mostly I would be wearing a uniform shirt but without insignia.

BB: Did you have a pseudonym? I mean, how did you introduce yourself when you [04:00] were with the prisoners?

HK: I called myself Sears.

BB: Sears.

HK: Yes.

SS: And so you'd be Captain Sears and Lieutenant Sears or something like that?

HK: Yes, for those for whom it was important to pretend that I was an officer in the American Army.

BB: Did your fellow interrogators, folks like Arno Mayer [04:28] and Leslie Wilson [04:30] and Peter Weiss [04:31], did they also, do you know, did they use pseudonyms as well? Was that common?

HK: They did, but I don't know what they used, nor would they have known what I used, because you had to remember what your true name was with a specific prisoner.

SS: What was your first name?

HK: Henry.

SS: Didn't change Henry?

BB: It's funny. We [05:00] --

HK: No. When I talked German, it was Heinz, which is my real German name. But it varied. For instance, Heinz Fehler [05:11], the captain of U-238, I got friendly enough with so we called each other by our real names, and he knew I was Austrian and my name was Heinz, and we made much of the fact that we have the first same name. I had different relations with different people.

BB: Sure. Wow.

HK: You will notice that there were two people there, Hesse [05:39] -- no, no, no, I'm sorry. [Maj. Gen. Heinrich] Aschenbrenner [05:47] and -- Aschenbrenner was -- [Lt. Gen. Ulrich] Kessler [05:54] and Aschenbrenner. They were the two people onboard -- no, no, no [06:00]. Kessler was on onboard 238.

BB: U-234 [06:04]?

HK: U-234, I mean. And Aschenbrenner [06:10] was captured separately. But both of them were accused of having ordered the bombing of Holland, Amsterdam, after Dutch surrender, which is a war crime, and they blamed each other. And after interrogating them separately for several days, I put them together into the same cabin and then we listened to what happened, and they had words. Kessler [06:50] was trying to pull rank on Aschenbrenner [06:53], and Aschenbrenner said, "I'm your superior." "The hell you are. We're both prisoners." [07:00] [unintelligible]

BB: Kessler [07:07] was on the U-234 [07:08]. Was Aschenbrenner [07:09] also?

HK: No, he was not on U-234. Kessler [07:16] was sent by Hitler [07:18] to go and --

SS: I'm confused. Were you interrogating the two prisoners? Were you interrogating them at 1142 [07:30]?

HK: Yes.



- SS: But this sounds more like an interrogation rather than a game of Ping-Pong. Was it a more formal setting where this would have come up?
- HK: Well, it was not -- when I was interrogating Kessler [07:56] first, and we came [08:00] upon the subject of who ordered the bombing of Amsterdam, and he got very defensive and he said, "Aschenbrenner [08:08] ordered it and it's nothing to do with me." So I got Aschenbrenner sent to us, and I interrogated him separately.
- BB: So Aschenbrenner [08:24] had not been at 1142 at that point?
- HK: Not yet when U-234 [08:31] landed.
- BB: Got you.
- HK: When Kessler [08:36] mentioned -- "mentioned" -- blamed Aschenbrenner [08:40] for doing it, we had Aschenbrenner sent from wherever he was captured so we could interrogate him.
- BB: So you said that you would have them -- you put them both in the same cottage. So they were kept in the cottage, not in the stockade?
- HK: Initially they were kept in the hotel, which was a [09:00] -- it was a separate house where we received -- a receiving room, let's call it, and there we decided where were they going to go, and some were going to the stockade and some were going to get their own little cabin.
- BB: Could you follow up on that a little bit, on this hotel? Did it look like a house or something like that, or it was just kind of a temporary holding area.
- HK: It was like a BOQ.
- BB: Oh, really. Okay. And that's where prisoners would go when they first entered 1142 [09:40]?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. So you said you'd decide if they went from there -- was that -- so interrogations weren't conducted there; it was just kind of a holding area?

HK: It was a receiving area.

BB: Do you know if it was bugged? Do you know if it was wired?

HK: Oh, it was wired. Everything was wired. And there was an underground [10:00] bunker where they listened and recorded all the conversations, and there were at least 20 people there in that bunker. They all had a little cubicle and a turntable with a vinyl record, a red, transparent vinyl record. They hadn't invented tape recorders yet.

BB: You've just given me about 50 more questions I want to ask.

HK: They must still have those records.

BB: I wish. We haven't found them, but what we have found, and I'm kind of kicking myself because we ran out of time to copy any of this to bring up, but we'll do this and send it to you; of the records that we have, the prisoner records that we have pulled from the National Archives, there are the typed-out the transcripts of these room conversations and also the handwritten [11:00] notes from the folks that were in this monitoring room that would listen in. We do have access to all of those room conversations. It would be really neat to go back and look at Kessler [11:13] and Aschenbrenner's [11:14] records to see --

HK: I'm not sure how many got transcribed or not, but I imagine most of them would. But I'm sure that Aschenbrenner and Kessler did, because they went to the Nuremberg Trials [11:28].

BB: Okay. Let's see here. On the subject of monitoring, briefly, where everything was wired and bugged, did you ever monitor, or was that a different person or groups of people that

were monitors?

HK: There was a different group of people.

BB: So you never did any listening in yourself?

HK: No, but I heard the records they made. Whenever there was some significant thing, I would go to the monitoring rooms and they would play for me what they heard.

BB: Okay [12:00]. And then would you -- you would use that information then?

HK: Yes.

BB: In, you know, in your interrogations or whatnot?

HK: Yes. I mean, I might disclose or not, but most of the time you don't want them to know -  
- they knew perfectly well that they were being monitored, most of them.

BB: Oh, they did?

HK: Most of them did, yes.

BB: You had mentioned that everything -- pretty much everything was wired, was bugged?

HK: Yes.

BB: Including, do you think, were the cottages?

HK: Oh, yes, the cottages mostly, most of all.

BB: Okay. So then the stockades would have been bugged and then this hotel building would have been bugged, you mentioned.

HK: Yes.

BB: Do you know, were there any bugs placed anywhere else, outdoors in the yard area or anything like that? You mentioned there were picnic tables and volleyball nets. Do you know if it was just the buildings that were bugged [13:00]?

HK: I think the buildings had outside bugs high up on the wall. I know that the conversations

in the big stockade yard were recorded.

BB: Really. Okay.

HK: You know,, not always intelligible. Most of the time it was more unintelligible.

BB: Right. So you mentioned there was this monitoring building. You said it was kind of an underground bunker sort of thing?

HK: Yes.

BB: Do you remember, was it hidden somewhere?

HK: It was hidden behind the stockade. The stockade had a fence around it and then the woods fell down naturally towards the river, and this monitoring stockade was below [14:00] the level so that you couldn't see. Trees and shrubs were hiding it. I would imagine it must still be there.

BB: Well, that's a very popular question, because a lot of folks -- we don't know if it's still there. We don't know exactly where this is, but we've got some ideas, and I think what I'll probably do, since we're on this subject now, is get one of the maps out.

SS: I think you should hold off with that.

BB: Okay because we do have -- we'll --

SS: That's the other thing we should have brought. We should have brought the big, big maps.

BB: We have some maps of what we think the place would have looked like during the war, and so maybe tomorrow we'll go through and see if you can't help us understand what some of the buildings were, because on the map it's just drawn as a box and that's it. If you remember.

[talking simultaneously]

BB: Sure, sure, sure. Let's put it this way. You're going to know a whole lot better than Sam and I would, either of us, we wouldn't have it [15:00]. So, no, that would be -- just to try and understand where some of these buildings might be, because there have been some folks that have suggested that if this bunker is still there, we might want to go out and do archeology and see if we can locate it and find it. I mean, what if it's still existing somewhere underground or something like that?

HK: I think it was concrete blocks or concrete, and I don't think anybody would have plowed it under deliberately. It had a roof which was just below grade so you couldn't see it.

BB: Was it covered in dirt, maybe grass, or did the roof stick up above -- it was out of view but it still had a roof above the soil?

HK: I think it was overgrown or camouflaged deliberately, but it had a roof. But it was a permanent building.

BB: Okay [16:00]. And this is where the monitoring took place for all of 1142 [16:05]?

HK: Yes. Wires ran from there to everywhere. They didn't have wireless networks.

[laughter]

BB: Do you remember, were there wires going, or do remember if it was underground, or would it have been on telephone wires going --

HK: They were underground.

BB: And you mentioned about 20 or so people you think that were in there monitoring?

HK: Yes.

BB: Did you know any of them? Do you remember any of those folks?

HK: We didn't have much to do with them.

BB: Okay. So they didn't live in your BOQ or anything like that?

HK: No. They lived on the post, but they must have had barracks.

SS: How much access did you have to the various parts of 1142 [17:00], the different parts of the base? Did you have free rein to go anywhere through the --

HK: Yes, we had. We had free rein to go wherever we wanted.

SS: So you had been into the monitoring room? You had seen it yourself?

HK: Yes, yes.

SS: You had been to the cabins where the prisoners had been, and you had been into the barracks where the lower ranks had been?

HK: Yes, and I've been to the munitions magazines that are buried. We had the run of the place. I'd gone to George Washington's mansion and looked at the smokehouse and all the things.

SS: You mentioned that you were interested in the different types [18:00] of machinery in the Army, that you had driven every type of vehicle that there was. Did the setup of 1142 [18:12] interest you? Could you talk about that a little bit? I mean, you seem to know how the wires were run. Could you talk about it, just were you interested in it as sort of a -- they weren't telling you all this, were they, when they --

HK: Well, I'd look around and I'd observe, so usually I could see where the power lines run. It's just a natural curiosity. There was a golf course nearby. Just about every Army base has a golf course associated with it, and this one wasn't right in 1142 [18:50], but it was a place where officers could go and play golf.

BB: So it was close by.

HK: Yes, close by.

BB: Would they ever [19:00] take the prisoners to the golf course?

HK: No, no.

SS: Could you talk about the reception of the prisoners a little more? Did you have a feeling of how they had been captured, what their stories were, whether they came directly from Europe or did they come --

HK: No, we heard a lot about how uncomfortable the troop ships were. Yes, they'd come from Europe and they'd been held en route someplace or other, and then they got driven to 1142 [19:33]. They arrived in everything from Army trucks with the canvas roof, the way soldiers were, with a bench along each edge and two guards sitting at the tailgate. That's how they got transported.

SS: Did you have a feeling for how long they had been away from battle?

HK: That varied [20:00]. That varied. Some got captured at sea, and some came from the Africa corps, where they were still based. It depended.

SS: Did you have a feeling for why -- were you told who was coming to 1142 [20:25]? How did you know about the prisoners when they came?

HK: As I recall, they had a list of arrivals that got mimeographed.

BB: We kind of wish we could find something like that, because believe it or not, we have a list of names of Americans who were there. Your name is on this list. But we don't have a list of the prisoners. You can go to the National Archives and [21:00] request an individual prisoner's folder, but there's no alphabetized list of prisoners, not that we've found yet. So that's one of the biggest difficulties that we're having, to figure out who all was there as a prisoner.

HK: Somebody must have made a list, alphabetical list.

BB: You'd certainly think so. It seems unlike the Army to not make a list of something like

that.

HK: They had these McBee [21:31] key-sort cards. Have you ever heard of the McBee key-sort cards?

BB: No, I haven't.

HK: They're cards about eight and a half by eleven that have two rows of holes all around them on all sides, and every soldier has one like that. The holes encode all sorts of things, [22:00] anything about you, languages, date of birth, medical history, record of service, what units. By knowing which holes are which, you put those things into a box and you stick a little needle. I still have two of those needles, because I used them in the Maglev [22:19] lab for scientific purposes. There's a punch that punches a notch, either shallow or deep, and if you punch a deep notch, both holes are missing, and then you punch the shallow one, only the top hole is missing. So when you stick a sorting needle through and pull it up, all the cards you want drop out. I must still have it. It was called the McBee [22:51] key-sort.

BB: I didn't know that the -- I've heard of something like that before and that makes sense, because a lot of the records at the National Archives has [23:00] -- the initial enlistment records, are all encoded through a numerical system. You might have the troops' state of birth, and number one is Delaware, number two means New Jersey. It's all numerical encoded that way.

HK: Yes.

BB: So, yes, that makes sense then.

HK: If you want to find all the soldiers whose home is in Philadelphia, you know what needle and [unintelligible] and they drop out.



SS: So you have this variety of people coming to 1142 [23:35]. Did you have some idea of how they were chosen to be sent there? Why were they brought to 1142?

HK: Well, eventually they had a dossier on them all, but not when they arrived necessarily. Somebody on the battlefield must have known why to send them to 1142 [24:00]. I mean, not every prisoner got sent to 1142.

SS: Did you have a feeling for what the selection criteria might have been?

HK: Knowledge of the order of battle, which changed, as I said, as the war progressed. Initially there was all the Africa business, because we were still fighting in Africa. Then that became further on, then they were worried about before the invasion, before D-Day, what units were assigned to what front.

SS: Did you ever see -- were you keeping abreast of the news of the battle in Europe?

HK: Yes [25:00], very much so. We got aerial photos and reports every day, the bombings.

SS: They were brought to 1142 [25:10]?

HK: Yes.

SS: How did you know what to ask of the different prisoners? What --

HK: Well, we had bulletins as to what information was important and desired. One was about where were the submarine tanks, for instance. Where were the submarine batteries work located, for instance. That's how we gathered the information that led us to eventually the ball bearings and all that kind of thing. The strategic bombing was suggested by the information we got that way.

BB: And so this information specific to the strategic [26:00] bombing campaign, how was that relayed to -- I mean, did that get reported to the Pentagon [26:07]? Do you know how that information made its way from 1142 [26:14] to Europe?

- HK: It was through G-2, through the official channels of G-2 and the various Air Force bases. We were told, for instance, that, "You bombed Hamburg three times but you didn't destroy a single submarine. What's happened?" There was one case. The Germans had built a fake dock. It turns out, aerial photographs revealed the fact that what we had bombed was -- there was a dock where they had docked submarines, and the Germans had extended that dock, and they made a scaffold made out of wood so that it looked like [27:00] the dock was twice as long. When we came to bomb it, they bombed the end of the dock, not the real dock where the submarines were. Well, when, two nights later, the dock was back in its original shape, we knew that was a fake. Between paint and lumber they had made a fake dock. So they were told to bomb all the way to the inside. The bombing was that specific. And then there were questions; where did they load? We'd bombed the big railroad stations in, I forget where right now, railroad stations, but equipment kept getting out, kept arriving. We found out that instead of using railroad stations, they used [28:00] a grade crossing, and they reloaded trains onto trucks and vice versa at a grade crossing, because they knew that the railroad stations were targets. So the question is, where were they doing that and what officer could tell us that? They were specific questions like that. Between that and the aerial photos we got back, we found those places.
- SS: Were -- the cases were -- you saw the -- so do you think in the general sense that the information you were getting at 1142 [28:45] was important, was being used in the battlefield?
- HK: Most of it, much of it really quite specific [29:00], like where were the emplacements that were guarding Peenemünde, for instance, which is where the rockets were coming from.

So we scanned aerial photographs and interrogated people, and they told us. Then there was the case of -- was after the invasion Peenemünde, they had removed valuable things from Peenemünde and hidden them, and a specific case I remember is that they had lots and lots of documents and formulas, particularly rocket fuel, that we were very interested in. We found out -- our ground team that went to Peenemünde found a couple of guys who said they took [30:00] -- they took all those documents to a salt mine and buried it. "Well, where was the salt mine?" "Well, I don't know, but I know an old salt miner who can tell you." So they rounded up the salt miner and he knew exactly where they had done that, and we sent a couple of engineer battalions to the salt mine to see what they could do. They dug out the opening to the salt mine, and they found these meter-cubed armor plate welded together containing all the documents, and they pulled them out just as the Russians arrived, who had found out the same thing. That kind of thing went on.

SS: We need to change tapes.

BB: Okay.

(End of Tape 2A)

(Beginning of Tape 2B)

BB: You were talking about the types of information you were getting. Do you ever think that the Germans were ever trying to intentionally mislead you or feed you false information or anything like that?

HK: Not the scientists and engineers that we talked to. They were more interested in feathering their own bed. Yes, but there was the question of where did Heisenberg [00:34] go and so forth. There is that book all about -- I forget. It's like the U-234 [00:43] book. I don't --

BB: Sure. We actually have -- we have a couple of copies of the U-234 book. In fact, I was actually looking at it on the plane ride up today and reviewing some of that.

HK: Well, this book I haven't read [01:00] yet, but my daughter found it and gave it to me. It's right over there and it's called "Hitler [01:04] and His Engineers" or something like that. There was also a PBS program about that same subject, where did Heisenberg [01:17] disappear to and where would we find him and how did we eventually arrest him or invite him, and was his wife instrumental in disclosing his whereabouts and all that kind of thing. There's a big history attached to that.

BB: So we'll keep talking a little bit about prisoners. Could you help distinguish and help us understand a little bit more about the differences between the prisoners?

[phone ringing]

HK: I'm sorry.

BB: No, that's fine. Go ahead and answer. Feel free.

HK: Well, I don't want to --

BB: Oh no, it's okay.

HK: Hello.

CONNIE HAWKINS: Hello, is this [02:00] Henry?

HK: Vikki?

CH: Oh, this is Connie Hopkins calling, and I'm following up on a vote that you received from William Hill of the AMC capital campaign for the Maine Woods initiative.

HK: Listen, I don't like you to interrupt me and to harass me on the telephone.

CH: Okay.

HK: Take me off your list. I'm not going to give you any more money. I've given you money

at the beginning of the year, and I don't like to be harassed every eight months.

CH: Okay. Well, I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know that.

HK: Well, now you know. I do not want to be called.

CH: Okay. Do you want me to take you off the call list?

HK: Yes, I want you to take me off the call list.

CH: Okay, thank --

HK: I give AMC a good amount of money, but I --

[audio break]

BB: Okay, we're back on the record. Okay. Are you all right, Mr. Kolm?

HK: Yeah, I'm fine.

BB: Okay, we'll probably go maybe for another half hour, and then --

HK: I have no [03:00] -- I have no attendances.

BB: So with the prisoners, if we could keep talking a little bit about the types of prisoners that were there. It sounds like from your recollection that there were definitely scientists and engineers --

HK: Oh, yes.

BB: -- but there were also military prisoners.

HK: Yes.

BB: Were military prisoners there during -- was there always a mix, or once the war ended, were there more of one type of prisoner or another?

HK: Now, I have to distinguish between my interviewing experience on Long Island --

BB: Absolutely.

HK: -- and 1142 [03:41].

BB: Which is probably quite difficult, yes, but, please.

HK: On Long Island [03:47] most of them were scientists and engineers. All of them even.

At 1142 [03:56], well, we went down [04:00] with all the scientists, too, but they got sent elsewhere eventually; 1142 wasn't for them. Well, wait a minute. What happened when we left the island? They were all scientists. And where did they end up going? It must be [unintelligible]. That was after [Franklin S.] Roosevelt [04:39] died and [Harry S.] Truman [04:42] became president. I went to 1142 from Ritchie [04:52]. I [05:00] keep mixing up a little.

BB: That's certainly understandable, and we appreciate you trying to differentiate, because I know it must be confusing between 1142 [05:09] and Long Island [05:10], especially if some of the same people were at both places. In terms of American interrogators, that would definitely be difficult.

HK: Yes. So what was your question?

BB: I was just asking for any more information about the types of prisoners that were at 1142 [05:26]. So there definitely were scientists and engineers at 1142, right?

HK: Yes.

BB: Not as many as were at Long Island [05:32] --

HK: No.

BB: -- but there definitely were at 1142. But were there also -- in terms of the military prisoners, was there a range? What types of military prisoners were there? Were they just high-ranking officers, or were they people that knew about technology?

HK: Mostly high-ranking officers, because remember, this is a G-2 operation. This is not the Paperclip operation [06:00]. Most of them were officers, either high ranking or with an

inside track of some sort, and some were just fortuitous captives like the 234 [06:12] bunch, and some were sent at our request, like Aschenbrenner [06:18].

BB: So you don't remember there being that many enlisted men from the German military?

HK: Not that many, but there were some, yes.

BB: What about branches of the German military? Were there all branches represented? You mentioned that there were some SS officers that were there, but do you remember naval prisoners or Luftwaffe prisoners?

HK: Well, Kessler [06:50] was a Luftwaffe general, three-star, and Heinz Fehler [06:55] was a U-boat captain, Navy officer, but most of the others were [07:00] ground Army officers. I'm speaking from memory.

BB: Oh, absolutely, no, absolutely. Don't worry, there's not going to be a quiz afterwards or anything like that.

HK: But the decision as to who to send to 1142 [07:16] was made in the field by G-2 officers, unless it was somebody we requested. Now, I said we had General Rundstedt [07:29], and when I mentioned that to Arno [07:32] a few years ago he said, "Absolutely not." He didn't believe it. So his memory didn't agree with my memory. Rundstedt [07:46] was very high up. He was a general staff officer.

BB: So again, it sounds like a lot of these folks were fairly high-up [08:00] --

HK: Yes.

BB: -- general officers and whatnot, staff officers. Would folks of that caliber be kept in the cottages, or would some of them be in the stockade as well and then maybe transferred to cottages or something?

HK: Yes, might be in a stockade. That's one of the troubles we had is the Waffen-SS [08:25]

guys who were Nazis [08:26] and got into fights with the others, you know. There was a mix of -- generally, they were not Nazis.

BB: I realize we're kind of jumping all over the place here, but you've said so many fantastic things that I'm trying to jot down notes and formulate some new -- because you're telling us a lot of things that we haven't heard [09:00] before, which is a neat thing about these interviews. Every interview we do, no matter how many people we've interviewed, we always get a couple of neat new tidbits of information, and you've given us more than a couple of neat little tidbits of information, so I'm trying to formulate some thoughts.

HK: Well, I hope they're all accurate.

BB: They're fantastic. That's one of the things that it's so refreshing when we do the interviews, a lot of the stories that folks share we hear time and time again, which in our minds backs them up and makes them more -- if multiple people say that Rundstedt [09:41] was there, then that makes us feel pretty good that he was probably there. So that's -- even if you're not certain, anything from your recollection or memory is great.

HK: Arno [09:51] was so emphatic about Rundstedt [09:53] not having been there, that I could begin to question my own memory. I didn't interview Rundstedt and obviously Arno [10:00] didn't, but he might still have been there.

BB: So could you take us through what a -- was there such a thing as a typical interrogation? Could you take us through that, or is there no such thing as a real typical interrogation?

HK: No, there is no such thing. There really isn't, because it was all done on a friendly, across the table "between you and me" basis over lunch or a chess game, so there was no typical. Different people were different. There were some who were very much emphatic about, "You and me shouldn't be fighting. We should be friends. We should



worry about the Russians and the yellow race. Let's not be antagonistic. I'll tell you everything you want to know, but please don't get into a fight [11:00] with Germany." In other words, the Nazi [11:04] Party is one thing, but the German Army is another. If there's anything typical, or let's say recurrent enough to be typical, it is that attitude. "We have nothing against America in this. We're only fighting you because there is the Third Reich and the Nazis, but after all, Germany is a respectable country and we are Army and we're not Nazis." That was the most frequent reaction from people.

BB: So lots of them trying to convince you that they were not Nazis [11:40].

HK: Yes. And, "We, the Army, tried to kill Hitler [11:44], and 12 guys got executed," that kind of thing. "Please don't think we're Nazis," or, "Please don't think we hate America."

BB: Did you believe them?

HK: Some yes and some no. It varies [12:00].

BB: So during these sit-down discussions over lunch or a game of chess, would it be one-on-one? Would you be with another American, or were you always by yourself?

HK: By myself. Oh, sometimes I had a second guy sitting or come and bring a sandwich or whatever. Sometimes I asked somebody else to come and witness the interview and tell me what he thought was [unintelligible]. That sort of thing went on. I might have asked Arno [12:34] to come and sit in and watch a chess game and begin to talk about something.

BB: Would you be taking notes, or would you not have to take any notes?

HK: Very minimum notes, because seeing somebody with a pencil writing down shuts them up. No notes [13:00]. I went away afterwards and did some frantic typing, that kind of

thing, but no notes in the field.

BB: So would you -- you would then go and type up like an interrogation report?

HK: Yes, type it up or dictate it onto a record sometimes, but mostly -- I type very fast, and I had a typewriter in my quarters. I had a Hermes. A Hermes Swiss portable typewriter was the thing at the time. I just got rid of it not that long ago.

SS: Oh, really. That's too bad. You should have kept it.

HK: A beige-colored box about this thick. Anyway, yes.

BB: So was that the variety of typewriter that you used at 1142 [13:49]?

HK: Yes.

BB: You had it up until recently?

HK: Yes. It is gone. I forget what I did with it, but it's gone.

BB: [14:00] So these interrogation reports, you would just kind of write up a synopsis of what information you had discovered?

HK: Yes, because next time I talked to him I had to know what he said last time.

BB: Who would that go to? Would you have to file that away? Would you have to report -- did you have to brief an officer or someone?

HK: I forget. I think I handed in these notes to whoever wrote up the interrogation report, which also included a monitored record. I think it is from the monitored record that they made [unintelligible], because I don't remember doing that much typing. It was on Long Island [14:51] that I had a secretary doing reports, but at 1142 [14:57] there was no such big thing [15:00].

BB: So would you ever listen to the recording of your own, of an interrogation that you had done?

HK: Yes, yes. Yes, I would go to the bunker and I'd say, "Bring me the record of when I last talked to Hesse [15:18]." I would do that, yes.

BB: So all of this information, your interrogation, your notes, the recordings, that would all get filed together then?

HK: Yes, I would assume. It eventually went to G-2. That was our boss, General Bissell [15:42].

BB: Bissell, and he would have been at the Pentagon [15:45]. You'd mentioned earlier that's where you ran into him.

HK: Yes. He was G-2; in other words, the intelligence officer on the general staff.

BB: Do you remember who you [16:00] reported to? Did you report to a master sergeant or did you report to an officer, a lieutenant?

HK: Now, that's a funny thing not to remember. It was an officer in charge of 1142 [16:25], but I forget who it was, and I can't even picture his face. But we did have staff meetings.

BB: Do you remember what the commanding officer's rank was?

HK: I imagine it was at least a colonel.

BB: But you think you probably reported to some level of an officer?

HK: Yes [17:00]. I know we had staff meetings where all of us got together in the conference room and sat around and were told what was needed and so forth.

BB: Was it strict military discipline in command, or was it laid back in terms of your interactions with officers? Would you address them as "sir" and salute, or did you feel like you were on more equal footing with them?

HK: More equal footing. Yes, you'd salute when you meet an officer, one way or the other, but aside from that, it was more equal footing. I have a little address book. Can you shut

down a minute?

BB: Sure, absolutely. You bet.

[audio break]

HK: I collected addresses. You know I worked for the Army as a civilian after I got off 1142 [17:56], and I was sent to Europe on a couple of [18:00] occasions, and I collected European addresses that I had from my whole career to take with me to Europe.

SS: Did you collect them from folks at 1142 [18:14]?

HK: Well, some of them were from 1142. Some of them might have been prisoners I interrogated; I don't know.

BB: Go ahead. That's okay. That's fine. Again, you were talking a little bit about what a typical interrogation was. Do you -- would your time with a prisoner last over the course of several days or even weeks?

HK: Yes, weeks.

BB: So someone like Hesse [18:48] or Kessler [18:51] or somebody like that, you didn't just deal with them for one day.

HK: Oh, no. It would last a long time, weeks, months sometimes [19:00].

BB: Do you know -- would you be the only interrogator assigned to that person, or would a whole slew of interrogators --

HK: No, I would be assigned to him and nobody else would.

BB: Nobody else would. Okay, okay. So I guess you would build up a sort of a relationship with that person.

HK: That was the intent. That was exactly the intent.

BB: Did you find that they -- we've talked about this a little bit, but that they were mostly

willing to speak and share information with you? They weren't trying to keep things from you?

HK: Very rarely. I mean, there were the Nazis [19:47] and then there were the non-Nazis. I won't say anti, but no. They were apologetic. "I had to be a Nazi in the Nazi Party because I had a job." A lot of them were [20:00] forced into approving the Third Reich and the whole thing, which they said because, "We're sorry that" -- some of them knew I was Jewish and a refugee and some didn't. Most didn't. But they knew I was an American soldier and so they apologized for making war on America. "We didn't really -- we have nothing against America," and all that kind of thing. That was the usual thing.

BB: And again, you mentioned earlier, sometimes you believed it, sometimes you didn't?

HK: Yes. Yes, of course. It's normal.

BB: Sure. So in a typical interrogation with one of these prisoners, would you be [21:00] told what kind of information you were trying to get? I mean, for example, would they say, "Look, Sergeant Kolm, we want you to find out X, Y, and Z"? Or would you just be told, "Find out anything you can?"

HK: Usually it was more specific than that. Like, find out, for instance, what measures have been taken to safeguard the U-boat [unintelligible] Zaybec [spelled phonetically], things like that. And sometimes the idea was, you know, when I talked to Heinz Fehler [21:43] I knew perfectly well that a submarine captain must know where the batteries come from, and he did. He was willing to tell us, no problem. And sometimes they wanted specific information about emplacements [22:00].

BB: Do you know why you -- what reasons were behind you being assigned to a certain prisoner? Was it random, or was there some thought process by the officers in charge to

assign you to -- why were you assigned to Hesse [22:20]? Why were you assigned to Kessler [22:22]? Do you know why that was done, as opposed to somebody else?

HK: I don't really know why, but at headquarters, 1142 [22:34] headquarters they knew, for instance, that I liked to play chess, and they might have assigned me to Hesse [22:40] because he was an avid chess player. I'm just guessing now. They did make a decision. And they might have assigned Arno [22:53], because they knew he came from Luxembourg, to somebody who was -- there was the Malmady [23:00] massacre, Battle of the Bulge and all that. They might have assigned somebody who lived near there, and Arno [23:11] would be a logical one because he came from Luxembourg, which is near the Bulge.

BB: Right. Do you remember other times where -- you had mentioned Hesse [23:24]; I believe it was Hesse where you had been very familiar with the same area outside of Vienna, I guess, about the mountain resort sort of place.

HK: Yes, that was Hesse.

BB: Were there other instances where your background in Europe suited you for a particular set of questioning?

HK: I had lived in Belgium and I knew about sites in Belgium [24:00]. They never took -- well, I lived near Austerlitz, but that's ancient history. That's in Moravia, the famous Austerlitz. No, I can't say why they picked us. It's a little bit random and a little bit of who's busy and who's not busy, the military kind of thing.

BB: Were they having you work with prisoners seven days a week, or was it more of a Monday-through-Friday operation?

HK: It was a Monday-through-Friday operation except for the guarding personnel. The MPs

and so forth had to do seven days a week duty. But the interrogation, it was sort of voluntary in a way. I was entitled to a weekend in town [25:00] if I wanted to go, but if I didn't go, I might have gone and decided it would be fun to play a chess game with Hesse [25:07]. It was that way.

BB: So it sounds like you were given a fair amount of freedom to run an interrogation with a prisoner however you saw fit?

HK: Yes, which was the purpose. You're the morale officer, remember.

BB: Right. To me it's somewhat phenomenal to think that a 19-, 20-year-old enlisted man can come out with his own strategy to interrogate a one-star general or a colonel.

HK: Yes [unintelligible].

BB: Can you give any sense, again specific just to 1142 [25:50] -- we'll talk about Fort Strong [25:53] later -- but just 1142, how many prisoners you dealt with [26:00] in your time at 1142? Just a ballpark figure.

HK: Let's say between one and two dozen.

BB: And any sense over the course of how much time, about how long you were at 1142? I guess you came back to 1142 afterwards, didn't you?

HK: Yes, as a civilian. But when I came back, I wasn't interrogating anyone. That was after it was gone. I think I was there about a year and a half, maybe.

BB: Okay. And so over that time, one to two dozen prisoners that you worked with.

HK: Yes, most of which I don't remember. I remember the outstanding ones like Hesse [26:57] and Kessler [26:58] and a few others.

BB: Sure [27:00]. I'm wondering about some of the folks that maybe you don't remember. Were there prisoners that were particularly not helpful, not useful, not interesting that you

just kind of dispatched after a short period of time?

HK: Yes, mostly the Waffen-SS [27:21] bunch.

SS: Why is that?

HK: Well, you know, there was a Waffen-SS guy assigned to every headquarters from battalion and up, and they had the duty to shoot a guy who didn't follow party orders, so every officer in the German Army above the rank of major or so had a gun in his pack, for all his career. And they did shoot them. And the Waffen-SS [27:53] guys got sent to us along with all the prisoners, and they were real dyed-in-the-wool Nazis [28:00]. I told you about the one that Rolf Arndt [28:04] got information out of.

BB: Right. In fact, though, we weren't recording that earlier, so would you mind since we have the cameras going now, would you mind telling that story again, and a little bit about Rolf Arndt as well?

HK: Well, Rolf Arndt [28:20] was a two-way agent. He had started out being the president of a German bank in Africa, and during the Africa war, the Germans killed his wife and child or children, and he hated them with a passion. So he came over to us and offered his services as a two-way agent. He went back and forth between Germany and P.O. Box 1142 [28:45], coming in with new information every time, and he managed to maintain his credibility with the Germans. He was very shrewd, very tough, very ingenious. On one [29:00] occasion there was a Waffen-SS [29:02] guy who wouldn't talk. I don't know what the subject they wanted was all about. Rolf Arndt [29:07] said, "I'll make him talk." "You will?" He said, "Yes. Just let me handle it." He put this guy in an ambulance and drove him around the base for about an hour, winding up at the iron door of an old munitions depot where they used to keep gunpowder in the Civil War days. It's



now empty. And along with a guard who was a genuine Russian, and they pushed him into that behind the steel door and said, "Are you ready to talk now? Because if you're not, we're going to gas you." But he didn't talk. So they put him in this thing and rammed the door shut and turned on a vacuum cleaner and blew [30:00] dust through the vent hole, the louver, into the thing, and he thought he was being gassed, because that's what the Germans did with prisoners. Rolf [30:14] let him out after a while and said, "Well? Are you willing to talk to us now?" He had not changed his mind. So Rolf put him back in and said, "Ivan, more gas." And the Russian said, "Yes, okay," and they blew more dust in with the vacuum cleaner, and by that time the little chamber had been filled with enough dust so he thought he was about to die, and he talked. That was one episode I remember.

BB: Do you get the sense, did that happen frequently, or is that just kind of a one-time incident and you were there?

HK: It was a one-time incident that I recall. I don't know how often [31:00] or else he did it.

BB: Did you actually see this happen, or did you just kind of hear that?

HK: No, I saw it happen.

BB: Wow. We're pretty much at the end of our tape right now, so unless you have anything that you want to jump in right now, we can save everything else for tomorrow.

HK: We can shut off right now.

(End of Tape 2B)

(Beginning of Tape 3A)

BB: Unfortunately, we didn't bring it with us. This is one of the files. That's actually Ulrich Kessler's [00:05] files and his photograph from the U-234 [00:09].

HK: Yeah, I see it.

BB: Right.

HK: So actually, just to make sure I got the chronology right because the sequence of events was that I was in the Corps of Engineers [00:29]; I went to intelligence school at Camp Ritchie [00:32]. Following Ritchie, I went -- yes, I'll tell you what happened exactly.

BB: I'm going to give a real brief introduction for the -- since it's a new tape, and then we'll let you -- we'll let you go. Again, this is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. This is Park Service historian Brandon Bies as well as team member Sam Swersky. We are [01:00] here outside of Boston, Massachusetts, at the home of Dr. Henry Kolm, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142. Today is May 8, 2007, and this is the third tape and the second day of interviews with Dr. Kolm. With that, you can get right back to what you were saying. Sorry, I have to do that every time in case if, you know, we all drop dead tomorrow, then we'll at least know what we were doing.

HK: God forbid. The sequence of events, just to keep the chronology straight, is that I was sent from Fort Belvoir [01:37]. I talked my way into the Intelligence Office, and General Bissell [01:42] is the one that sent me to Fort Ritchie [01:44]. From Ritchie we went to the island, because at that time General Bissell [01:54] called us together at the Pentagon [01:56] one time and said, "Gentlemen, I need to [02:00] take an action which is illegal and which might wind me up in jail, but a general is supposed to risk his life on the battlefield if required, and I figure I'm obligated to risk my freedom at home to do what I consider right. There are dozens, perhaps hundreds of German scientists, and if we don't bring them into this country, they will go to Russia, they'll go to England, they will go elsewhere, and we will lose all of that technology. So I have decided to do it illegally,

because I can't get permission from the State Department." Those were the times when President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt [02:40] had died and [Harry S.] Truman [02:42] hadn't taken over yet. Everything was in limbo. If Roosevelt had been alive, they would have gone to Roosevelt [02:50] and said, "Tell the State Department to okay this." But he couldn't get an okay, and he couldn't wait. "So we will take over an island in Boston Harbor [03:00], which is under control of the military for the duration, and we will import these scientists illegally and take them to the island before the immigration people see the boat." So these people came over on troop ships, and before the troop ships went into Boston Harbor, they stopped at Nixes Mate [03:21]. It's a little rock that sticks up out of the ocean out in Boston Harbor, and it's a famous meeting place for ships. It is said that pilots used to abandon prisoners on top of Nixes Mate [03:34] and let them drown when the tide came in. But at any rate, the troop ships were told to hold at Nixes Mate [03:41], which they did anyway to wait for the harbor pilot, and before the harbor pilot got there, we came out from the island in an old whaling ship that we had commanded and picked off all the scientists and took them to the island.

BB: So they weren't on the books or registered or anything [04:00].

HK: They were not. They were enemy aliens who were not allowed to come in in time of war. The regulations say enemy aliens can't come to this country in time of war, and it was the time of war, so we imported several hundred people illegally under command of General Bissell [04:20] to the island, and after things got legalized, we took them to Washington.

BB: Okay, to [Post Office Box] 1142 [04:30]?

HK: To 1142, yes.

BB: Got you.

HK: That's the sequence of events.

BB: Outstanding. Well, that helps tremendously to have that.

HK: It fits things together.

BB: That's fantastic.

HK: So when I overlap and I flip back and forth, that's the sequence.

BB: Sure. No, that's great. And if you can, and you've done an excellent job, try to continue to separate in your head if an event happened at 1142 [04:53] or if it happened at Boston.

HK: At Boston Island [04:57] was an interesting thing, because all these Germans had come over voluntarily [05:00] under the promise that we, the Army, would take care of their people in Germany. Germany was not a very safe place right then.

BB: Of their families in Germany?

HK: Yes. Their families were taken care of in Schweinfurt [spelled phonetically] [05:15], where we had a camp where they were fed and taken care of and they could go to American school, and they were very happy to come over here if we would safeguard their families. That was the deal. And they got paid a per diem as if they'd been legal immigrants. Years later I had a confrontation with the Immigration Office in Boston because we had an au pair girl from Switzerland and they gave her a hard time. She'd overstayed her welcome or something, and they said, "You have to go outside the country and come in all over again," you know, big deal. So I talked to the lady who was in charge of the Immigration Office in Boston [06:00] and I said, "I have imported 386 aliens illegally, and I'll do it once again if necessary." She said, "What's that again?" So I told her about this project. She hadn't heard about it, and she was very impressed by this operation. Anyway, it was General Bissell's [06:18] decision to do this, and that's

how the island came about. We picked these people up, and I distinctly remember the time we picked up Wernher von Braun [06:31] and the first of his 300-people crew from Peenemünde. It was a storm. It was so bad that the pilot boat couldn't come out, and the troop ship was waiting at sea at Nixes Mate [06:44]. And you know a ship sitting on -- they were all seasick, or most of them. Magnus von Braun [06:53], the younger brother of Werner, had an accordion, and while these guys were seasick on the [07:00] deck, he started playing German student songs on his accordion to cheer them up in the pouring rain and the howling gale, and they came off the ship on a boatswain's ladder to our little whaling ship, because we had that whaling boat that was owned by the Corkham [spelled phonetically] [07:20] family. Corkham was an old seventh-generation seafaring man, and he had an old, stout, wooden boat that had carried cod. It smelled like fish. They just dumped fish from that. The day Wernher von Braun [07:40] and his crew came, they were lowered on the ladder in a storm that was too bad for the pilot boat, but they got off the ship and I was right there and cheered them up, and they came aboard. They came to the island and, of course, the landing at the island was another hairy experience, because we [08:00] had only a half-collapsed dock was all. The island was sort of abandoned. They came in and we had beer and cider, and they were very happy. But that's the occasion -- that's how Wernher von Braun [08:17] came to this country [laughs].

BB: I have all sorts of questions about Boston --

SS: Stay with him.

BB: Okay. Well, since we're on the subject of Boston, we'll just jump right in, then.

HK: All right.

BB: And then we'll go back to 1142, because I have a lot of questions I'd like to ask you

about 1142 and von Braun [08:37] in particular. So he was at Boston. Did he end up going to 1142 [08:43] after being at Boston?

HK: No, he went directly to Fort Hunt [08:47]. No, no, no, I'm sorry. He went directly to the space program. If you read [James A.] Michener's [08:54] book called "Space," it will tell you exactly where they went. They all went to the Space [09:00] Center in Houston. Yes, they went to what is now NASA, was then NACA. Wernher von Braun [09:14] and his whole crew went there.

BB: So you don't recall -- because you said some of the scientists went from Boston to 1142 -  
-

HK: Yes, the ones we took down in the buses when we went down.

BB: But von Braun you don't remember?

HK: No, he was not on there. He was sent -- you see, we interviewed these people on the island, and I wrote up a dossier, a résumé for all of them. We sent that résumé to Washington, and they decided where these people would go, and all the people with rocket expertise went to NASA, and Wernher von Braun [09:53] and his 300 Peenemünde crew -- Peenemünde is the upper corner of Germany, which is where [10:00] Wernher von Braun and his crew operated, and when Germany surrendered, all of those people got picked up and brought here to the island. Some went to Signal Corps. There was a guy named Schturm [spelled phonetically] [10:17], a young fellow who knew about radar, but the Germans didn't trust him because he had worked in England. That's how he learned about radar. Yana Schturm [spelled phonetically] [10:29], young fellow, clean-cut very, no Nazi at all. He was an academic type, and we sent him to Signal Corps. It was in New Jersey, Signal Corps camp.

BB: Is it Dix?

HK: Fort Dix [10:46], yes. Those people were sent where they would do the most good. The Peenemünde crew was sent to Houston, and Signal Corps people were sent to Fort Dix [11:00], and they went all over the country. Arno Mayer [11:04] and I were the two guys who did the résumés, and Arno is not very technical, so he needed a lot of help. Actually, I did them all, when you really get down to it. This Werner Grass [11:20], the typist, typed them up, and they went out to Washington either by mail or we had a secure mail-pouch system. Also it had encoders. So all those résumés, hundreds of them, went to Washington and then came back orders, “Send this guy to Fort Dix [11:42], send this guy to Houston,” send this guy to wherever.

BB: And Werner Grass [11:46], he was the German typist you mentioned yesterday?

HK: Yes. His name wasn't Werner. I forget, but anyway Grass. The typist I mentioned, he'd type them all up, and they were all neat, several-page [12:00] résumés, based on me interviewing them, “Where did you go to school and what did you do?” and so forth. They were all perfectly willing to talk. They loved the thought of being absorbed into America that way and bringing a family over. And we took them to town to buy things, somewhat embarrassing. They were this bunch of strange-looking guys in leather coats. Most of them had these Navy-issued kidskin coats that the Germans wore, and funny-looking hats, and people stared at them. We took them to town to go shopping, and they bought brassieres and things that their wives wanted, that they couldn't get in Germany for years. [laughs] So we had to take them to downtown department stores and interpret what they wanted to buy, and then we sent it to Europe under military pouch. We [13:00] treated them very well.

BB: And this was in Boston still?

HK: That's in Boston. You're talking now about the island.

BB: Right, I'm just verifying that. So when you were escorting these folks around Boston, were you in uniform?

HK: I don't recall. I think I was not. We didn't want to attract attention, because this whole thing was secret. The reason we had a crew of prisoners running the island is because we couldn't trust American soldiers. They had to go on leave, and they'd get drunk and talk, and we didn't want to take that chance. So we only had about seven trusted MP guards that were really reliable, I mean, older guys who wouldn't -- and forty-some German prisoners, and the prisoners did all the work and shoveled snow and mowed the grass and did all those things, and those seven prisoners were the only American -- as far as the Army was concerned, it was a contingent of about a dozen [14:00] American soldiers.

BB: So most of these scientists, I mean the folks that were there at Boston, they were all scientists, right?

HK: Yes.

BB: There weren't any military prisoners? I mean, some of the scientists may have been in the military, I guess.

HK: But no, on the island they were only -- it was Project Paperclip [14:22]. They were only scientists and engineers, all of them top-level guys.

BB: And you had mentioned that --

HK: In fact, they had -- they made a joke. They lived in an old brick barracks that was on the island, probably still there, that we had turned into a hotel. We put up partitions and made rooms out of what used to be a big barracks, three stories high, not a small thing,



and they all lived in that house. They had a meeting room downstairs, and we had a kitchen. We installed all that. When we took over the island, we did all that work [15:00], all done by the prisoners and whatever else we could -- you know, they'd give us a list of building materials. We'd bring in plywood and sheetrock and benches and bed frames. We got everything we wanted from the 1st Service Command at Fort Devens.

BB: And -- go ahead.

HK: They nicknamed that building [speaks German], "the house of German science."

BB: So this building housed about 40 people? You said at any given time there were about 40 or so?

HK: Forty. We had 40 German prisoners who did the work.

SS: Prisoners of war [15:42].

BB: Oh, okay.

HK: But the house -- the building that we turned into a hotel housed 300. It was a big building.

BB: Okay. So help me understand that a little bit more. So there were -- the scientists were on the island, but you [16:00] also had a contingent of German prisoners of war [16:05], non-scientists?

HK: Not scientists. German prisoners of war that we went to Fort Meade [16:09] to select. We picked them. Arno [16:12] and I went and Leslie [A.] Wilson [16:15] went to Fort Meade and picked the prisoners we wanted. It was like, we joked about Noah's ark, because we picked two tailors and two cooks and two bakers and a few husky guys to shovel. We picked a contingent of 40-some-odd German prisoners to go there and work.

BB: Was that enjoyable for you?

HK: Yes, it was. We talked to these guys and we sort of assessed them, you know; was this guy friendly or was he likely to get drunk, you know, was he married or have children?

We interviewed these guys and then we said yes or no. We had the full support, of course, from -- Fort Meade was a prisoners' [17:00] center, holding center.

BB: So you went to Fort Meade [17:06], you selected these 40 or so prisoners and then you all went up together to Boston?

HK: Yes.

BB: So those 40 or so prisoners -- so that's who -- you said you had about seven or so MPs at Boston.

HK: Yes.

BB: So they were guarding those prisoners.

HK: Yes.

BB: They weren't guarding the scientists?

HK: No, no, no, it was prisoners. It was really great. Christmas came and they wanted schnapps, and the baker said, "I want to make Christmas stollen, and I'm going to need six bottle of scotch." We knew what he was after, so got his bottles of scotch. You know, big deal. [laughs] Oh, yes, it was a very jolly kind of an operation, and as I said, we scrupulously obeyed all the Geneva [17:58] and health safety and all the rest of it [18:00]. They got the same food that soldiers got. They got medical care. Many times I went to Fort Devens, because three of them had dental problems, and so I sat in the waiting room while they sat in the dentist's chair. They got all of that. I mean, it wasn't any of them who were unhappy.

BB: So this time period, the war was obviously over at this point, because the German

scientists were coming over.

HK: Yes. The war was over, Roosevelt [18:34] had died, and Truman [18:35] had not yet quite taken over, and things were in a state of flux.

BB: Would this have been like late 1945, then?

HK: Yes.

BB: The winter of '45, '46?

HK: When did Roosevelt die? Do you remember?

BB: He died, I think, in April of '45.

HK: Well, this would have been May '45 to June '45 kind of thing.

BB: Okay, yeah. The war ended in May [19:00]. Well, the war in Europe ended in May of '45, so sometime after that is when the scientists would have been coming back, I guess.

HK: Yes. As soon as this whole thing was legalized, when Truman [19:15] had gotten hold of things and the State Department had been told to back off and mind their own business, then we took them all to Boston in a whole bunch of Greyhound buses.

BB: And so do you remember about --

SS: Excuse me, to Boston or to Washington?

HK: To Washington. We took them to Boston in the Corkham [19:39]. That ship was called the U.S. Corkham, and as far as I know, it may still be around. It was an old wooden whaling ship run by Corky [19:49], we called him, who has long since died, because he was kind of old by then. So Corky [19:56] worked for us. We chartered him with his boat [20:00], and nothing stopped him. I mean, the pilot boat, he laughed about the luxury yachts that they used for trying to pick up the pilots, because he said they couldn't stand a wave in a lake, let alone the ocean, and he was right.

BB: So he was your pilot around the harbor in Boston?

HK: Yes. The only way we got from the island to the -- now there's a causeway, but that didn't exist at that time. Only way we could get to the island, and we had a wharf. We had T Wharf [spelled phonetically] in Boston Harbor we had chartered. The Army took it over. The Army took over things for the duration kind of thing, and T Wharf, which had a big loft where they sewed sails; it was a very nice operation. We hired that and that's where Corky kept his boat, and we had radio contact with Corky [20:56]. When we knew a troop ship would come in, we would get a teletype [21:00] from Washington, and we'd say, "Corky, we need you at 4:00 this afternoon," and he would be there.

BB: So he knew about this. So he was a civilian.

HK: Yes, he was a civilian.

BB: But he knew about the operation --

HK: Oh, yes, he knew.

BB: -- and obviously was told to keep things secret, and you guys trusted him?

HK: Oh, yes. Yes, Corky [21:19] was a topnotch guy.

BB: And so there -- so I'm just trying to picture --

HK: There was some question about Corky [21:29] had a helper, because sometimes in rough weather he took two people that were on this boat. He had a diesel engine, but it was basically a sailboat. It was a schooner, Marconi-rigged schooner, gaff-rigged schooner with a mast and a gaff mast and a sail and a jib sail. He was a real seaman, I mean, not the kind who goes out for vacation. He came from seven generations of [22:00] seamen.

BB: So how long would it take for you to get from the island to where the troop ships were moored? Was it a long trip, or just a quick trip through the harbor?

HK: Quick trip. Nixes Mate [22:19] was about maybe eight nautical miles from the island. I can still see it. [laughs] It's amazing the things that come back. There was a little hill and on the ocean side of the hill was a gun emplacement with 12-inch naval guns dating back from World War I, and when we took over the island, there was a contingent of about three -- six sailors who were in charge of that installation. All they did was cook for themselves and keep the grass reasonably mowed and guard those guns [23:00]. I mean, the guns weren't active; they were old guns. They're probably still there. They were built in concrete emplacements facing the ocean. They were right on top of --

BB: We might need to see if we can make a trip there.

HK: There was a lighthouse on top of the hill.

BB: So I'm trying to picture the makeup of the island and who would have been there. So we have about seven or so MPs who were guarding the forty or so German prisoners.

HK: Yes.

BB: And the prisoners were kind of a construction party and cooking and fixing things.

HK: Yes.

BB: And then about many American -- how many interrogators -- I mean not really interrogators, how many folks like yourself were there?

HK: Just about seven.

BB: So this would have been a group like yourself and Arno Mayer --

HK: Arno Mayer [23:54], Leslie Wilson [23:55], and a few others.

BB: Okay, okay.

SS: Had you all known each other [24:00] before you went here?

HK: I was going to say we all came from Ritchie [24:09], but that's not right. Yes, we knew

each other just because we'd been in General Bissell's [24:14] outfit.

BB: And had everyone been at 1142 [24:17]?

HK: Not before then, no. No, it was strictly Project Paperclip [24:26]. I refer you again to Michener's [24:31] book on space. It's a very well-researched book. It's not just a novel. Everything in that Michener book -- and for a long time I didn't bother to read the book, because I thought it was a novel, you know, but it wasn't. It was an accurate account of everything that happened, with names and everything. He mentions Reedel [spelled phonetically] [24:52] and Ogster [spelled phonetically] [24:53], who were the two right-hand men for Wernher von Braun [24:57].

BB: [25:00] So you said there were about seven or so in Boston like yourself. Was there an officer? Was somebody in charge? Who was in charge of the whole Boston operation?

HK: [laughs] That's a good question, and I can't really answer it. We all reported to Washington. There was nobody on the island who was in charge. We were --

BB: Just kind of a detached contingent?

HK: I was in charge as much as anybody. It was just -- my orders came from Washington via encoded teletype, and I did things. I wanted a movie camera, a movie projector, I teletyped Washington and they ordered the Fort Devens 1st Army [25:50] Command to deliver it. Then I talked to 1st Service Command. They weren't told what was happening, of course. They said, "I don't know what strings you pulled [26:00], but" -- was the answer.

BB: So at any given time, how many German scientists would have been at Boston?

HK: On the island?

BB: On the island, right. Were they kind of cycling through, or were they there for a long

time?

HK: Some were there for a longer time than others, but there were as many as 300 on the island.

BB: At any given time?

HK: Yes.

BB: Wow. And they were all staying in this hotel barrack?

HK: The house of [speaks German]. And some of them were Catholic, and they wanted to have a service on Sundays, so I got an Army chaplain delivered.

BB: Really.

HK: Yes. It worked like that. I called 1st Service Command and I said, "We have a few people who would like to have a service." The chaplain didn't speak German, so I interpreted, and I was somewhat free in my interpretation of what he said [27:00].

[laughs] Yes, he was perfectly all right, but he was Catholic. Most of the Germans were Lutheran, Protestant, but there were some Catholics.

BB: I'm just picturing myself. I shouldn't speak for you, but I would think it would be interesting interpreting a Catholic -- someone who was of Jewish descent, having fled Germany and finds himself translating a Catholic service for German scientists just seems interesting.

SS: Who worked for the Nazis [27:36].

HK: Well, I'll tell you, when Germany [sic] was invaded by the Nazis, there was a cardinal in charge of the Vienna archdiocese whose name was Cardinal Innizer [27:47], I-double N-I-Z-E-R, and he collaborated generously with the Nazis. He disclosed Jewish things, so he was a real son of a bitch [28:00]. The Catholic Church behaved miserably when the

Nazis [28:04] invaded Austria. You know, they blessed them and they did all kinds of things. So whenever this priest gave his sermon and referred to the great deeds of the Catholic Church, I watered it down somewhat in my translation [laughs]. I injected my own comments. You know, I would put in things like, “Cardinal Innizer [28:32] appeared on the balcony of the Hotel Imperiale with Hitler [28:36] when Hitler came to Vienna,” for instance. He did. He did. It’s the truth. Hitler stayed in Hotel Imperiale, which is right downtown Vienna. It’s the biggest hotel in Vienna. He appeared on the balcony to talk to the crowds, and on one occasion Cardinal Innizer [28:59] was there with him [29:00]. On another occasion Porsche was also there. Porsche designed the Volkswagen, of course. He was an Austrian and Hitler [29:09] loved him.

BB: So there was this large number of German scientists. Did you get the sense that -- you know, they had all worked for the Germans.

HK: Yes.

BB: I guess some of them had probably been forced, I assume, to work for the Germans?

HK: Yes. Yes, there was always the story, “If I didn’t join the Nazi [29:34] Party, I would have lost my job, because I worked for the government.”

BB: Did you get the sense that any of them were Nazis or caught up in, you know, very -- still pro-Germany and defended Germany?

HK: No, I don’t think there was any of them who was a convinced Nazi [29:55]. I mean, they were forced into a position where they couldn’t decline [30:00]. If a guy was important enough, he had to join the Nazi Party or lose his job and maybe go to a concentration camp.

BB: Let me flip the other tape real quick.



(End of Tape 3A)

(Beginning of Tape 3B)

BB: This is outstanding. This is -- we've spoken about Boston with some folks because -- now, only a couple of people that we've spoken to were in Boston. George Mandel [00:12] was in Boston.

HK: Yes, and so was Arno Mayer [00:15] and so was Leslie Wilson [00:18].

BB: And Peter Weiss [00:20] remembers being in Boston as well.

HK: Yes.

BB: As did actually this other gentleman I spoke with, Erich Kramer [00:28]. He remembers being in Boston.

HK: Yes, that's right. He was one. You could count up to about seven, I would say.

BB: I believe that's all we know who were in Boston. That would work out to about six or seven right there. In fact, we're hoping Erich Kramer [00:48], who's just outside of New York City, he has a whole photo album of photos taken up at Boston, and I want to see if he can bring that to the reunion [01:00] to show, because I imagine there would probably be photographs of all of you there at Boston.

HK: Yes, probably. I only have a very few, and there's one of myself that Arno [01:12] sent over, so that's the only picture of myself that I know of, and that's the one that [01:18] [unintelligible].

BB: Great. But you have other photos of yourself -- of the group at Boston, do you know? If you happen to run across any, we're always -- especially because they would have been showing folks who were at Boston and were also probably at 1142 [01:43], so we're always interested in that sort of thing.

HK: At that time I wasn't a big photo fan. I did my own photography work ever since. I used Leicas and I had a darkroom. I just threw away a ferrotype [02:00] machine. Do you know what ferrotype is?

BB: I sure do.

HK: Well, I threw it in a dumpster. Nobody uses it anymore. If you want it, it's right on top.

BB: Maybe I'll peek inside and see. You'd be surprised how much people collect that sort of stuff still.

HK: They do?

BB: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

HK: Yes, but I wouldn't know where to go with it.

BB: You put it on eBay. People will buy anything on eBay.

HK: In fact, there's a store that's helped me sell things. Maybe I should take it out of the dumpster.

BB: We'll take a look at it during a break and see. I'll see. It might be worthwhile. So you said there may have been as many as about 300 or so German scientists who went through Boston.

HK: Yes.

BB: Was it just the scientists? You mentioned their families were kept in Schweinfurt [02:57]. None of the families came [03:00] through Boston themselves. Just scientists?

HK: The families? But not during the war. Some of them came here after the war.

BB: Right. But the families were not with the scientists at Boston on the island?

HK: No, no, they all came alone. They sent stuff home.

BB: Okay. So you said that some -- depending on what -- you would run up there; your role

there at Boston or at the island was writing up their résumés?

HK: Yes.

BB: So you and Arno [03:28] were working on that. Did you have any other role? You mentioned sometimes going and taking them into town and whatnot to go shopping.

HK: Yes, to town for shopping, to Fort Devens for mental or dentist appointments, you know, and chest x-rays and whatever routine maintenance the prisoners need. That was in Fort Devens. I had a staff car that was parked at T Wharf. The T Wharf that we had taken over was our base on land, so [04:00] Corky would come out at least once a day, and that was only maybe seven miles into town. You can look at a map. It's very easy. In fair weather it was a 20-minute ride with Corky [04:15]. So I would take a whole bunch of them in Corky's [04:19] boat to T Wharf and there I would have a staff car, tractor trailer on the license plate and so forth, and I would drive to Fort Devens many, many times.

BB: So you said some of the scientists -- after you filled out the résumés, the résumés were sent to Washington.

HK: Yes.

BB: And then you'd hear back from Washington --

HK: Yes, we did.

BB: -- about where the scientists were supposed to be going next.

HK: Their travel orders came through. "Send the following people to Fort Dix [04:51] and send the following people to Houston, Texas," and then the military transport system took over when we delivered them to Boston [05:00].

BB: Did some of the prisoners get transferred to Fort Hunt [05:05], to 1142, for further work there?

HK: Not until we took them all down, no.

BB: So when you left Boston, you did take some of the scientists to 1142 [05:20].

HK: Yes, quite a few.

BB: So do you remember what types of scientists? You know, you mentioned the rocket scientists went to Houston and the Signal Corps [05:29] people went to Dix [05:30]. Do you remember what type of scientists went to Fort Hunt [05:34]? Was there a certain specialty or anything, or was it just folks who they didn't know where to go, so they took them to Fort Hunt?

HK: When they felt they had valuable information but they didn't quite know where to send them, they went to Fort Hunt [05:51], so Fort Hunt became sort of a transit place for a lot of them.

BB: For the Paperclip [05:59] scientists?

HK: For the Paperclip [06:00] group. I specifically remember that a lot of them went to what was known at the time as the Taylor Model Basin in Washington, which had a towing tank, and all the people -- Voith [06:16] and Schneider [06:17], for instance, were two guys. They invented the Voith-Schneider propeller, and that, by the way, is an interesting story, too, because Voith -- was it Schneider or Voith? Voith [06:32]. He was a marine architecture guy, a boat builder, and he had his own institute in Germany with his own little towing tank and his library of books, an enormous collection of stuff, a real dedicated designer, and when he wanted -- when they tried to get him over, he refused to come, because he said, "I can't leave all my belongings here." We knew the Russians [07:00] were going to get him. The Russians were very interested in naval architecture. Many times he got approached by our European contingent, "Mr. Voith [07:12], don't

you think it's time for you to come?" And then we had word that the Russians were on their way, just about to get him from intelligence. At that time he was approached not by me, by some people from over there, said, "Mr. Voith [07:29], if you don't come with us this afternoon, you'll be gone by dawn, because the Russians are going to get you today, and we will prepare to take all your belongings. We have two engineer battalions with flatbed trucks," tank recovery units, they were called. They're enormous. They could carry a 55-ton Sherman tank; 37 ton, I'm sorry. They were with the Corps of Engineers [07:56]. Anyway, so he talked to his wife, and he said [08:00] -- his wife was called Lisa. Funny things one remembers [laughs]. And he said, "Okay, I think we'd better really take them up on that." So before nightfall, they had loaded all of his belongings, his books, and he had an enormous bunch of stuff on these flatbed tank recovery trailers and were out of there. It was hours before the Russians showed up. The Russians wouldn't have asked many questions. They just grabbed people. So we got Voith [08:34] and he went to the David Taylor Model Basin with Schneider [08:37], and the Navy was very interested in the -- do you know what the Voith-Schneider propeller is?

BB: I've heard of it, but I think it's just because of your website, so if you want to mention it, sure.

HK: It was a side-thrust propeller that had four blades sticking straight down out of a plate, and the pitch was controllable. So this whole plate [09:00] rotated, and depending on the pitch, it could thrust in any direction, and it was used as a bow thruster for big ships. The Japanese have hundreds of them. I don't know whether our Navy finally wound up building them, but it was the Voith-Schneider.

BB: So it allowed them to kind of almost parallel park, per se, if they're going into a wharf?

- HK: Yes, it could move a ship sideways. Very important for some ferry boats and so forth.
- BB: We're both quite familiar with the David Taylor Model Basin, because it's literally right up against our park. Literally they are our neighbor. We share a boundary with them. In fact, it's about not even two miles from where Sam works, about a mile and a half, really, from where Sam works.
- BB: I'm at Glen Echo. I work at Glen Echo.
- HK: It's now called the David Taylor Basin?
- BB: Yes, the Naval Surface Warfare, [10:00] something like that.
- HK: At that time it was called the David Taylor Model Basin.
- SS: It still is. It still is.
- BB: Yes, they still use that name, yes. A very, very long building where they have all the works in there.
- HK: Yes, that's right, with a towing tank and a bridge across it. I remember it very, very well. I went there many times.
- SS: But I'm curious, how did you know about the capture of the two German scientists? Where did you get the information from about the U.S. forces approaching and the Russians coming a few hours later? How did you hear all this?
- HK: We had a bunch of guys over there. The Military Intelligence Division [10:42] had people over there that we corresponded with. They put the people we wanted on troop ships. Some of them came by air to Squantum Air Base [10:54]. Squantum Naval Air Station is on the north end of the [11:00] peninsula of Mass Bay, and some of them we picked up at Squantum Air Base [11:06], but most of them came on troop ships. There were hundreds of troop ships coming home at that time, bringing home 30,000 soldiers,

and that's where most of them came from. And where did I hear about that capturing?

From our contingent in Europe.

BB: So you had correspondence with the contingent in Europe?

HK: All the time, oh, yes.

BB: Did they tell you which -- did you request certain German scientists, or were they just rounding up as many scientists as they could and then would they let you know who was coming?

HK: They rounded them up on orders from the Pentagon [11:44].

BB: Okay. So they weren't receiving orders from you?

HK: No, no. Occasionally we wired to the Pentagon [11:51] that the following people also should be collected. There were instances, for instance, there was the Mercedes-Benz Company team [12:00]. I think I told you about that.

BB: No, I don't think so.

HK: Mercedes-Benz built the diesel engines that powered the PT boats that the Germans used to invade Norway. You may remember that big thing. There were 30, 40 PT boats steamed across the North Sea and invaded Norway. Well, the first time they tried that, they had brand-new diesel engines designed by the Mercedes team, and not one of them made it across. They all had main bearing failures, and the heads were about to roll at the Mercedes factory. That whole Mercedes team, it was only about six or seven of them. They were a top bunch of guys. I got very friendly with them. I'm interested in engines, of course.

BB: Sure.

HK: Well, it turns out that they had tried to build the best diesel engines they could, and so

they used roller bearings for the main bearing in the crankshaft [13:00], and it turns out that the stress on those roller bearings -- you know what a roller bearing is. It's like a ball bearing, only it has cylindrical rollers instead of balls. It's supposed to take more thrust than a ball, more distributed load. Well, it turns out that when these rollers rolled around the crankshaft, the metal started creeping and little pieces peeled off under the pressure load. It was way above what is the local stress. So before they got there, metal chips ruined the whole engine and they froze up. So they just rebuilt the engines using journal [spelled phonetically] bearings. Journal bearing is just ordinary journal, [unintelligible] on bronze, two dissimilar methods, and that worked fine. That's how they built engines. Anyway, Mercedes people just tried to make it better with roller bearings [14:00], and they were, "Dummkopf,". "You shouldn't have tried that." All of this went on in all the Mercedes bunch. They were a great bunch.

BB: So did they tell you about this on Boston Island [14:12]?

HK: Yes. Mercedes people themselves told it. [unintelligible] almost got his head chopped off. It was a big joke among them. They got away with it eventually. They persuaded the Nazis [14:27] that it wasn't sabotage. The Mercedes company was important anyway. You know, a lot of politics goes into all that. But that was this one instance I can recall, because I got very close to the Mercedes people.

BB: Do you know where they were shipped to after Boston?

HK: Yes. They were shipped to an Army place where they designed engines [15:00] in Clifton, Fort Belvoir [15:02] it could have been [15:02]. I don't recall, but I know that they were very important, because the Army at the time was trying to build a modular engine. [unintelligible] the Army was in love with V-shaped diesel engines, and they



made three sizes, and they were made in single cylinder pair so you could bolt together a V engine into four, six, eight, anything you wanted, and there were three sizes. The smallest one might have been for a Jeep, or the biggest one might have been for a tank. The Army wanted them all interchangeable, with standard parts and so forth, and the Mercedes team had designed exactly that kind of thing. I don't know whether it was the Army's idea or Mercedes' idea, but they went to a place where they were supposed to design a [16:00] family of interchangeable, you know, less spare-part requirements and all the rest of the arguments for it, and they went to a place where they -- unless somebody screwed up, the Army has these engines now. I don't know. I've been out of touch. So that was the story of the Mercedes team, and they were discussing the nitty-gritty about, you know, "If you're going to do that, well, how are you going to get all the manifolds matched together? And what about the exhaust?" There were some that didn't believe in V engines because it's too hard to get rid of the heat, because the two cylinders don't have room for an exhaust system between the cylinders. They have to go outside. All these nitty-gritty details. I mean, they worked into the night on the blackboard.

BB: So is that what they would do? I mean, I'm trying to think, what were the German scientists at Boston -- is that how they would spend their time [17:00], working on these projects?

HK: Yes. Yes, or they would have internal lectures. Like, for instance, Wernher von Braun [17:08] would give a lecture on rockets. He believed in going to the moon. He was very visionary. He'd give slide talks, and his brother would help him with them. Magnus [17:20] was more speakable than Wernher. Wernher [17:24] was sort of an aristocrat of few words, and if you really wanted to find out, you went to Magnus [17:30], the younger

brother.

SS: So this became like an academic community? Is that what you're saying?

HK: Yes, the house of [speaks German]. Another thing they said, "You know, there's certain music we haven't heard," because it was not authorized. Mendelssohn was Jewish. And no Mendelssohn. "We know that there's a lot of beautiful music. Do you suppose you could get us a record of Mendelssohn music?" So I got records. I went to town and bought some records, and they listened to Mendelssohn that they'd [18:00] never heard, just for example.

BB: How long -- about how long do you think that you were at Boston?

HK: On the island?

BB: Yes, on the island. Just ballpark.

HK: Well, it was from the snow season through the hot summer season. I would guess we went from September to next August, so not quite a year.

BB: When you left Boston Island [18:44], was that the end of the -- did they shut it down at that point, or did they continue -- the Boston facility continue after you left?

HK: No. As far as I know, the Boston facility was turned over [19:00] back to the state after the duration. They built a causeway eventually and they built a hospital. There's a hospital on another island. On the upper end, the northern end of Long Island [19:17] became the site of a hospital. It was an abandoned building, but once the causeway was built, it was a good place for this hospital, and that's owned by either the state or the city of Boston. That's what happened to it. It's now a national park, because the whole island system, the Boston Harbor islands are a national park, including what doesn't belong to the hospital.

SS: You just talked about the Mendelssohn music. I was wondering if you could talk about -- tell the story that you told us earlier about the movie projector and the scientist who was involved in the optics. I don't remember his name [20:00].

HK: Oh, Patin [20:01]. There was a German scientist named Patin, P-A-T-I-N [20:05]. He came from Alsace Lorraine, hence the French name, and he was a very much respected and beloved optical scientist. He came with his own team of about six people. They came with their tools and their lens-grinding equipment and were well equipped. Patin [20:24] is remarkable for being one of the few people who stood up against the Nazi [20:29] regime, protected our own scientists from being sent to the concentration camps, and was never -- he was too important to be disposed of by the Nazis [20:41]. A very courageous guy, very likeable guy, very well informed, well educated, and a great team leader. One time when we had a 16mm movie projector and it wouldn't work, the sound-system lens was shot, Patin [21:00] called his crew together, "Get me my toolbox and get me the lens grinding and get me such-and-such," and in an hour or two, we had that sound system. It was a cylindrical prism that didn't -- hadn't worked, and he made it work. I mean, it took him 10 minutes to diagnose the problem and two hours to have his crew fix it. He was a remarkable guy.

BB: What other sciences and technologies were being brought in? You've mentioned motor design and propeller design. You just mentioned optics. Obviously aeronautics.

HK: And rocket fuels. That was a big thing that we were interested in, rocket fuels. You know the fuels that fuel V-2 rockets, for example, that was all part of von Braun's [22:00] crew. And just orbital calculations. We didn't have anybody who could make orbit calculations, and Wernher von Braun [22:10] had two people, Ogster [22:11] and Reedel

[22:12]. They were mathematicians, and they developed all the orbital calculation systems, and they gave talks about going to the moon and what it will take and all kinds of things. I mean, they were ahead of us in space, and again Michener's [22:29] book "Space" will give you all the details and mention names. Ogster [22:34] and Reedel [22:35] were the two most important guys on the von Braun [22:39] team. Wernher himself was a visionary more than a scientist, actually. And was he a Nazi? I -- he did what the Nazis [22:57] wanted to do and it was his great favor. You know, [23:00] ideologically, he was interested in rockets and going to the moon. He wasn't interested in warfare, really. Yes, he made the V-2s that bombed London and all that, but --

BB: Did he seem apologetic or anything for the V-1s and V-2s?

HK: His attitude was that this was important progress from the viewpoint of us going into space, and the fact that they had used it for military purposes was not his intention. And he was -- yes, he was apologetic about his rocket science having been abused to kill people.

SS: And where did you come out in the equation? I mean, you're a human being. I mean, as well as being a soldier here, you're also a human being. Your family had suffered in Europe. You had heard this excuse or this explanation for their behavior. How did you feel [24:00] personally?

HK: I discussed that a considerable amount with the team. Their excuse was always, "You don't understand. We were forced into all of this. You know, we couldn't refuse to join the party." When the Nazis [24:25] invaded Vienna, I had a similar experience. My best friend, named Walter Fogel [spelled phonetically] [24:30]; we were really good friends. We went on long bike trips together and all the rest of it. Religion just never entered into

the picture. I didn't know what half of my friends were religious-wise. It wasn't an issue. And one day Walter [24:51] said, "My father said I shouldn't see you anymore because you're Jewish. My father is a civil engineer [25:00], works for the government, and he's afraid that he's going to lose his job." That was a blow out of the clear blue sky. That's the kind of thing that happened in Austria. There was no anti-Semitism [25:16] in Austria before that. As I said in my autobiography, Sigmund Freud was a professor at university and he was Jewish. Most of the musicians in the symphony were, many of them. Yes, there's a book -- did you ever hear of a book called "Alma Rose: From Vienna to Auschwitz?"

BB: No.

HK: I'll give you a copy.

BB: Or you can just tell us how to get one, but sure.

HK: I've got a couple left. I've distributed them widely [26:00]. You can return it if you feel like it, but meanwhile, I'll give it to you.

BB: Sure. Great.

HK: But anyway, on the island that subject came up a great deal, and I don't think any of those scientists were anti-Semitic [26:19] or gave a hoot about it. It just didn't concern them. There were a few Catholics who were devout, brought up Catholic and so forth, but most of them were Lutheran and most of them were very free-thinking. They talked about everything from extramarital sex to -- it was what you'd expect a bunch of intelligent, educated guys to talk about. It was a great community.

BB: Did you reveal -- I mean, we're mentioning the names of a lot of these folks who were there -- yourself, Peter Weiss [27:00], George Mandel [27:01], Arno Mayer [27:02] --

who had all fled Europe because of their Jewish heritage. Did you tell these scientists? Did they know that that was your own personal story?

HK: Yes, I talked to them. They knew all of that, yes. Arno [27:21] was the most rabid guy. Arno, he was sort of a Zionist in the ways, very Jewish, and I'm not. In those days my father used to say, "A Zionist is a guy who talks one Jew into giving money to send a third Jew to Israel." [laughs] He didn't have much regard for Zionists, and I don't either. I don't know what the Jews are doing. Anyway, yes, Arno [28:00] was the most rabid of the guys, and he didn't like any of them, because if they smelled German, that was enough for him.

BB: Oh, really. Okay.

HK: Yes. He's still that way, I'll bet.

BB: We've got a couple of minutes of tape left just to wrap up some more discussions about Boston, because this has been fascinating. We talked about the different types of scientists. Do you remember if there were ever any German nuclear scientists that came through Boston?

HK: Yes. There were some people who had worked for Werner Heisenberg [28:38]. The answer is yes, definitely. Heavy-water business.

BB: Sure. And do you remember where they were transferred to afterwards?

HK: No, but they would have gone [29:00] to, at that time, what was the center of nuclear research?

BB: I don't know if it would have been at Oak Ridge [National Laboratory] [29:13] or at Los Alamos [National Laboratory] [29:15].

HK: Los Alamos [29:18]. Both Oak Ridge [29:20] and Los Alamos were destinations, you

know, when I mentioned Fort Dix [29:24] and all that. Los Alamos [29:26] was definitely a destination. Yes, and they were all very anxious to hook up with American scientists in that field.

BB: Probably because we had successfully -- our program was one of the only successful programs --

HK: That's right.

BB: -- and theirs had not been.

HK: Theirs had not been also largely because the Nazis [29:47] didn't trust a lot of good scientists. Either they had Jewish roots someplace or other, or else they'd studied in England and weren't reliable. They missed radar because [Yana] Schturm [30:00], the young guy who had worked in England on radar, came back to Germany when war started and wrote proposals to do radar research, and they didn't give him any money or support because they didn't trust him. He had worked in England all his young life. He'd been at Oxford.

BB: All right. Just real quick, the last question. You mentioned some of these folks had brought -- like the lens folks had brought their equipment with them. Were there other people who brought scientific devices or equipment or tech manuals, anything like that with them?

HK: They had a lot of formulas, formula things, you know, paperwork. Formulas for rocket fuel was the hottest item.

BB: But, for example, they didn't bring samples of rocket fuel with them or anything [31:00] like that?

HK: No. No, Patin's [31:05] group was the only one I remember that came with equipment.

BB: Okay. Do you know if the equipment came with them somehow? If somebody went to Los Alamos [31:17], do you know if anything would have been shipped directly from Germany to Los Alamos?

HK: It's quite likely.

BB: Okay. All right. We'll go ahead and stop the tape for right now. Yeah, we're --

SS: Wow.

BB: -- tapes.

(End of Tape 3B)

(Beginning of Tape 4A)

HK: [unintelligible]

BB: Okay. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. This is National Park Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as Fort Hunt Oral History Project team member Sam Swersky. We are here outside of Boston at the home of Dr. Henry Kolm, a veteran of 1142. Today is May 8, 2007, and this is the fourth in a series of recorded interview tapes with Dr. Kolm, and the second for today. So with that, we'll go right back into Boston, and you mentioned you had just thought of another recollection.

HK: Yes, a very important one, I think. There was a man named Edgar Rowe Snow [00:51], old Boston family, Edgar R-O-W-E- S-N-O-W [01:00], who was the historian of Boston's Harbor Islands [01:07], and he made it a practice to fly around in a helicopter every Christmastime and bring presents to the lighthouse keepers on all the various islands. Aren't many left; they've automated most of them. But in those days there were quite a few lighthouse-keeper families, which were wives and children who could never get ashore, and Edgar Snow [01:31] visited them in his helicopter dressed as Santa Claus.



And he came to our island too, so he was one of the people who inadvertently found about the secret operation and promised to keep it quiet. He told us a lot interesting things. One of them was that the story of “the Cask of Amontillado [02:00],” written by author -- do you remember that?

BB: Sure.

HK: The guy who was walled in and --

SS: Hugo, Victor Hugo.

BB: Poe.

HK: Edgar Allen Poe. Edgar Allen Poe wrote one of his short stories, “the Cask of Amontillado,” about the guy who was walled in alive. That was based on an actual event that happened on one of the Boston Islands [02:32] during the Civil War. They had a drunken party and they picked on one guy, and they didn’t quite kill him and wall him in, but they started to do it. He sobered up, and they let him out again, but they thought it was a very cute trick. Edgar Allen Poe made a short story out of it, [03:00] and Edgar Rowe Snow [03:02], the historian, told us about that episode. It happened on one of the islands that had a fortress on it, military.

BB: So he was a historian, but he also flew around, you said, in a helicopter?

HK: Yes. Yes, a helicopter pilot. Ultimately he became the chairman of the Massachusetts Aeronautical Authority, and he flew around in airplanes in weather where very few people would have dared fly. He was a real aviation pioneer.

BB: So he landed a helicopter on Long Island [03:39] while you were out there?

HK: Yes.

BB: I would imagine helicopters were still fairly rare at that time.

HK: Yes, they were, but Edgar Snow [03:50] had one.

BB: Is there anything else that you think we ought to know about your time in Boston [04:00] and the island in Boston? We've talked about it for a while, but this has been fantastic. Where did you live while you were out there? Did you have -- did you live in a house on the island, or barracks?

HK: We lived in the house that [speaks German].

BB: Oh, so you lived in that as well. Okay.

HK: Yes, we had a few private rooms. There were lots of private rooms. There was no shortage of space to live. We had installed kitchen equipment. It was a real fun project, you know. We sent a list of stuff we wanted to the 1st Army Command [04:37] and then it would come. "We need a gas range, we need a propane set, and we need this and that," and we had lots of strong-arm people and we turned this empty shell of a barrack into a hotel.

BB: Do you know if it's still standing?

HK: I'm sure it's still standing [05:00]. I mean, it stood since the Civil War. I mean, unless they bulldozed it down for some reason. But I haven't been to the island.

SS: I'm curious. How old were you when you were on Long Island [05:17]?

HK: Well, I was born in '24, and that must have been about '43, '44.

BB: Actually, would it have to have been later, because the war was over, right?

HK: Well, the war ended when we were on the island.

BB: Okay.

SS: So you were about 20.

HK: V-E Day [05:39] happened when we were on the island, so that was '45. So I suppose if

I was there in '44, I would have been exactly 20.

SS: What was your scientific training up to that point?

HK: I had been to Drexel University in Philadelphia, where I had [06:00] something like a three- or four-months' course in elements of engineering under the V-12 Program. They were training some of us to be inspectors and technical assistants and sort of para-engineers, I might call it, to coin a phrase, and I'd gone through that program and I learned an awful lot about metallurgy and things. It was an excellent program.

SS: Then had you had an interest in science and engineering before you had --

HK: Always. Oh, since I was old enough to read. I'd always been interested. The funny thing, I was always interested in thermodynamics, since we got one of the first refrigerators that were manufactured by Electrolux in Europe, ran on gas. And I asked my father one day, "How come a hot flame [07:00] can make cold temperatures?" And, of course, my father being medical, why, he couldn't answer the question. But he came home one day with a book called [speaks German]. I still have it, which was way above my head, but it got me so interested in all of these things. I read about liquefying air and nitrogen and helium and so forth. I once tried to liquefy air by using a compressor, by using a compression pump that my father had. It was a medical thing. I bent the piston rod, I remember. I hadn't heard about a critical temperature above which you can't liquefy a gas. There's a critical temperature below which pressure will liquefy a gas and above which it won't. I hadn't heard about that yet. But I wound up, at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] my first teaching assignment was civil dynamics and statistical mechanics, and low temperatures was my field [08:00]. My whole career had started at that point. I asked all kinds of questions, like, for instance, why does a

vacuum cleaner run faster when you hold your hand over the hose? Nobody could answer that question, so I decided it must be trying harder, that's why it goes fast. I mean, like that kind of question was in my mind all my life.

SS: So I guess when you were interrogating or processing these scientists that were coming over, were you doing most of the interviewing, or was it the whole team that was doing interviewing?

HK: When it came to the technical résumés, it was just me and Arno [08:56]. Leslie Wilson [08:59] did some [09:00]. I read "Popular Science" in Vienna. I had a subscription to "Popular Science" in Vienna long before the invasion, and I must have been 8, 10. I read Popular Science way back then and a few books, technical books that were published in Europe.

SS: Then the other team members, did they also have a love of science or an interest in science?

HK: Not necessarily, no. I was the most scientifically minded.

BB: Do you remember their role -- some of the other folks that were at Boston, what they were doing with the prisoners? Or I should say not with the prisoners, but the scientists?

HK: They were interviewing them too.

BB: Okay. So again, working on résumés and just getting [10:00] information about them to assist the military in deciding where they should be placed.

HK: They would come to me after hours and say, "Look. Here's my notes from interviewing so-and-so. What does this mean? He worked on such-and-such thing, and what does that really involve?" And I would interpret and add explanations and so forth.

SS: So even though you were only 20 or 21, you were basically capable of understanding the

concepts that they were talking about?

HK: Yes, from my reading ever since childhood. [speaks German] was one of the books that was published. It was sort of an annual book, very thick, about all that went on from rockets to bring down hail water, hail rockets, interested in pictures, cutaways of greater ships that were being built at the time, the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. I was very interested in the astronomical telescope. "The Glass [11:00] Giant of Palomar" was one of the books I read way back, when they were grinding the lens for the Palomar telescope, the 200-inch reflecting telescope. That was a fascinating thing. I knew all about that. I could have told you more details about that lens than you would believe, you know, how they grind it. I was interested in all these things. Where other kids watched boxing matches and soccer games and so forth, I would read a lot about science. I know some laughed at me, but I had a radio at home, which was not that frequent in Austria at the time, and so they would ask me about if Schmeling was fighting Joe Lewis. Remember those days? And I remember on one particular occasion I said, "I don't know which idiot gave a concussion to the other idiot, and I'm [12:00] really not interested, and I don't think it matters." They laughed at me for not being interested in this great news about boxing. I wasn't. I watched other things. I was interested in racing cars. [unintelligible] had just built a 12-cylinder car and Maserati's inline engine. I was interested in that kind of stuff, and I followed it. I was technically a renaissance man. I knew about more branches of engineering than most specialized engineers do.

BB: So how did the Army find out about you, your background? How did -- do you remember?

HK: Well, General Bissell [12:48]. When I talked my way into General Bissell's office and

presumably he looked at my résumé and then he sent me to Ritchie, and at Ritchie [13:00] they examined our background more thoroughly. I would have to say Fort Ritchie. I don't really know, but it's at Fort Ritchie [13:20] that they picked those of us who went to P.O. Box 1142 [13:24], and they picked us all for a reason, either geographic know-how or acquaintance with one thing or another. I know why they picked Arno [13:36], and they picked Leslie Wilson [13:40] because he was fluent in German. He translated a lot of German literature.

BB: Now, he was not a refugee, right? Or was he?

HK: No, no, no. He was born and raised in Texas. I know Leslie [13:58] because his wife [14:00] went to Bryn Mawr [College] and so did my wife, so I knew him personally as well as through --

BB: To wrap up with Boston, we had mentioned about the families. They were being kept in Schweinfurt [14:21] while the scientists were here. Do you know, did a lot of the families end up being --

HK: Schweinsberg. Schweinfurt [14:30] was the ball-bearing factory place in southern Germany, and it was Schweinfurt. "Schwein" means pig and "furt" means a ford in a river, so Schweinfurt [14:43] would be named after a ford where pigs could go. [laughs]

BB: So in Schweinsberg, then, that's where the families were kept. Did they come to the United States after [15:00] -- when the scientists got moved on to their destinations, did they start bringing the families over?

HK: Oh, yes. Of course, yes, they all did. The ones that stayed here brought their families over.

BB: So did a lot of the scientists -- again, this would have been after they had left Boston, but

did a lot of them remain in this country and become residents? Like Wernher von Braun [15:21] and whatnot, become American citizens.

HK: Yes, a lot of them did. In fact, it's an interesting thing, but my wife and I were on a group travel tour in Texas, and we were having a steak dinner over beer and steak, and there was a couple that spoke German, about our age, and we got friendly with them, and "Where did you come from?" and so forth. "Well," he said, "I came from Hamburg," or wherever, "but I was a prisoner of war [15:49] in this country. The war ended and I loved it so much I came back and settled here." And that was a very frequent story. You know, "I was in Oklahoma," or wherever that prison was, "and [16:00] I decided to come here. It was much nicer than Germany." Lots of them. They were treated fairly and they liked the country. We were a popular country in the world for being fair and all that sort of thing, and I am afraid we have used up all the goodwill under the [George W.] Bush [16:21] administration. Pardon me [laughs].

BB: We won't put that in the new Visitor Center tape or anything.

HK: No, but it is absolutely true that we strictly obeyed the Geneva Convention [16:35], the Helsinki Convention [16:37]. Everything was -- you know, we had the laws of warfare read to us and it's strictly obeyed. No question. We never maltreated anybody. We even gave them the Schnapps.

[laughter]

No, it was a really -- it was a remarkable [17:00] period of reconciliation.

BB: It sounds like it really had a huge impact on you and maybe even shaped a lot of what you did after the war. I'm trying to think what it would be like to be 20 years old working with hundreds of German scientists who are some of the most brilliant people in

the -- you know, when it comes to science.

HK: Well, it proved to me one thing, that there are decent people in Germany, despite the Third Reich and Nazis and Hitler [17:34] and all the rest of it. On the other hand, I was also glad I had helped defeat the German war machine. I had these mixed feelings. But when you get to know somebody one-on-one, you know, it's a different story. Most of them are perfectly decent people. I didn't encounter much anti-Semitism [17:59] at all [18:00] among the grassroots German population.

BB: Right, right. And particularly the scientists, you didn't feel that there were many of them that were --

HK: Not at all. I mean, many famous scientists were Jewish. Heisenberg [18:22] wasn't, but Schrilling [spelled phonetically] was an Austrian; Mach, you know, Mach 2, the guy who discovered the sound barrier, Austrian Jew.

BB: Right. Do you know -- and this wouldn't come really so much from personal experience at Boston, although it might, do you know if there were any Jewish scientists that the Germans had continue to work for them during the war?

HK: Well, they all left.

BB: So they either left or sent to the camps. So [19:00] they're -- so you're saying there weren't any Jewish scientists working for Germany during the war, which had been forced, obviously.

HK: Well, there may have been some that got killed, I don't know, but Lise Martin [spelled phonetically] and Einstein and the people who invented nuclear energy, they all left. They came to Princeton [University] or wherever. No, I don't know of any Jewish scientist who worked under the Nazis [19:32]. They wouldn't have.



BB: Right. That's what I figured, but I just wanted to check. So the Boston operation wrapped up then at some point in 1946, I guess, and you said at that point you and a lot of the folks that you were at Boston with, the Americans that you were with, as well as a handful of actual German scientists, all returned to 1142 [20:00]?

HK: Yes. Well, you say returned, but they'd never been there.

BB: Well, they hadn't, yes, but you had been to 1142 [20:08], right?

HK: Yes.

BB: And then you went up to Boston and went back to 1142.

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. So what was your role at 1142 after you'd been in Boston?

SS: I'm sorry, Brandon. Could you talk about maybe -- you said everyone at Fort Strong [20:28] in Long Island [20:30] had been put on Greyhound buses?

HK: Yes.

SS: Could you talk about that trip coming down to Fort Hunt [20:36], how you found out that the operation was closing in Boston and how you came down to Washington?

HK: Well, we were told by Washington, the Pentagon [20:48], our contact where we took orders from, that the immigration or importation of enemy aliens had been legalized thanks to an order [21:00] from President Truman [21:01], and the State Department had backed off and everything was okay, and, "There's no point in keeping the island going. We'd rather have you all together in Washington, so you are hereby directed to bring all the people to Washington as gracefully as you can. Close the camp." So we made arrangements. We chartered enough Greyhound buses for everybody. As I recall, there must have been something like six of them. Greyhound buses only held 40-some people.

So we had all these buses come to Rose Wharf, which was our local base, and we brought all these scientists with their belongings and the 40 POWs [21:46] and so forth, and put them on buses. I remember we stopped -- they were amazed that there was no sign of destruction. Boston was standing. We stopped in Philadelphia, I distinctly remember, driving [22:00] downtown on Arch Street under the bridge. There's an elevator that goes over the bridge. It's funny, some of the things that stand out. We parked all the buses and took them out into a big restaurant, and of course everybody stared at these funny-looking guys with the leather coats and their funny-looking hats and so forth. And so we stopped; we made a couple of stops, but the Philadelphia one is the one that I remember. Then we arrived at 1142 [22:28] and they were checked in and they got assignment to places to stay. It was a pretty big operation.

BB: Just a quick question that dawned on me for Boston. 1142, everything had been bugged with microphones listening in. Would you know, were there any bugs being used in Boston? Was there monitoring or listening in to the scientists in their rooms or anything?

HK: No. No, no, nothing of the sort [23:00]. They didn't need to. They all talked freely.

BB: Do you know if when they arrived at 1142 [23:10] after this trip in the Greyhound buses, do you know, was anyone interrogated there, or was it just more open conversation in meetings with people about science?

HK: They went on to other destinations pretty quickly; 1142 didn't consider them to be strategically important anyway; they were Paperclip [23:35]; 1142 just happened to have inherited Paperclip [23:42], was the attitude, and as quickly as possible, send them on to where they can be useful. But the scientists were not an interrogation problem. They loved to talk about their work, argued about it [24:00]. They appreciated us Americans

listening to their story. It was not interrogating at all. It was -- they talked very freely about their work. They loved their work. And Wernher von Braun [24:16] was more interested in the future of space than he was in military rockets.

BB: So this second time that you were back at 1142 [24:28], what did you do? What was your role? Were you still in the military at that time?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Do you remember what you did when you returned from Boston?

HK: I continued to interrogate the people at 1142 and then U-234 [24:51] arrived about that time. It's just after the surrender, during the surrender [25:00]. The U-boat was ordered to surrender.

BB: Why don't we go ahead and talk about that a little bit, if now is a good time to talk about U-234 [25:11]?

HK: Yes.

BB: What do you remember about the U-234? Were you at Fort Hunt [25:17] when it surrendered or whatever? How did you find out about the 234 and what was your role?

HK: We found out that that U-boat had surrendered and was going to a beach in Portsmouth, and I went up to Portsmouth. A few of us went up to Portsmouth in a staff car.

SS: From 1142 [25:41]?

HK: From 1142. It was a big thing, because we're going to take over this, and it's got all kinds of valuable information, and they had also an intelligence report about what was on U-234 [25:53]. So we arrived in Portsmouth and there was the submarine [26:00].

BB: So did you see the submarine?

HK: Oh, yes, I went aboard the submarine.

BB: Oh, did you really?

HK: Yes. I went down the sail and I looked through the periscope, and I got very friendly with Heinz Fehler [26:12], the captain.

SS: Had you ever been on a submarine before?

HK: No. No, I hadn't, but it was fascinating.

BB: Wow. So could you describe that a little bit, just your trip? You'd never been on a submarine before, and all of a sudden you were here in this captured German submarine.

HK: That's right. It was tied up alongside a dock, and the sail was open, the hatch on top. I went down the ladder and I talked to Heinz Fehler [26:48], the captain of it, who was proud of his submarine and showed off all the things he could do and so forth, and we became good friends. He was a regular Navy man. He was as apolitical as you can imagine [27:00], a career Navy guy interested in technical things, and I was a willing listener, and he was very proud to show off his submarine. When they took out all the stuff, there were cases of documents, fuel formulas and stuff, a lot of things. There were 960 pounds of uranium, among other things, that we hoisted out with a crane. They had a swinging boom crane on the dock that belonged to the Navy, and I remember that. And I remember seeing the two complete rocket engines, and they had a disassembled Messerschmitt bomber, 209, 206, 209?

BB: 262? The ME-262? Or there was a 163.

HK: 163. And [28:00] all those things were taken out of the submarine.

BB: And you were there while they were unloading this?

HK: Yes. I was there and we had -- Kessler -- General Kessler [28:11] was there. When the submarine surrendered -- Heinz Fehler [28:17] told me that -- Kessler [28:22] had plans

to go to Argentina and sit out the rest of the war, and Heinz Fehler [28:29] had other ideas. He wanted to surrender. There were two Japanese naval officers aboard who committed suicide. I think I told you that.

BB: Right. And I know that's mentioned in the book on U-234 [28:43].

HK: Yes, that's right. But we found that out from Heinz Fehler. Heinz Fehler [28:48] felt sorry for them. They got to be professional friends, and the Japanese knew that they were going to be handed over [29:00] to the Americans, and the Americans were still at war with Japan, and you don't surrender alive. I discussed that with Heinz Fehler [29:11], and he thought it was a terrible shame. He tried to talk them out of it. They'd gotten friendly, Navy people, you know. Underlying all of this stuff is the camaraderie that exists across enemy lines among professionals, be they sailors or soldiers, and these were an example. He told me when Heinz Fehler [29:37] had decided to surrender to the Americans rather than the Canadians, he surfaced and Kessler [29:47] woke up and smelled fresh air, and you don't smell fresh air in the morning on a submarine at war. He demanded an explanation, and Heinz Fehler [29:58] told him that they had surfaced [30:00] off the shore of America. They had argued before about going to Argentina. There was an argument. Kessler [30:11] said, "I'm a general in charge." And Heinz Fehler said, "The hell you are. I'm the captain of this ship." There'd been this argument going on. The crew was mostly good Nazis [30:24] and if they had known about that, they would have killed Heinz Fehler [30:29], he felt.

BB: So did you get the impression from your conversations with Fehler that this submarine -- if the war had not ended, if they hadn't received the order that the war was over, do you think they -- did he mention if they were going to continue all the way to Japan?

HK: Yes. But they weren't going to continue because Kessler [30:54] wanted to go to Argentina.

BB: So according to Fehler [30:58], they were going to stop in Argentina regardless [31:00]?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Were they going to drop him off, or just take the ship to Argentina?

HK: He was going to take the ship and hand it over to Argentina in exchange for a free ride himself. He had -- Kessler [31:19] had aboard a whole collection of valuables, including fur coats, and he had a bunch of Leica cameras, which were very popular, in demand at the time, and he had jewelry. He was going to feather his nest in Argentina and sit out the rest of the war was his plan, was his plan, Kessler's [31:43] plan. And Fehler's [31:45] plan was to surrender and become a naval officer again. He didn't much care about the war or the Nazi [31:54] Party. He was happy to get out of Germany. But if they had gotten to Japan [32:00], it would have been a calamity, because they would have used V-2 rockets piloted by kamikaze pilots, and our Air Force would have been faced with rocket --

(End of Tape 4A)

(Beginning of Tape 4B)

HK: -- in touch with him.

BB: We'll have to check the U-234 [00:04] book and see if they mention what he did. He would have been a little bit older, right, than you, since he was the captain of a submarine?

HK: Yes, he was older than I was at the time. He's probably died since then.

BB: Well, we can look into that, because that'd be interesting. I believe that when that book

on U-234 [00:24] was written, they might have interviewed him, because I think that was maybe written 10 years ago or so, so they may have interviewed him.

HK: They might very well.

BB: So you were there in Portsmouth while the U-234 [00:40] was being unloaded?

HK: Yes. We took the whole crew to P.O. Box [00:47].

SS: With the cargo you mentioned the uranium. Do you know what happened with the uranium? Did you have anything to do with the uranium [01:00]? Or did you just -- how did you know it was uranium? Did people just tell you, "Oh, that's what this is?" I mean, if I was twenty years old, I don't think I'd have a clue what uranium would look like, so how did you know that's what it was?

HK: Well, I knew the Germans were working on an atomic bomb. I didn't know the difference between enriched U-235 or U-238 or plutonium, but I knew that this was the stuff that atomic bombs were made out of and that, had it gotten to Japan, they might wind up having faced the Japanese -- I mean, Hiroshima and Nagasaki had just happened at the time, so everybody up on the news would know what uranium was.

BB: So do you know what happened?

HK: I was only told afterwards that that big cask was uranium. I saw it come out on the crane. It was very heavy.

BB: Okay. Do you remember at all what it looked like or anything?

HK: It was [02:00] in a cylindrical vessel, like a hot-water tank.

BB: Oh, okay, okay. But you're not sure where they took it or what they did with it? It didn't go to 1142 [02:15]?

HK: No, it went directly to whatever nuclear -- probably Los Alamos [02:22]. Los Alamos is

really -- Huntsville is where they did all the centrifuge work, but Los Alamos is where they put together an actual nuclear bomb. So this thing would probably have gone to Huntsville first to be enriched, because it didn't have -- the Germans didn't have [unintelligible] centrifuges. I knew that much, but I, you know -- I -- they took it away. But Heinz Fehler [02:55] knew what it was.

BB: Okay.

SS: Did you see the actual rockets being taken out of the [03:00] submarine?

HK: Yes. Yes, they had a hydraulic crane with a swing arm on the dock that belonged to the Navy. They took it all out, and we took all the crew and we drove them to P.O. Box [03:18]. Yes, we had a couple of MPs along, as I recall. But they got -- they commandeered a -- we had a secure prison car of some kind, ambulance-like van or something, and I forget the exact details, but they were all guarded, and they were prisoners. Their crew contained a bunch of Nazis [03:44]. They were a good, trusted Navy bunch that ran that submarine, as you can imagine, and Heinz Fehler [03:55] warned us about it, that they were Nazis and don't trust them, and [04:00] take good care of guarding them. But they all went to Washington, along with Heinz Fehler [04:07] and General Kessler [04:12].

SS: Were you pretty much in charge of this group that went up to bring them down to 1142 [04:18]?

HK: No, there were some officers around. I wasn't in charge. I don't remember the names or the identity of some officers that were around, but they were from the Pentagon [04:32]. This was an important event, this old submarine.

BB: Sure. So was your role to essentially serve as a translator during this, or do you know



why you went to Portsmouth? Why did they select you to go on that?

HK: Well, they needed somebody who spoke German, obviously, and I served as interpreter. I'm pretty good at interpreting on the feet [05:00]. There are lots of people who can't do that. I can interpret as fast as I can read. I also did all my translations from a dictating machine, because I can translate as fast as I can read German. I was the interpreter, essentially.

BB: Was there any interrogation done up there in Portsmouth, or was everyone taken to 1142 [05:31]?

HK: Everybody went to 1142.

BB: And then they were interrogated while they were there?

HK: Yes. Yes.

SS: There were no stops in Philadelphia on the way?

HK: No, that was with the buses, when we took the whole -- there was no stop in Philadelphia, no. We drove nonstop, changing drivers on the way and so forth. But I don't remember exactly what kind of vehicles we had for all of those people, because they all had to be guarded [06:00]. We probably got something from the 1st Army [06:03]. They liked to use the same vehicles they used for ambulances to transport prisoners in those days. They were a closed rear car with secure doors, and they could be locked. My guess is that that's what happened. We got the support from the 1st Army [06:22] in Fort Devens.

BB: So any of the equipment that came off of the U-234 [06:31], do you know if any of that, even the smaller equipment, or any of the documents or formulas, did any of that come with you back to 1142 [06:41]?

HK: I don't remember. All I can say is that my own contingent that I went with was only the

people.

BB: Okay. So once you got back [07:00] to 1142 from Portsmouth with this group, did you -- did they immediately -- were you immediately assigned to somebody off of either the crew or to Kessler [07:12]? Who did you work with that was on the U-234 [07:15]?

HK: Kessler. And Heinz Fehler [07:20], but Heinz Fehler didn't need to be interrogated. But Kessler [07:23] did, and that's when we started about who ordered the bombing of Amsterdam. That's when that whole thing began. Kessler was an arrogant Prussian officer, Hollywood-style. He had a monocle he used to put in his eye. He'd drop it and catch it at his waist, and he stood as erect as a ramrod. Yes, Heinz Fehler [07:49] told me that when Kessler [07:51] found out that they were about to be boarded by the Coast Guard, that they had surrendered, his reaction was to put on his best white tropical uniform [08:00] and stand up on the sail erect as can be. He was going to surrender [pounds table] in style like a German officer is supposed to. [laughs] Yes, he was very funny. He took himself very seriously. Yes, well, he got to be my customer, and then we got into this business of the bombing of the Dutch.

BB: So what sort of information did you try to get from Kessler [08:32]? You mentioned about the bombing of the Dutch. Did you try to get any technological, any scientific information, or just more historical information about who did what during the war?

HK: More the latter. Kessler wasn't technical. He was, I guess, two stars, three. [speaks German] is three star [09:00]. That's what he was.

BB: So you had recounted yesterday about working -- not so much working with him, but talking to him about this whole bombing episode. Did you question him about that directly?

HK: Yes, very directly. It's something I obviously felt very strong about.

BB: You mentioned yesterday that he had blamed --

HK: Aschenbrenner [09:36].

BB: Aschenbrenner, who was his commander?

HK: Aschenbrenner was his inferior, and Kessler's [09:46] claim was that, "Aschenbrenner [09:48] is responsible, and I'm not." And so after I questioned them both separately -- Aschenbrenner came at my request, and I interrogated [10:00] them separately for a long time until I had their individual stories. Then I put them together, and we listened to what they had to say to each other. When Kessler [10:13] heard that Aschenbrenner [10:14] was going to share -- yes, I know. Aschenbrenner got into the cabin first for some reason, the double cabin they assigned them to, and when he heard that Kessler [10:30] was going to be his roommate, he took all the good furniture out of Kessler's and put the worn-out armchair that had -- it was a caned armchair, and the cane had sagged to the point where it looked more like a toilet. I said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Kessler will [speaks German]. His ass [11:00] will fall through the chair." He hated Kessler [11:04]. Aschenbrenner [11:05] was a comfortable, easygoing, somewhat fat guy. Kessler was the great Prussian, and Kessler tried to pull rank on Aschenbrenner, and Aschenbrenner [11:17] told Kessler to go to hell, essentially, is what the relationship developed, so that was -- you know, "The general's ass can fall through this chair," he said with a chuckle. Yes, it's funny the things one remembers.

SS: What was the setting of the interrogation? This was -- you weren't playing chess with these people, were you? I mean, what kind of a room was it, or how did you interrogate them? What was the setting?

HK: The setting was a cabin in the woods among a few other cabins, the whole thing being surrounded by barbed wire. It was out [12:00] in the open. Well, there was a Ping-Pong table. Different people were interrogated in different ways. Hesse [12:14] liked to play chess. Kessler [12:15] didn't play chess. He was too stiff. Aschenbrenner [12:24] played chess occasionally, but he wasn't much into chess. Aschenbrenner was more interested in girl magazines.

BB: Would you provide them with, for example, magazines and pictures?

HK: Yes.

BB: So you guys would provide them with that?

HK: Oh, yes. We had a great collection of old magazines that they loved. They'd never seen the American magazines. Oh, they saw all those places like Durstrumer, which was the German anti-Semitic [13:00] magazine.

BB: Would you give them copies of that?

HK: No, no, no, nothing like that. We gave them copies of any magazines we had around, mostly donated by the staff, what you find in a doctor's waiting room. Yes, but they were free to -- we wanted them to get to know American culture.

BB: Did you ever interrogate Aschenbrenner [13:35] and Kessler [13:35] at the same time?

HK: Well, after they all got together, yes, when they were in the same cabin.

BB: Are there any other -- we've mentioned Aschenbrenner and Kessler.

SS: Was there an intent when you were questioning the general to try [14:00] to get documentation for war crimes also?

HK: Yes, that became the main subject of the interrogation, that they had committed a serious war crime, and who was responsible? That became the ultimate -- I got orders to

determine culpability for that war crime. Nuremberg [Trials] [14:36] had been set up, and it was clear that one or both of them were going to go to Nuremberg.

SS: So do you remember, were either of them sent to Nuremberg [14:47] --

HK: Yes.

BB: -- for the bombing?

HK: They were both sentenced to life, and as happened, 10 years later they were all free. That's what happened at Nuremberg [15:00]. They got life sentences, and for some reason 10 years later everything was forgotten, and they got out. There's a PBS movie called "the Trial at Nuremberg." I don't know whether you've seen it.

SS: I've seen a lot on Nuremberg, but I'm not sure I've seen that or not.

HK: Well, you can get it for 19.95 from PBS. I have a recording on hard drive, and I have it on the hard drive, and if you want I can show you. It's two hours long, and it goes into all kinds of things, but it does make the case of the Germans. Their defense lawyers essentially took the position that, "We are citizens of Germany and we had to support our country, because that's what you would do too." I mean, George Washington did it, you know, "My country, may she always be right, but right or wrong, my country." That was the theme of their defense. The thing on the Nuremberg Trial [16:00] is a very thought-provoking thing, because for many of them, that really was the issue. You don't become a traitor because you don't believe your country is right. But as I said, many of them got life. A few got executed, Hesse [16:17] being one of them. But most of them got life or long sentences, and none of them was in prison 10 years later.

SS: Were there ever interrogations that eventually led to war crime trials that you were involved in the interrogations for?

HK: Not that I was involved in. There may have been others, I'm sure. [Erwin J.] Rommel [16:42] died in a mysterious accident about that time, in Germany. When the Africa campaign went south, I think Hitler [16:55] disposed of him. But you know, but yes [17:00], there may have been other war crime interrogation of other prisoners, but none that I was involved in.

SS: So the interrogation of Kessler [17:07] was fairly relaxed, you said, mostly? Is that the way you would describe it?

HK: Yes. Yes, the answer is yes. He was very defensive, and, as I said, very stiff and rather arrogant.

SS: But your tactics were to -- would you describe your tactics? He was that way. How did you react when you talked to him?

HK: Well, my reaction, feeling that the Germans were responsible for killing most of my family, I was not very forgiving or understanding or kind when I talked to Kessler [17:53]. Aschenbrenner [17:57] was so ingratiating that it was hard to be tough [18:00] on him. He would just agree with anything you said. He'd rather sit in an armchair and look at girl magazines. He was sort of a [speaks German] kind of guy. But Kessler [18:13] -- I was -- Kessler was not one that you'd get friendly with.

BB: Was intimidation ever used with someone like Kessler?

HK: Only to the extent that he was told he was going to Nuremberg [18:32] to be tried. To that extent. That wasn't intimidation; that was a fact. He was going to Nuremberg.

BB: So no intimidation, like as in the case of Rolf Arndt [18:49] and the Russians?

HK: No. What they were afraid of is being turned over to the Russians. We sometimes used that as intimidation. "If you [19:00] have nothing to say to us, we'll turn you over to the

Russians, because they consider you a war criminal.” That they’re afraid of. So that’s the only intimidation I ever used. And some were turned over to the Russians, if they were responsible for having done war crimes in the siege of Moscow, for instance. I mean, remember, Russians were our allies.

BB: Right. Do you know, was anyone from 1142 [19:34] turned over to the Russians?

HK: Oh, yes.

BB: Were there ever any Russians at 1142 who were there to either interrogate --

HK: Yes. The answer is yes, absolutely.

BB: So Russian military people were at 1142 [19:53] for interrogations?

HK: They were invited for specific cases. They weren’t just sitting there [20:00]. Before we determined that they really ought to be turned over to the Russians, we gave the Russians a chance to prove that they had a case. We didn’t turn over a prisoner lightly to the Russians. We’d have a Russian interrogator come and talk to them, and we had some Russian people who were interpreters on the staff. I mean American Russians.

BB: Right. So we’d mentioned a little bit about intimidation and also the fear of the Russians, and how -- but most of the time, would you say was the most successful way for you to get information to be playing that role you’d mentioned of being a morale officer, and just going in and befriending someone? Is that what you did most commonly, or did you use intimidation most frequently?

HK: No, the most common was get friendly [21:00] and play Ping-Pong, was the most common.

BB: Did they ever use any other tactics? You’d mentioned before, and would you like to speak to it again, that to your recollection, there was never anything physical that was

done? Is that safe to say?

HK: Yes, that is safe to say. We had copies read to us of the Geneva Convention [21:33] and the Helsinki Convention [21:35]. We strictly obeyed that. General Bissell [21:40] believed in it. "Two wrongs don't make a right, even if the Germans don't obey by it." That was drilled into us all the time.

BB: Anything else? Would they ever use alcohol? Would they try to get prisoners drunk to get them [22:00] to talk that way?

HK: No, never, never. Oh, yeah, I'd have a beer on a hot day, but nothing --

BB: Sure, sure, but not, you know. Okay. Or anything involving -- you mentioned Aschenbrenner [22:16] enjoyed looking at, you know, girl magazines and things like that. Would they ever bring women into 1142 [22:25], or anything like that?

HK: No. I mean, I told you about Mrs. Buck [22:32].

BB: Oh, right, right, right.

HK: She came in because we had a swimming pool.

BB: Right. But not to entertain the prisoners or anything like that.

HK: Nothing of the sort. Absolutely not. Particularly in those days, one didn't believe in any sexual -- no, nothing of the sort ever happened. Strictly professional. Professionalism was stressed [23:00] very highly at P.O. Box [23:04].

BB: So we've spoken about some specific prisoners, Aschenbrenner [23:11] and Kessler [23:12]. You said that they were together in the same cottage.

HK: Yes, after they'd been separate.

BB: Right. And then Hesse [23:22]? We spoke about his yesterday.

HK: Yes, Rudolph Hesse. Funny, you mention the name and suddenly his first name comes



back to me. Rudolph Hesse. Yes, what about him?

BB: Was he in a cottage as well?

HK: Yes. Yes, he was in a cottage, and I don't remember who was on the other side of him, but he was in a cottage, and as I said, he always liked to play chess.

BB: Do you remember what sort of information they were trying to get from him?

HK: All kinds about strategy, because he was in on every conference that involved Hitler [24:00] and the general staff.

BB: Okay, and did you -- because he -- and his role again? He was Hitler's [24:09] aide, essentially?

HK: He was Hitler's military advisor, not that Hitler listened to him very much. But that's what his role was, so he knew the strategy that Hitler was trying to -- was enforcing all the time. His attitude was strictly, "You and me shouldn't fight. We should get together and worry about the future, like the Russians and the Japanese," was his viewpoint. He talked freely about all that stuff. In his viewpoint, Hitler [24:43] had wrecked the Third Reich by imposing a strategy that destroyed the German Army. He hated [Hermann] Goering [24:55] with a passion.

BB: Oh, really. He worked this closely with Hitler [25:00]. Was he a Nazi himself?

HK: No, he was not a Nazi. He was a professional military specialist who worshipped Clausewitz [25:13]. I mean, Jesus Christ Clausewitz. He knew everything that had ever been written about the science of warfare, from Machiavelli to Clausewitz [25:25].

SS: How was he captured, do you know?

HK: I don't recall. He came about the time they had that big putsch when they tried to kill Hitler [25:44], and a whole bunch of guys were executed. At that time he may have

surrendered, because he didn't believe in the Nazis [25:55]. He believed in the army. He was a professional army -- he may have [26:00] skipped ranks over that time. I don't recall. But that would have been in his character. He was apolitical. He was a military guy.

BB: Are there any other specific prisoners that stand out at 1142 [26:23]? Even if you don't remember their name.

HK: Well, only negatively, whenever we got involved with a Waffen-SS [26:31] guy. They stand out because they were such thorough Nazis and such bastards, and they would have shot you without blinking an eye. I mean, they were really bad guys.

BB: Were they kept in the cottages as well?

HK: No, they were mostly in the big stockade, where they often got into a fight with their fellow prisoners, who were mostly not Nazis [26:55]. They almost killed some of them [27:00].

BB: Some of the other prisoners?

HK: No. Some of the other prisoners almost killed some of the Waffen-SS [27:09], who would band together. So it got to be like in this enclave there were the Waffen-SS and then there were the prisoners.

BB: Do you know what the Waffen-SS [27:23] were being questioned about?

HK: Well, they were assigned to different headquarters, and they would have known what their particular division was assigned to do. They had all the strategic information, and they would know what orders came down from Berlin, or Berchtesgaden, which is where the orders came from at that time. Berchtesgaden is a mountain resort where Hitler [27:48] went. It's a beautiful place.

BB: I understand. I've seen photographs of it, and it looks phenomenal.

HK: It is.

BB: It's in Austria, right?

HK: Yes [28:00].

BB: So you mentioned the Waffen-SS [28:04]. Anybody else, either by name or types of people that stand out?

HK: Not that I can think of right now. Lots of ones on that Boston Island [28:17] stand out, but 1142 [28:19] I can't think of anybody else that wasn't my customer. Yes, I had other customers too, of course, but none of them stand out for any particular reason. They ranged from minor officers that happened to know about the Africa campaign --

BB: I just -- I want to mention a couple of other names of prisoners that -- I'm sorry --

SS: [unintelligible]

BB: -- other names of other prisoners who were at 1142 [28:52] that other folks' interviews have mentioned, and see if it rings any bells with you, and if it doesn't, that's perfectly fine, because obviously everyone was assigned to different people [29:00]. One gentleman who would have been there after the war was named Reinhard Gehlen [29:07]. He was involved in a spy network, spying against the Russians.

HK: Yes, I remember him.

BB: Actually, he ended up working for -- he actually ended up working for the CIA [29:21] after the war.

HK: Yes, I remember his name. He wasn't my customer, but I remember his name very well, yes. We interrogators got to discussing things among ourselves, and I remember that business, yes.

BB: Okay. But you never worked with the Gehlen [29:39] organization yourself?

HK: No, not myself.

BB: Another name of a gentleman was Gustav Hilger [29:46].

HK: I remember that name too, but I don't know in what connection. He was also not my customer. Hilger, yes.

BB: Okay. Our understanding is he was sort of the [30:00] equivalent to -- before the war had been a sort of ambassador, an emissary between Russia and Germany, so he had a great understanding of the Russians.

HK: Yes, I remember his name. He was discussed among us.

BB: Okay. Do you remember -- well, in fact, I'll go ahead and hold off, because I'm thinking of a few other questions, but I'll hold off until we start a new tape, because we've only got about a minute left. So we'll take a break.

(End of Tape 4B)

(Beginning of Tape 5A)

BB: Are we good to go again? Outstanding. All righty. Let's see. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. Today is May 8, 2007. This is National Park Service historian Brandon Bies, as well as project team member Sam Swersky, and we're here at the home of Dr. Henry Kolm, a veteran of P.O. Box 1142, at his home right outside of Boston, Massachusetts. This is the second day and the fifth of a series of recordings on his experiences related to 1142. So with that, we'll jump back into what we were speaking about a little bit before lunch, and that was talking about some of the specific prisoners. I had mentioned to you some of the names. You'd said Hilger [00:53] sounded a little bit more familiar as a name, but it wasn't somebody that you worked with while you were at

1142 [01:00].

HK: No, not me personally, never.

BB: Okay.

HK: It is the 8th, by the way. You said 6th. It's the 9th.

BB: Oh, did I say 6th? Okay, 8th, May 8th. Okay, sorry. And let's see here. In terms of other prisoners that were at 1142 [01:20], do you remember there being any non-German prisoners, or guests or even scientists? Anybody at 1142 who was not German?

HK: Not German. I'll try to think hard about that. You don't mean where they were born. You mean what army were they in?

BB: If they were military or if they were civilian. I mean, I suppose there probably were scientists, I guess, from Austria and Hungary and other locations.

HK: Yes.

BB: But especially, yeah, if you remember, for example, were there Russian prisoners? Were there Italian prisoners [02:00]?

HK: Not that I recall any. There were German Army, Navy, Africa Corps, but Germans.

BB: Do you ever remember if there were any Japanese prisoners?

HK: No. Only the two officers on the U-boat who committed suicide were Japanese, but, no, we did not have any Japanese ones.

BB: You don't remember any Japanese Americans, any interrogators who spoke Japanese?

HK: Not that I know, no. I don't think so.

BB: Okay. So in terms of the interrogators, though, most of the interrogators spoke German?

HK: German and French. European languages.

BB: Okay. Do you know, was there anyone there who conducted interrogations who did not

[03:00] speak German and had to have someone act as an interpreter? Did you ever serve, or did anybody else ever serve as an interpreter at 1142 [03:10], or was everyone fluent in German?

HK: Everyone was fluent in German, but not necessarily in technical language. I was often asked to assist by interpreting technical words that one of the other interrogators might not have known. As the war ended, the prisoners became more and more technical people rather than military people, and since we had inherited the Paperclip [03:43] project, there was an influx of people that P.O. Box 1142 [03:49] wouldn't originally have been interested in, so it gradually took on a more scientific aspect.

BB: So while the war was going on [04:00], you don't recall there being that many scientific people who would have been there?

HK: No, not early on, no.

BB: Do you remember if, after the war was over, when there were more scientists at 1142, were there any military prisoners still being held there, or had it shifted 100 percent to scientists?

HK: Not 100 percent. There were still some that were involved in the Nuremberg trials [04:27]. Things like that were longer-range projects. But as I mentioned, General Bissell [04:36] decided he had to go to Long Island [04:38] in order to be able to report Germans. That was Paperclip [04:42]. But Paperclip eventually was turned into 1142 [04:49], so 1142 became more scientific people than military people. The turning point was about the surrender of Germany, which means about U-234 [05:00].

BB: Right.

SS: Did you know it as Project Paperclip [05:07] when you were working on it? The term

Project Paperclip?

HK: Yes, it was known as Project Paperclip at the time I worked on it, yes.

BB: Why was it called Paperclip [05:19]?

HK: It was somebody on the staff of General Bissell [05:24] in G-2, because they had files mostly consisting of key-sort punch cards, and they put a paperclip on important scientific papers that we wanted to have, which was a logical way to index a file which otherwise just had punched holes in it. That's what gave them the idea. It wasn't any of us; it came down from the Pentagon [05:54].

BB: With the actual prisoners at [06:00] 1142, do you remember ever using stoolpigeons [06:07]? And are you familiar with the term stoolpigeon?

HK: Yes, of course.

BB: Was that technique ever used while you were there?

HK: No, not really, unless you consider people like professional two-way spies. No.

BB: But there were -- you didn't necessarily purposely try to turn one prisoner, you know, and have them go in and get information from another prisoner, or anything like that?

HK: No. Very often a prisoner said, "Ask so-and-so. I don't know." But stoolpigeons [06:45] was not a technique.

BB: In terms of the interrogators, do you remember, was Fort Hunt and 1142 [06:58] strictly an Army [07:00] fort or installation, or were there other personnel there from the Navy or other branches of service?

HK: Well, there was a thing called the Office of Strategic Services [07:14], OSS, and it was the predecessor of what was then CIA [07:20]. We were all officially members of the OSS.

BB: Really.

HK: Yes, Office of Strategic Services [07:28].

BB: Okay. So you were considered to be in the OSS?

HK: Yes.

BB: Was that entire operation at 1142 [07:38], was that under OSS [07:38] control or U.S. Army control, or was it just -- you know, do you know if it reported to somebody at OSS?

HK: OSS was for all services, and we were the Army component of the OSS [07:56]. We were officially working for military [08:00] intelligence/OSS. That was the designation. In my honorable discharge, it said military intelligence/OSS. OSS was only created about that time.

BB: Okay. Were there regular officers who were strictly just OSS [08:28] officers who were stationed at 1142, who would act as a liaison between OSS offices and the operations at 1142 [08:37]?

HK: Officially, all the OSS-only members who were in the service were stationed in the Pentagon [08:48], where there was an OSS office in the G-2 complex. But all of us at Camp Ritchie [09:00] were military intelligence, Army-based. That didn't mean we didn't interrogate Navy officers if they were relevant. Navy had its own intelligence, and it's only when they started merging that the OSS [09:13] -- OSS was created in order to merge the military services of all the three, Marine Corps, Air Force and -- the Air Force didn't quite exist yet. It was the Army Air Corps.

BB: So you don't remember, then, any specific naval interrogators? This is U.S. Navy personnel who were there, too?



HK: No one that I recall that I knew. Everybody we were friends with was Army. All the interrogators were Army; 1142 [09:48] was an Army installation at that point.

BB: You'd mentioned that you were working for the Military Intelligence Service [09:58]. Do you know -- did your [10:00] program at 1142 [10:01], did it have a name? Did it have a detachment number or anything? How was it identified, if it was?

HK: 1142 is the only designation I'm aware of.

BB: Okay, because in some writing the whole interrogation program for the U.S. Army in World War II [10:27], we've seen it come across as MIS, for Military Intelligence Service, MIS-Y [10:35]. Does the letter Y, MIS-Y, does that ring any --

HK: That's probably the designation they used in the files in the Pentagon [10:47] in General Bissell's [10:48] G-2 office, because there was interrogation going on elsewhere too. There were prisoner camps all over the country, Fort Meade [10:56] being one example. There were some in Oklahoma [11:00]. And all of those had interrogation officers who would send prisoners that seemed important to Fort Hunt [11:08]. So probably in General Bissell's file was a designation Y for 1142. There may have been other designations for all the other camps.

BB: Okay. But you don't remember MIS [11:25] or MIS-Y. That wasn't anything that you used, or terminology that you used?

HK: No.

BB: So you just referred to it as working at P.O. Box 1142?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Were you aware of any other -- you mentioned that there were other prisoner-of-war [11:47] camps. Were you aware of any other interrogation centers like 1142

[11:54]?

HK: Not of any specific interrogation centers. I was aware of the fact that other prisoner-of-war [12:00] camps had interrogators, because we got sent prisoners from them.

BB: Right. But did you consider 1142 to be a prisoner-of-war camp, or just an interrogation center?

HK: Interrogation center. We didn't warehouse prisoners. Fort Meade [12:20] did, for example.

BB: Administratively, was 1142 its own entity, or did it fall under Meade or Belvoir [12:34] or one of the local bases?

HK: No, it was our own entity. The Boston operation fell under 1st Army [12:44], but that had nothing to do with 1142 [12:48].

BB: I want to mention a name of another facility that we think might be related to 1142. This location is up in [13:00] Pennsylvania, and it was known as Pine Grove Furnace. Does that name ring any bell whatsoever?

HK: No. I know there was a Navy base at Warminster in Pennsylvania. I knew about that. They specialized in surface weaponry or something. We sent prisoners there sometimes, to Warminster.

BB: Oh, really. Scientific prisoners or military?

HK: Military. Air Force prisoners mostly. It was a tactical research center for fighter pilots.

BB: Really. And prisoners were sent there for further interrogation or to assist with training? What were they sent to Warminster for?

HK: To teach flight instructors at Warminster about fighting tactics of the Germans [14:00] or the Russians or the Polish. The Polish were famous for having highly effective, well-

trained fighter pilots. Germans killed them all, mostly, but they all respected the Polish Air Force greatly. The Germans had learned tactics about the Polish Air Force, of course, and when we sent somebody to Warminster, it was to teach fighter-pilot tactics to the American fighter pilots. That's what it amounted to. They arrested all of those prisoners. You know about the egg? The concept of the egg was the brand-new thing. A fighter airplane has a surface that looks like an egg. It's smaller at the top and bigger at the bottom. It's three-dimensional, and a fighter pilot can operate [15:00] on the surface of the egg. If he gets inside the egg, he exceeds G-forces that the plane is stressed for. And every plane has an egg. The concept of the egg had just been discovered about that time, and from the fighter pilots I've talked to, it came from the Polish Air Force. The Russians killed most of the Polish officer corps, you know. It was a terrible disaster. We talked about that a lot. But as far as I remember, the concept of the egg was developed by the Polish Air Force and taught to the German Air Force. So there were pilot trainers who were specifically skilled in fighter tactics, and Warminster was one of two [16:00] places that they went. There was another place out West that did similar things, but Warminster was the nearest one, in Pennsylvania.

BB: This location, Pine Grove Furnace, what we understand about this is that this was built as a prisoner camp where some prisoners were held prior to being sent to 1142 [16:25], and it was specifically built for that purpose as kind of a temporary holding area, because 1142 had so many prisoners, there was a backup of prisoners.

HK: Yes, that's right.

BB: But you had no experience or dealings with this other location?

HK: Not that I remember. They came from very many places, and that was one of them, but I

just don't remember.

BB: Speaking of the prisoners, we've mentioned a little bit, but [17:00] a typical military prisoner, so not the scientist, but a typical military prisoner at 1142, did they have any freedoms or liberties that they could do? Were they allowed around the base? Were they always kept in the compound, you know, in the stockade, or what sort of freedoms did they have, if any?

HK: They could use the swimming pool, which was sort of a dammed-in lake kind of a place. But they were not allowed out. Nothing like the Boston Island [17:39] operation. No, essentially no, though we had picnics in the stockade sometimes. There were things like that going on.

BB: But they couldn't leave 1142.

HK: No [18:00]. They would have talked.

BB: Sure. But you mentioned they were allowed in the pool?

HK: Yes, under control. There were events. They were allowed on the tennis courts and things like that, but on the base.

BB: What about the scientists at 1142? Were they given a little bit more freedom, or were they also retained on the base?

HK: Retained on the base. Nothing like our Boston operation.

BB: Sure, sure. What about yourself? When you were at 1142 [18:55], you and your fellow interrogators and others, what did you do for [19:00] -- what sort of freedoms did you have? Could you leave the post on a regular basis?

HK: Yes. I had a Q clearance. That came later. The clearance system came a little later than that, but the answer is I was trusted and I was allowed to come and go as I pleased, no

restrictions.

BB: What sort of things would you do for leisure? Would you go -- did you go from Fort Hunt [19:33] to visit your family sometimes?

HK: Yes, and I loved to swim. I swam every day before breakfast.

BB: In the pool?

HK: Yes.

BB: Did you ever swim in the Potomac River or just --

HK: No. The Potomac River was not safe to swim in, not communally. No, nobody swam in the Potomac. There were [20:00] boats, canoes and boats for rent up and down the river. I never did that, though, either. I went swimming every morning before breakfast. I liked to swim. I'm not into golf, and I'm a poor tennis player, but I did occasionally play tennis.

BB: Were there tennis courts at 1142 [20:26]?

HK: Yes. There was a tennis court. I think it had a double court. They were side by side. That was a clay court, and some of my tennis-playing friends admired that greatly, because a clay court is the cat's meow in tennis. Most commercial courts are paved with asphalt or something; 1142 had a set of two, I think it was [21:00], clay courts.

BB: Would you go into Washington for -- you know, for an evening or a night on the town, or go into Alexandria?

HK: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, Washington was a good place to go. There were movies and plays and other things. I think I told you about Leslie Wilson [21:26] and Mrs. [Mamie] Eisenhower [21:27]?

BB: You mentioned that, but why don't you recount that story. That would be great.

HK: Well, one particular day -- weekend we'd all gone to town, and Leslie Wilson [21:38] came home and said, "You'll never guess who gave me a ride home today," because we had to hitch rides. In those days, soldiers always got picked up. But anyway, "I thumbed a ride into town, and guess who picked me up? Mrs. Eisenhower." And everybody laughed [22:00] at him. "Tell me another one," was the general reaction. Well, he was very embarrassed, so he decided to write a letter. He wrote a letter, and the only address he had was General Eisenhower [22:12], Chief of Staff, the Pentagon [22:14]. He wrote a letter, and not really expecting to hear very much. Promptly, a day later, he got back a letter on the letterhead of the Chief of Staff, General Eisenhower [22:26], and he said, "Dear Sergeant Wilson [22:29], thank you very much for the letter." His letter said, "Please -- would you please -- my friends don't believe that you picked me up. Would you please confirm?" is what the letter said. Or, "Would you please ask Mrs. Eisenhower to confirm that she really picked me up?" That was his letter. And back came a letter on the letterhead of the Chief of Staff's office, and it said, "Dear Sergeant Wilson [22:58], Mamie is very busy, and [23:00] asked me to answer your letter. And, yes, indeed, it is she who picked you up. We always like to pick up servicemen going into town, and thank you very much for the appreciation." And he has that letter to this day. Must be worth some money.

[laughter]

And, of course, he brandished it all over the place. Yes, that was one of the highlights of 1142 [23:26].

BB: Did you ever receive any famous guests or dignitaries? I mean, did any generals or anyone come and visit or inspect the installation there?

HK: Not that I'm aware of. As I told you earlier, I did escort many generals when we had our maneuvers in Tennessee and Kentucky, but at 1142 [23:53], I'm sure there must have been generals coming, but they never permeated to my level [24:00].

BB: You mentioned when you had to go to Washington, you would usually hitch a ride?

HK: Hitching a ride was the preferred way. There was a bus service, but not very frequent. But you always had -- if you were in uniform and thumbed a ride, you got picked up, invariably, and there was a lot of traffic going between Mount Vernon and Washington, along the Potomac. There was never any problem to go to town or come home.

BB: Do you remember -- this is a very specific question, but you mentioned that you were going up and down the Potomac. Were you on the -- it was then known as the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Today, it's our park. It's the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Is that the road that you would go up and down?

HK: Yes, that was the road.

BB: Is that the road that you would use to enter? It was the main entrance to Fort Hunt [25:00], off of the Parkway?

HK: Yes, it was and still is.

BB: Right. Yes, it is. We're just trying to find out if that's where the entrance was during the war as well.

HK: It was, and when we hitched a ride, we said, "We'd like to go to Mount Vernon." But everybody knew it as Mount Vernon; it wasn't known so much as Fort Hunt [25:21]. Mount Vernon always told people where it was. Big tourist center it is to this day. I went there back once with Elizabeth, and she collected a whole bunch of seeds that they're selling. They sell seeds from Mount Washington's plantation in little bags.

Elizabeth is a great gardener, and she came home with a whole bunch of seeds. Many of them are growing around. Yeah.

BB: So you would go into the city. You said you would just go for movies [26:00] and that sort of thing. Did you ever go to the USOs [26:07] or anything? Were there USOs around?

HK: Yes, there were USOs all over the place. Yes, we went to some, but not that often. I'm not into popular dancing or music. There were a lot of good plays in town, and that was more -- and even later, when I was working for Advanced Research Projects Agency; what do they call that? APRA, DARPA and then ARPA. I had a contract with DARPA and ARPA, Howie Fair [spelled phonetically], who was then head of the operation [27:00]. I went into Washington quite often. We had meetings at a mansion which is south of Washington. I forget. It had its own landing strip. I'll think of it. We had our meetings there often. That was when DARPA net became Internet. Yes, DARPA net existed long before Internet. All military contractors were on DARPA net, so we could share results all over the country.

BB: So when you weren't going to the city and whatnot, you said you'd swim at the pool or play tennis at 1142 [27:48]. Would you -- what sort of socializing did you do at 1142 with your colleagues? Did you have a group of friends that were just [28:00] interrogators, or did you also do things with the MPs that were there?

HK: We rarely mixed with the MPs. However, us interrogators got together socially quite a lot.

BB: What sorts of things would you do when you were around with your friends? Just socializing, or did you do anything else?



HK: We might have gone to a movie together, if there was a good one in town. There was a hall along the Potomac River that is still there, I bet. It was a station in the canal system. It was a former foundry. It's a great big hall, and it's in Georgetown area, and we sometimes went there. It's a [29:00] historic monument and a restaurant at the same time. I'm sure it's still there.

BB: Really. I'm trying to think what that could be.

SS: It's called The Foundry [29:11]. I think it's called The Foundry.

HK: The Foundry, yes. That's it, The Foundry.

SS: I think it's still there.

HK: Yes. That was there at the time. We sometimes ate there, because it was a very historic building, a great big roof. Yes, that was one of the things I remember. They had a weatherman who came on every morning, and he has long since died, who used to give a weather report, and then he said to an assistant, "See what Arthur says." And the guy came back, "Arthur Mometer says" --

[laughter]

BB: Our thermometer says.

HK: It was his joke. Arthur was "our thermometer" in his southern drawl [30:00]. I remember that. Every morning on the news was Arthur.

BB: This was on the radio?

HK: On the radio, yes. Television hadn't been invented.

BB: Sure. Sure. I wanted to talk a little bit about what you remember, a little bit more about the physical setup of 1142 [30:23]. You're looking at me.

SS: I think while you're talking about the people that he worked with, did the interrogators

talk very much about the politics of what was happening during the war, or did they talk very much about work? Did you talk very much about work with --

HK: Yes, we did. We certainly did. We were all deeply immersed in what Germany was doing, and who was bombing Amsterdam. And things like the famous bridge in Hamburg, the U-boat pens in Hamburg was one of our big subjects. We got [31:00] aerial photographs. At that time, we were taking turns with the British. We were taking daytime photos, and they were taking nighttime photos. We took turns bombing, and each photo was a valuable input for the next day. That was one of our activities. I told you there was this business where the Germans had built a fake causeway, not causeway. A dock, docking area. That was the kind of information that went back and forth. Then we came up with the idea of strategic surgical bombing of the German war machine to disable the war machine instead of randomly bombing civilian towns. That idea came from our interrogators' group.

BB: At 1142 [31:58]?

HK: At 1142, yes.

BB: And so was there -- I'm trying to figure out what the relationship was between 1142 --  
(End of Tape 5A)

(Beginning of Tape 5B)

BB: Decisions weren't made at 1142 [00:03] of where to bomb, were they? You just provided the information to the Pentagon [00:07]?

HK: Yes.

BB: Or did you recommend bombing targets or anything like that?

HK: Well, sometimes we recommended bombing targets on the basis of pictures. We got

eight-by-10 photographs, aerial photographs. I don't know how they got them there that quickly. They must have flown them. Some of them still wet from being developed.

They came out of a Pentagon [00:31] office. We would analyze them and look at them and point out things that were happening that would be targets of opportunity.

SS: Was this in conjunction with the interrogations you were doing?

HK: Yes, very much so.

SS: So you would get a group of photographs. You would be analyzing them yourself?

HK: Yes.

SS: And then you would bring it [01:00] to one of the prisoners at 1142 [01:03]?

HK: Well, if we thought there was a prisoner who could help us to identify something. You know, a submarine captain would know where the submarine pens were around Bremerhoven or Bremen. It was that intimate. We got the photographs from the Pentagon [01:22], and everything went back to the Pentagon, where there was an Air Force officer and Army Air Corps officer. We didn't directly order the bombing, but it all went back very efficiently and very quickly.

SS: But would you have -- because I don't think we know necessarily how the prisoners were selected to be sent to 1142 [01:48]. Would there sometimes be a prisoner that would be sent to 1142 about a certain topic that you were analyzing? Or [02:00] you don't know?

HK: Well, yes.

SS: I may not be phrasing this right.

HK: Prisoners were sent sometimes for specific knowledge that we knew they must have. There were naval commanders, and there were Air Force officers who knew things. There were logistics experts who knew where munitions were reloaded from trains to

planes. We were interested in German tanks, for example. The Russians had these tanks that had the widest tread and the lowest footprint pressure of anything, and they could go through marshes, marshland, where neither Germans nor us could go. We were very interested in that. Of course, Russia was [03:00] on our side, but we didn't know much about their tanks. We found out a lot more about Russian tanks from German prisoners, funny as it may seem. That was one of the big topics.

BB: Do you remember some of the other topics, other things that you were -- any specific technologies or military technology that you learned about through interrogation?

HK: Yes. There was the recoilless 88mm antiaircraft gun the Germans had and they put on their tanks. They had them everywhere. It has a muzzle brake, so they could mount it on tanks too small for 88mm, and we learned about that from people. We had never captured an 88mm tank at that point, 88mm gun. But that's what they used for the antiaircraft gun [04:00]. So we learned about the muzzle brake at that time. I mean, nobody knew that. You know the muzzle brake?

BB: Yes, I do. But if you want to explain it, that'd be great.

HK: When a bullet comes out of the front of a gun normally, it just departs, and the gun, the barrel recoils. Momentum is being conserved. Impulse equals momentum; good physics. Well, the tank has to be heavy enough to take that recoil. So the size of a gun that a tank can carry, like for a Howitzer, depends on the size of a tank and the weight and the strength. . Our biggest tank was the M-7 Sherman tank, and the biggest muzzle it could take initially was 95mm. The Germans had small tanks [05:00] that had 88mm guns that didn't seem to buckle under the load, and we found out later that the way they do it is that in front of the barrel they have a ring that's attached to the barrel, and the bullet has a

copper sleeve on it. When the bullet comes out of the barrel, the copper sleeve is standing out, and as it goes through that ring, it is sheared off, and that imparts a forward momentum to the barrel. So the tank doesn't have to take the recoil of the barrel. In this way, you can mount a bigger and bigger-caliber weapon on a small tank, and the first ones the Germans built like that were the 88mm. Don't ask me why 88mm. But it was a very high-velocity projectile in a tapered barrel, so that it made very efficient use of [06:00] the explosive, and it made much more recoil than 88mm would have produced if it hadn't had that tapered barrel. But the muzzle brake neutralized a lot of the recoil.

BB: So that technology related to the muzzle brake was uncovered through interviews at 1142 [06:20]?

HK: Yes. That is correct. Right.

BB: Any other technologies come to mind?

HK: That got revealed that way?

BB: Yes, that sort of thing.

HK: Well, the design of the Siegfried Line in bunkers, because we were preparing to invade Germany through the Siegfried Line, coming from the Anzio beachhead with Patton's [06:52] 7th Army. The design of how thick are the [07:00] windows on the bunkers, for instance, and how are they protected from the top? Can you destroy them from the top somehow? The specific design, and the dragon's teeth, which are concrete piles connected four together underground, they were stopping a tank. How are they designed, and how strong are they, and how can we destroy them? That's typical of the kind of information we got from German tankers, who were mostly perfectly willing to talk. On the basis of that, we developed what we called the snake, which I had already made

acquaintance with earlier, when I was in the Corps of Engineers [07:53]. That was typical. Other technology? [08:00] Yes. One of the things that people were interested in was German submarine magnetic amplifiers that didn't use radio tubes, that could withstand a depth charge, was one of the technologies that we researched. The Germans had developed the know-how for amplifiers -- no, we didn't have transistors yet. We had vacuum tubes, and vacuum tubes are notoriously sensitive to microphonics. A depth charge would put them out of commission. The Germans had developed a system of amplification based on magnetics, magnetic amplifiers, and that was a very hard technology. It's one of the things that came out of it. There were specific prisoners who could shed light on that kind of thing [09:00]. And, of course, radar. Did the Germans have any -- were they anywhere near developing radar, was one of the hard questions. And as I told you, we found out why. Because they didn't trust the only guy who could have led them along the right path. Yes, the Germans at that time knew the British had something like radar, because the British were able to predict arrival of planes. They had fighter planes in the air before the Germans arrived, and they knew there was something funny going on. They didn't know radar as such.

SS: So is it fair to say, just sort of in summary, that there were significant topics being discovered, or items being discovered at 1142 [10:00] that had direct application to the war?

HK: Well, the muzzle brake is one of them. Magnetic amplifiers. I just mentioned two. Were there anymore? Well, there was --

SS: You were doing big things, I guess. I'm sorry to interrupt, but basically this was important information that was being found at 1142. For someone who's not technically

oriented, the process of the war was being affected by what you were doing at Fort Hunt [10:41], do you think?

HK: Well, the most important thing being the strategic bombing of the German war machine. The fact that all ball bearings came from Schweinfurt [10:52], for instance, that was a very important piece of information. The fact that [11:00] freight trains and trucks were inter-loaded on railroad cars instead of the big railroad stations, which were favorite targets. One of the most important things, of course, was the dams on the River Rhine and the Ruhr. Their entire power plants depended on power from the Ruhr Valley. There's a film about that story on PBS which is very informative. I was involved in planning that. I didn't realize what a technical challenge it was, because it was a need-to-know business. I knew that 13 Lancaster bombers were dispatched to destroy the dams, and that they had to fly at a precise altitude in a precise direction underneath the German anti-aircraft fire in order for the dams to blow up. These dams were 16-, 14-foot thick [12:00], and to destroy them like that with a bomb takes some technology. That's all been recorded in a historic documentary film. I was involved in planning that attack, although I didn't know the technical details. But learning where the Ruhr dams were, and which ones were the ones that produced the power, and where it went afterwards, and where the substations were that distributed the power, that kind of geographic information was an important thing that came out of P.O. Box [12:37]. The Schlimmer [spelled phonetically] industries, the rolling mills that produced gun barrels and tank armor, for instance. Schlimmer, yes. One of the Schlimmer relatives came to this country, and I've been in touch with him [13:00]. Schlimmer to this day is the biggest rolling mill in the world, and hydraulic metal clay, they've switched to that now. Again,

industry.

BB: What do you remember at 1142 [13:33] about the organization of everything that went on there? Do you remember their being different sections that studied different subjects or had different roles?

HK: Not really, no. There were individual prisoners and individual interrogators, aside from me, that had their own assignments [14:00]. And there were the spies, like Rolf Arndt [14:03] and like Hilger [14:05]. Two-way spying was much in demand and appreciated. But to answer the question about what specific technology, I ran a translation service at MIT that dealt with all of the German naval documents that we wanted and hadn't translated yet. Prominent among those things were damage control in Navy ships, destroyers, and battleships, fire-extinguishing things, that kind of thing. The Germans were great at fire fighting. We learned a lot about that. But that was after P.O. Box [15:00], mostly. Sonar, the Germans did have a form of sonar. It was rather primitive. But we learned about how sensitive and all that kind of thing.

BB: But in terms of the organization of 1142 and different -- do you remember there being different groups that were assigned to different tasks, whether it was a group assigned for gathering information or maybe another group? I mean, were there folks at 1142 [15:47] who were not working directly with prisoners, but were working on other --

HK: Well, there were the monitors who recorded everything. There was the hotel personnel [16:00] that took care of the kitchens and things, service personnel. There was a quartermaster department that took care of uniforms and clothes and towels and sheets. There wasn't much ordnance, because there wasn't any shooting going on, no rifle ranges or anything.



BB: There's -- some of the documentation we've looked at and some of the people we spoke with have mentioned other sections like a documents or documentation and mapping section, so a whole group of soldiers who didn't deal so much directly with prisoners as they did looking at capturing documents.

HK: There was a bunch of people who brought us the photographs that came over somehow. They were flown over or -- they didn't have Internet imaging technology yet. But we got eight-by-10 photographs taken the night before [17:00], some of them still moist from developing. There was a group that took care of those graphics that we dealt with, and some of them we got friendly with. They were all photo buffs, for the most part. They handled all the visual things, maps and things.

BB: Do you remember anything about -- there was another program. I think we mentioned this just a little bit yesterday. There was another program at 1142 which was not an interrogation program, but it was a program that worked with American prisoners of war [17:45] and sending the secret messages back and forth, that had lots of crypto-analysts and cryptographers and people making special care packages with hidden radios and compasses and clothes. Do you remember [18:00] hearing anything about that while you were there?

HK: Yes. There were people in Germany who had illegal shortwave radios, strictly forbidden it would've been, who sent information that we got, that got transmitted to us. You know, "We hear from a frau in Germany that such-and-such happened." Moles, we called them, that worked with [unintelligible]. A lot of information came that way.

BB: You had mentioned yesterday that you had a friend there, I think his name was Buck [18:48].

HK: Buck, yes.

BB: And his wife would come and swim in the pool sometimes.

HK: Yes, that's right.

BB: You said he worked as a cryptographer or crypto-analyst?

HK: That was his job. He wasn't based at 1142.

BB: Oh, he wasn't [19:00]. Okay. Right, right.

HK: He was based in the Pentagon [19:03], but he came to 1142 [19:07] to help with deciphering things and so forth, and his wife happened to come along. She was also employed by the government in a similar capacity; I forget just how. But, yes, she came to the base with him, and she liked to go swimming. I told you, yes. I don't remember her name. See if I can remember. Yes, but Buck [19:36] was a cryptologist, crypto-analyst. Well, he was very heavily into cryptography. I talked to him about the probability of hitting a code with two letters and three letters and four letters. He was very much intellectual. He was a math major who specialized in that.

SS: Was he an officer, do you remember [20:00]?

HK: I think he was a civilian. He came in civilian clothes. My guess is he was a warrant officer.

BB: Right. Okay, we did talk about that. Going through chronologically again, we had discussed earlier -- so you had been at 1142 for a while. Then you went up to Boston. Then you came back to 1142 when they shut down the Boston facility. At what point were you mustered out of the military? At what point did your military service end?

HK: March '45, I guess it must have been. Yes, March '45.

BB: Would it be '46? Because the war was still going on in '45, in March of '45.

HK: When was V-E Day [20:58]?

BB: The war ended in May of [21:00] '45.

HK: Yes. When I got out, the war had just ended. My guess is I got out in June '45. I seem to remember March '45, but that may be just when I was officially decommissioned or whatever. I don't remember exactly, but that's pretty close. Because I know I entered MIT as a freshman in '46, so in September '46 I was at MIT. And earlier that year, I was taking college entrance exams and brushing up on my high school math and all that. It wasn't easy, after you'd been out of high school for four years or so, to get back into it. That was a monumental effort. Just the fact that I got accepted was a miracle. I mean, MIT doesn't accept many people out of 1,000.

BB: Well, it sounds like you had [22:00] a few years of pretty phenomenal training, though, in the military, speaking with all of these brilliant scientists.

HK: Yes, I was really up on science. I read "Scientific American and Physics." Yes, I was up to date. But I got discharged officially in early '45. Then for a while I was employed, till I went actually to MIT. I was physically employed at 1142 [22:35] as a civilian.

BB: As a civilian. And what was your role during that time? Did you have the same job that you'd had before?

HK: I was what they then started calling an analyst.

BB: Okay. Do you remember what you were analyzing?

HK: I remember there was a guy, a captain whose name I forget, who was after my job [23:00]. He bugged me, and I was interviewing people. I had an office set up for interviewing people when I was there, and who did I interview? Veterans, American veterans, about things they remembered.

BB: About intelligence?

HK: About intelligence.

BB: Really.

HK: Yes. At the time, we were starting to look at the Russian military machine and so forth. I remember this captain who was after my job. He would have loved to see me fired and have the job I had, because I had a good high-paying, well-paying job. I remember. I had a fan on the wall, and I knew that the bug was above the ceiling tile at that wall, and I took the fan and I bent the shaft. I just took off the propeller blade and hit the shaft so it was bent. Then I put the propeller [24:00] back on, and the fan made a loud humming sound. I put it back on the wall, and I knew that he couldn't bug me, because the fan over-drowned whatever was spoken.

[laughter]

That kind of game-playing. And I knew that had worked successfully, because he promptly started showing up in my office and wanted to hear what I was saying, and I just showed him the door.

BB: So this was an officer who you think wanted your job as an analyst?

HK: Oh, very clearly, yes. There was a limited budget, you know, the type of organization that they have, and he was waiting in line for that job, and I had the job. I was an insider, and I inherited the job from my standing. Yes, I remember that.

BB: Do you -- were there others that were there also working as civilians?

HK: Yes, but nobody from P.O. Box [25:00] that I remember. There were people from the Pentagon [25:03] who were working there.

BB: So other folks that you'd been there with, like your friends Arno Mayer [25:11], Leslie

Wilson [25:12], others, you don't recall them working there as a civilian?

HK: No. I remember my younger brother had joined the Army a couple of years behind me, and I got him assigned to an intelligence job at Fort Sill [25:38]. Fort Sill had an operation. They were basically an artillery camp, but they also had an intelligence operation, and they needed somebody with inside information and language skill, and I got him that job by just asking one of my friends to contact Fort Sill and offer him a job, and send the résumé and so forth [26:00]. I remember that. I was a pretty high-up person by that time. I was all of 22 or something, but that's what the Army was made up of. Yes, so I got my brother a job and I wrote him a -- Captain Cohen [26:20], I think was his name, C-O-H-E-N. Similar to that; something like that. He was -- I remember, he was a tall fellow, and he was a real scheming kind of a guy.

BB: So you said you think his name was Cohen [26:41]?

HK: I think his -- I'm not sure about that. I just seem to remember. It was something similar.

BB: But you thought he was a captain?

HK: It was a good Jewish name.

BB: Was it K-O-H-N?

HK: No, it was C. I don't really quite remember [27:00]. It wasn't K, no. My best guess is Cohen [27:04].

BB: Okay, Cohen [27:06], okay. And he also had been an interrogator or something?

HK: He wasn't at P.O. Box. He came from the Pentagon [27:16], from an independent career. He just thought P.O. Box was a good place to start working.

BB: Got you.

HK: It was a very desirable place at the time. It was out in the country and good parking and

good living. It was a nice place to work. He just wanted my job. He wasn't a dumb guy. He was -- don't quote me on his name; I'm not sure.

BB: Sure, sure.

HK: We talked a lot. He wanted to find out what my job really consisted of, and what information I was looking for, and who I was talking to. He wanted to be able to say, "I know [28:00] his job and I want it." What happened when I finally went to MIT, I don't know.

BB: So maybe he got your job.

HK: He might have gotten my job, and they might have abolished it. I don't know. But I do remember that much of my civilian service to P.O. Box [28:17].

BB: While you were a civilian at 1142, were you still living on base, or were you living off base somewhere?

HK: I was living off base at that point. Yes, I was living off base. I had my first car, and I drove to base. I forget how I got there, but I was not living on base at that point. I went there every morning, and I had the run of the place, and I still went swimming there.

BB: So again you were working as an analyst, talking to folks still about intelligence, and you mentioned lots of American [29:00] veterans who had been involved in the war?

HK: Yes. The focus was on Russia, the Soviet Union at that time. Yes, the Cold War was beginning. The focus was Russia, the Soviet Union.

BB: Were you ever recruited or requested to stay in the military? Did they ever try to keep you in the military or keep you in intelligence?

HK: Yes, they -- "Do you really want to quit?" Yes, they did. I did good work, and they appreciated it, and, yes, they did. I was invited to stay. But I said I had been accepted at

MIT, and I really thought --

BB: Were you ever explicitly approached by the CIA [29:53] to work for them, since they were just beginning to be formed?

HK: It hadn't been invented yet.

BB: Right. They weren't -- didn't [30:00] come around till '47. But were you ever approached in your later life because of your experience at 1142 [30:08]?

HK: No. Oh, yes, we had a CIA come. When I ran my company, EML, in Cambridge, we had contact with the CIA [30:24]. They came and looked at our security once in a while, and they asked whether we have had any information about so-and-so. We had Russian visitors. At the time, there was an interchange program between the Russian Academy in the U.S., and we had Russian academicians visit us to study things like electromagnetic launchers, in exchange. Superconductivity was a hot item, and there was a CIA [30:54] agent, who didn't call himself CIA, he was strictly undercover, who came and talked to me [31:00] periodically about what's the latest news that I had, and so forth, because they had two members of the Russian Academy of Sciences staying with us, who were very interesting, two of them. I took two of them to our town meetings. We showed them how our government works, as non-voting members of the town meeting, during a vote. It was funny. They came out here, and they liked to chop wood. They admired America greatly, but as soon as they went back to Russia, silence. They couldn't send even a postcard. But the CIA [31:40]. [laughs] And they were mugged once. They lived on the Boston side and worked at MIT during the day, and on their way walking home they were held up and mugged and robbed. And, of course, immediately I called my CIA contact, and they moved heaven and earth to catch the guys [32:00]. It was a bunch of

MIT students, I think. I'm not sure.

BB: Jeez.

HK: They're walking across the bridge and a car stopped, and they grabbed the two and pulled them into their car, and took their briefcase and whatever.

(End of Tape 5B)

(Beginning of Tape 6A)

BB: -- my address. All right, one more introduction. Today is May 8, 2007. This is the Fort Hunt Oral History Project. This is Brandon Bies, Park Service -- National Park Service historian, as well as National Park Service Oral History Project team member Sam Swersky. We are here interviewing Dr. Henry Kolm at his home outside of Boston, Massachusetts, about his experiences at P.O. Box 1142. This is the second day of interviews and is our sixth cassette tape that we've made. So with that, I'd like to shift gears a little bit from what we were talking about and talk a little bit more about the specifics, what you remember about the fort itself and how it was set up and what the buildings were like, because as I said initially, almost everything was bulldozed [01:00] right after the war. We have a couple of pictures and a couple of maps, but nothing real specific. So any clues you can provide about what buildings might have looked like or where they were is extremely helpful for us in any future interpretation that we want to do. If the Park Service wants to put up markers saying, "This was located here," or "This used to look like this," that could be very helpful. So I just want to ask you a few questions about what you remember things looking like, and even show you maybe some photographs that we've come across, to see if that brings back any memories or anything.

HK: Well, unfortunately, most of the buildings were really temporary, you know, thrown up



during the war. The only thing I can remember is there were three rows of BOQs, bachelor officer quarters, which had individual [02:00] rooms and a raised porch outside. You walked along the porch, and there was a door for each of the rooms. They were very standard, made all over during the war. They were prefabbed. The only permanent buildings are ones that date from the Civil War, the gun emplacements and the munitions gunpowder storage rooms. The one permanent building that was put up for the purpose was the sunken monitoring center where they bugged all the business, which was mostly underground with just an exposed roof. And I would guess that that's still there.

BB: You said you went in that a couple of times?

HK: I went into that quite frequently.

BB: Okay, because I think you mentioned, is that where you -- if you had [03:00] conducted an interrogation, you said you'd go and play back and listen to parts of it?

HK: Yes, very often, almost daily.

BB: Do you remember how you entered it? If it was almost sunken in the ground, do you remember how you -- was there -- did you come in through the roof or something, or was there a door?

HK: No, no, there was a little down stair, like what you'd call a basement entrance. You walked down a few steps and opened the door. No roof. And there was a modern building inside. It had a bathroom and overhead lights.

BB: Was it camouflaged in any way from the outside?

HK: Well, only in the sense that it was sunken below the skyline, and it was surrounded by trees and bushes.

BB: So you said there were trees and bushes planted around?

HK: Yes.

BB: Do you [04:00] remember about how large the monitoring building was? I don't know if you can even compare it to, like, the room we're in right now.

HK: The room we're in right now is about 42 by 30. It was bigger than that. My guess is it was about 100 feet long, or close to it, and probably about 18 feet wide. That's my best guess.

BB: So kind of a long, narrow building?

HK: Long, narrow building and there were desks down the middle, with people sitting on both side, and a partition down the middle, so it was divided into little booths. They didn't yet have portable walls, but that was the way it was made. So each monitor had his own little cubicle and a chair, and we could go and sit down and listen. And they used red vinyl, transparent vinyl [05:00] records.

BB: In terms of where the prisoners were kept, we had said before that there were cottages where some of the prisoners with more freedoms were kept. Some of the either higher-ranking or the scientific folks would have been in these cottages?

HK: Yes. Then there was a stockade with a barracks in the middle, for enlisted men prisoners.

BB: So with these cottages, you'd said before that there were two prisoners per cottage?

HK: Yes, unless one was unoccupied. There were two per cottage, with doors on opposite sides.

BB: So they each had their own entrance?

HK: Yes.

BB: And then there was a central, or like a shared kitchen?

HK: They went to a little mess hall for kitchen. The huts were served by -- no, they were

brought [06:00] food by people from the kitchen unit, who delivered the food to the huts, unless they had a meeting in the central room. But mostly, the food was delivered to the people in the huts.

BB: Can you remember where the huts were located? Were they in the center of the camp, or were they off to the side? Were they obvious, or were they in a remote location?

HK: They were obvious and they were in the center of the camp. They sort of occupied the biggest space in the camp. It was wooded. They didn't clear the woods. It was like a mom-and-pop motel, that idea. And the huts were not particularly lined up in a row; they were scattered and oriented different ways. They were scattered. They were all alike. They were identical. They were prefabbed.

BB: Did you get the impression they were built [07:00] for that purpose, for 1142 [07:03]?

HK: Yes.

BB: As opposed to, you know, they were built -- you know, they weren't from a long time ago. They were built new for that purpose.

HK: No, no, they were built for that purpose. Yes, definitely.

SS: Any idea how many there were? I mean just a ballpark figure.

HK: I'll make a rough guess. My rough guess is that there were 30.

BB: Really? Wow. Okay. Wow. And so they each could have housed two people.

HK: Yes.

BB: So at any given time, you could have had as many as around 60 or so people in these cottages.

HK: That's a pretty close guess. They all had electric light. There were overhead wires.

BB: Overhead wires were running to the cottages?

HK: Yes.

BB: Were they just wood-framed, though?

HK: They were wood frames, with windows and novelty siding, as I recall [08:00].

SS: Okay. Were they bugged?

HK: They were all bugged. Always, every one of them, with bugs outside too.

BB: In terms of the other prisoners, the stockade, you described that as being kind of a central -- presumably a big fence around the outside.

HK: Yes.

BB: Do you remember anything about the fence, if it was barbed-wire, or just a high-wire fence, or what it was?

HK: It was a chain-link fence with a barbed wire on top, sticking up, which was almost a standard kind of a fence they used around prisons. It was about eight feet or more high.

BB: And then it was -- well, I should -- was it a large barracks [09:00], sort of a prisoner barracks in the middle?

HK: Yes. The barracks ran down the middle of that stockade, as we called it. The barracks was pretty long. I think it could hold more than 100 prisoners. It was pretty big, but it was not a permanent building; it was [unintelligible].

BB: Were there any other facilities inside the stockade, any other offices or interrogation rooms or anything else inside?

HK: Bathrooms, but that's all.

BB: Do you remember if there were multiple stockades; if there was more than one stockade, you know, a barracks-prisoner compound. Were there two, or just the one [10:00]?

HK: There was just one, and it was fenced. There was one gate, and the gate was double-

sided because we could drive a Jeep in.

BB: Into the compound?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. By double-sided, so there were actually two gates? You'd open one, drive it in, then close it, and open the next one?

HK: Yes, right. Because they drove in lawn mowers and things to take care of the inside.

Every once in a while, they'd deliver them a toilet or whatever. It was trucks to deliver inside. And there were some picnic benches around.

BB: Inside the stockade?

HK: Inside the stockade.

BB: And the prisoners, were they free to roam in the outside yard area?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. What about how they were guarded? Do you remember guard towers [11:00]?

HK: There was no tower. There were just MPs at the gate, around the clock.

BB: And the MPs were armed?

HK: Yes. Standard-size arms, probably a Colt .45.

BB: Do you remember where the MPs lived? We asked before. You said you didn't think that they lived with you. They lived somewhere --

HK: They didn't live in the BOQ. They had a barracks of their own somewhere else. That would have been on the north side, and I don't quite remember. That would have been a standard barracks. All these barracks were standard. They had them at every Army camp in the whole country. They were prefabricated. They could hitch them together and make them as long as necessary. Yes, the MPs and other personnel had their own

barracks elsewhere on the compound, and there was a central building. I didn't [12:00] have much dealings with that building, but that's where they did the accounting and payroll office and all that kind of thing.

BB: So sort of an administrative post building?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. Could you describe your BOQ a little bit more? You said there were multiple soldiers who lived inside there?

HK: Yes. It was a standard BOQ. The standard BOQ is a building that's up on stilts off the ground, maybe four feet up. It has a porch running around each side of the building, with a stair on each end of the porch, and off of that porch are the individual doors, which means when you come out of your room, you're outdoors. The roof hangs over enough to keep the door dry. BOQs like that were built on every single Army camp that had officers.

SS: What was your rank?

HK: I was a staff sergeant [13:00], officially. But as I told you, I wore officer's uniforms most of the time. Some of us were warrant officers. A warrant officer is an officer who is not commissioned. He is appointed by a warrant that can be issued in the field. I don't know whether it still exists, but it's used for technicians, for technical people mostly.

BB: Okay. Your BOQs, did you have dining -- you didn't have dining facilities in them, did you?

HK: Not in the BOQs. We had a mess hall.

BB: Can you describe what the mess hall was like and how the food was?

HK: The mess hall, again, was like a standard, prefabricated company mess hall that existed

all over, seats -- a company is four platoons, and each platoon has 12 times four, 48 people in it, so call it 50 [14:00]. There were a few extra ones, and 200 people. That was the mess hall.

BB: How was the food?

HK: First-class. Very good.

BB: Do you remember who was doing -- did they have cooks?

HK: Yes.

BB: Do you remember who was doing the cooking?

HK: They had a whole staff of kitchen personnel, and the soldiers pulled KP duty the way they do in the Army.

BB: Did you have to pull KP duty?

HK: No. We had coffee for 24 hours a day. Mess halls generally are open all day and all night, and they have a big coffee urn with a level glass up the side, standard Army coffee. People complain about Army coffee, tastes like iodine. [laughs] Doesn't really. But anyway, there was a Coffee Institute or whatever it is [15:00] sent around a crew one time to all the Army camps, in an effort to convince soldiers that the coffee they were getting was top-quality. It was just the fact that they never cleaned out the coffee machines. So the coffee crew came into camps, and I've seen them in other places I've been. They came to our P.O. Box [15:19] too. They would take the coffee machine, empty it out, and scrub it out with detergent and chlorine and whatever they did, and then they'd make fresh coffee with that machine, and they'd invite all the soldiers in to come and taste the coffee. And the coffee was first-rate, excellent. "That coffee is exactly the same coffee that you get delivered. The only difference is that we cleaned the machine."

[laughter]

BB: What about other facts about 1142 [16:00], like the parade ground? Was there a kind of an open parade ground?

HK: Yes, there was a parade ground because we had parade training and gymnastics. There was a parade ground, or what you'd call a training ground.

BB: Did you have inspections?

HK: Not the BOQs. They undoubtedly had inspection in the barracks.

BB: But in terms of, if you're on the parade ground, would they walk down the line and inspect you or anything?

HK: Not us, but the MPs and enlisted men did. We interrogators were treated like officers, whether or not we were officers. Living in BOQs itself was, you know, different.

BB: Was there a -- did you have to get up every morning and salute the flag [17:00]? Did they play reveille and taps and that sort of thing?

HK: They played reveille and taps, and the reveille means "Come eat breakfast." And, of course, when they lower the flag, you salute. Everybody does, no matter where you are, but it wasn't in formation like you are in basic training. Yes, they blew reveille and retreat, yes.

BB: Do you remember, was the entire post surrounded by a fence?

HK: I don't think so.

[phone rings]

HK: So many serious calls, they can leave -- there's an answering machine in the study if they don't -- this happens all the time. I get this one little call and nobody on the line. You know, I don't know whether it's the wrong number or a computer controlled -- but



anyway, [unintelligible], and it happens [18:00].

BB: Happened about the same times yesterday.

HK: Yeah.

BB: So yeah, I was asking if there was a fence all the way around, you know, or a way to keep people from getting onto the post.

HK: There must have been. There must have been because we entered through a gate. Yes, I'm sure the fence went all around on the river side too. The gun emplacements along the river were inside the fence, so Fort Hunt [18:34] was fenced.

BB: They were inside the fence, okay. Do you remember, could you see the river from the post?

HK: Yes.

BB: Was the post itself wooded a great deal or was it just --

HK: Yes, it was wooded. It was quite heavily wooded beyond the camp.

BB: Were there trees within the perimeter as well?

HK: Yes [19:00], yes. There were trees among all those little outside huts.

BB: Okay. So the huts were amongst the trees, then.

HK: Among the trees, yes. They had a clearing for each hut, with trees in between.

BB: Okay. You mentioned before that there was a swimming pool that you liked to use?

HK: Yes. It might have been part of the lake, but there was a swimming pool with a boardwalk around it, and I don't know whether it was a lake or an actual pool, built pool.

BB: I want to take a few minutes, then, to maybe show you some maps and some other photos that we've acquired over time, and see if they ring any bells for you and if you can help us understand what some of them are and that sort of thing.

HK: Of course. Of course. I'm sorry that my geographic memory about the location of things isn't all [20:00] that good.

BB: No, that's perfectly understandable.

HK: It may come back.

BB: Yep. Let's see. This well predates your time. This is a postcard made in 1906, so 40 years earlier. But looking in this photograph -- and again, a lot of these buildings may not have been there when you were there, because this is a long time before that -- the parade ground would have been to the left, and the mess hall would have been up here, the swimming pool and all of these posts; these would have been, I think, some of the administrative buildings and whatnot here. So I don't know if this looks remotely familiar, but again, this was taken 40 years before you got there.

HK: No, it doesn't look familiar.

BB: Okay. This is [21:00] an aerial photograph, taken about 20 years before. This was taken in 1923 or so. This is the large gun battery right here. Yeah, there are a couple of smaller batteries here and here. So again, the entrance would have been in here, and then you would have come in and this would have been the parade ground.

HK: And this would have been the bunker, the powder storage.

BB: Yes, exactly. That would have been one of the gun batteries. So I don't know if that -- if these were the underground bunkers here. I don't know if that looks remotely familiar to you or not.

HK: This looks familiar, this whole compound and the road, the driveway going downhill and coming up the other side. This little building doesn't look familiar. As I recall it, there were these roads. They went down one side and up the other side [22:00], and you could

drive all the way through. So my guess is, this was taken away, but this was all left.

BB: It's interesting, because this is no longer there today either. This is still here, but that little building, the roof's gone. There's a little bit left, but not much is there. And, of course, here's the river right here.

HK: Yes.

BB: So, again, this would have been -- and I realize it's difficult. But you're saying, from what you said earlier, you think that some of those cottages might have been over in this area closer to the river?

HK: Yes.

BB: You came in here. So, again, this would have probably been taken right over where you thought maybe the BOQs were, looking back this way.

HK: Yes. Right. Yes. The little huts were beyond this on the slope going down to the river. That was wooded. Here's it's cleared. But it would have been young groves [23:00]. That's my recollection.

[inaudible commentary]

BB: Okay, so that, we were just going over -- I -- yes, that's -- the next one, that's just a photo of one of these -- you know, they referred to as the windowless buses, where I guess they would take prisoners back and forth.

HK: Yeah. That's still there?

BB: No, no, that's not there anymore. It would be great if it was.

HK: Looks like the right vintage.

BB: But does that look familiar to what you know?

HK: Yes, it does.

BB: This is a picture of one of the prisoner compounds that was there, which was apparently one of the more recent ones. We think there were actually [24:00] two prisoner stockades there, one that was original and one that was built a little bit later, in 1944. It was this long kind of cross -- this cross design, with a guard tower in the middle. In this, it's kind of bleeding out, but this is the open yard area right out here.

HK: Yes, that looks familiar. I don't remember the guard tower, but that was on the other side of the wall. Yes, and here's the stake that's holding the fence.

BB: Okay. This next one shows -- it's a different one, a little bit -- this shows -- again, here's the fence going around one of the guard towers in the corner and then kind of the open yard areas. In fact, here I think there there's even a pull-up bar or something like that, for doing exercises [25:00].

HK: And the date was sometime -- yes, that looks -- and the barbed-wire fence. I don't remember the guard tower, but I might not have noticed much. Yes, that looks more like what I remember.

BB: This is a photo that another veteran had given us of just some of the soldiers out on the parade ground, being inspected. I don't know that anyone will look too familiar to you.

HK: Yes, that would look like the permanent enlisted man's contingent that included the cooks and the bakers and MPs and other things.

BB: All right. Well, I'll show you some pictures [26:00] of other people that you might -- perhaps you'll recognize, just getting more in terms of people. This was apparently taken at 1142 [26:15].

HK: Leslie Wilson [26:15]?

BB: Oh, is that Leslie Wilson? Are they -- yeah, if you could identify as many people in that

photo as possible, that would be great.

HK: That's Rolf Arndt [26:23].

BB: Oh, really?

HK: Yes. That I'm positive of. What's his name, the lawyer?

BB: Peter Weiss [26:54]?

HK: Peter Weiss.

BB: That's Peter Weiss right there [27:00], standing there.

HK: It could be. This is Rolf Arndt [27:05]; that I'm sure.

BB: Really.

HK: Yes.

BB: And this is George Mandel [27:15]. That's who gave us this photo. That's George Mandel.

HK: This is Arno Mayer [27:22].

BB: Okay, that's who we thought it was.

HK: Okay, those two I'm absolutely positive of, and Leslie Wilson [27:31], positive of.

BB: So that's Leslie Wilson there?

HK: I think so, yes. Yes. Well, let's say to the best of my recollection, that's Leslie Wilson [27:51]. This is definitely Arno Mayer [27:53] and this is definitely Rolf Arndt [27:54], or whatever name he went that day. He had multiple names [28:00], but this is definitely him. You say --

BB: Yes. That's definitely George Mandel [28:20]. And I believe that's Peter Weiss [28:23]. I think we've even sent this to Peter, and he's verified that that was him. This is Erich Kramer [28:30], who I mentioned to you the other day --

HK: Yes, right.

BB: -- who ended up being a pharmacist after the war. We thought that was Arno, and then wasn't sure if -- I haven't met Leslie Wilson [28:43] yet -- if that was Leslie, or if that was Leslie.

HK: Yes, that's Leslie. But positive, absolutely positive about those two. No question [29:00].

BB: Wow. Well, fantastic. That's great. But none of these other folks, some of the other younger ones, like this gentleman and this gentleman, they don't ring any bells?

HK: This rings a bell, but I can't --

BB: Unfortunately, his eyes are closed.

HK: He was one of the base officers. I don't think he was among the interrogators, somehow. Grass [29:38] isn't here. I would recognize him, I think.

BB: All right. Well, now we have a lot of people to look at. This was [30:00] apparently taken sometime around the winter of 1945, December of '45 or so. And I don't know if you would've been -- you may have been in Boston when this was taken.

HK: No. Nobody looks familiar here. Well, of course, it's very small.

BB: Okay. Sure [31:00].

HK: But in my study I have a magnifying glass with a light on it. It might be a little more helpful. No, I don't recognize anybody here.

BB: Okay.

HK: I bet I -- again, I can look at it on the magnifier if you want.

BB: Sure, that's fine. What I'll switch to now is a list of names. I hope this isn't coming across -- seeming like it's a quiz or something that you're being graded on, but this is

[32:00] this roster of lots and lots of names, and in your case, it may be best to flip almost to the end because that's when -- this is done by date, and there is a number of names -- in fact --

(End of Tape 6A)

(Beginning of Tape 6B)

BB: Herbert Hirsch [00:02] sounds familiar?

HK: Yes. Hirsch [00:09], German for "sky." I remember that name. All the names around my name sound familiar. Yes, the names around me sound familiar. Certainly Hirsch [00:37] sounds familiar. [Robert W.] Lowe [00:39] sounds familiar; Peter Weiss [00:41], of course; Kramer [00:44]; [Joseph] Newmann [spelled phonetically] [00:45].

BB: That's George Mandel [00:48]. He went by his middle name.

HK: Yes, he went by H. George. He always liked that. Yes. Mayer.

BB: That's actually Arno Mayer [01:00].

HK: Arno Mayer, yes. Let's see this. [Ernst] Salomon [01:07] sounds familiar. George [J.] Jacobs [01:11] sounds familiar. Bernhard Oberlaender [01:21] sounds familiar. [unintelligible] is Japanese.

BB: Yes. And then, see, then suddenly there are Japanese names at the end. That's why I was asking you if you remembered any Japanese Americans who might have been there.

HK: No, I don't. But I know that the war shifted to Japan, of course. When Germany surrendered, Japan wasn't yet. [unintelligible], yeah.

BB: And then some of the names before yours as well, I don't know if you recognize any of them either [02:00]. Again, they would have been there about the same time that you were there.

HK: No, don't sound familiar.

BB: Okay. Well, that list is yours to keep, and if you think of anything about any of those folks --

HK: In those days, they made carbon paper copies and that's why it's all coming apart.

SS: People just remember different things, I think.

HK: But I hope I have contributed something.

[laughter]

SS: I think so [03:00].

[inaudible commentary]

BB: Now, that picture, don't try to recognize anyone, because it was taken in about 1905.

HK: Yeah, [unintelligible].

BB: Probably won't. At this point, you know, we've talked about most everything that we wanted to chat about, and just wanted to go back and rehash a few other details and things, just squeeze every last bit of information out of you as possible, and that sort of thing. But one thing is, chronologically, again, you mentioned that you were at 1142 [03:49] as a civilian, and then you ended up going to MIT in September of '46. Okay. I might have been incorrect [04:00]; did you mention yesterday that you went to Europe as a civilian, while you were working at 1142?

HK: Yes.

BB: Okay. What role did you have there? What was that for?

HK: It was in connection with my military contract, developing electro [unintelligible] technology and working for DARPA. I went over in a MATS airplane. MATS was Military Air Transport System. They ran airplanes to Europe. As a contractor, I had



access to going over on MATS and went over several times to meetings that DARPA wanted me to go to. I was a contractor to DARPA at that time.

BB: Okay. Was this when you were still associated with 1142[05:00], or was this later?

HK: Later.

BB: Later, okay, okay, so this didn't have anything to do with Fort -- this was just after you --

HK: It was after MIT, or during MIT. It was after MIT, for the most part.

BB: Okay. Sure. Okay. Got you.

SS: When was your first time back to Europe after the war?

HK: Let's see. Margie [spelled phonetically] was born in '57. That wasn't the first time. [unintelligible] My guess is it was around '50, '54, or '55.

SS: About 10 years after the war?

HK: Yes.

SS: Did you go back to -- did you see the places where you lived?

HK: I went back -- well, for the first time, I ran a conference [06:00] in Italy, in Auster [spelled phonetically]. Do you know where Auster is? It's on the Italian side of the Brenner Pass and Mont Blanc. There's a tunnel through Mont Blanc. We had an international conference, a NATO conference. NATO ran conferences and I was considered an expert in superconductivity, and I chaired a local conference in the Auster Valley, on the Italian side of the Brenner Pass and Mont Blanc, and so forth. I think that was probably the first time back to Europe after the war. Well, not the first time. My memory is hazy. I was invited by [07:00] Siemens for a while, consulted for them on superconductivity and levitated transportation systems. That was in the Nuremberg [07:12] area.

BB: Did you ever revisit your actual home, your original childhood home in Vienna?

HK: Yes. Oh, yes, lots of times. I went over every odd-numbered year with Elizabeth, and we always visited the local area and the parks around Vienna and where I grew up. We visited all the nice places in Austria, including the big waterfalls at Krimml, the Krimml Falls, where I used to ski when I was young, now developed into a ski haven. Yes, we visited all of Austria and Kolm-Saigurn, the town named after me. Not after me; probably I'm named after the town. But Kolm-Saigurn is a beautiful place in the Alps [08:00]. It's now become a national park. There's a stone hut that used to be an Alpine hut, run by a family that I got very friendly with.

BB: When you revisited your town and where you were from, were any of the families or any of your childhood friends still in the area?

HK: Oh, yes. Yes. I'm in touch now with a high school classmate of mine named Fritz Schmidt [spelled phonetically]. Walter Fogel [08:34] was killed as a fighter pilot. My best friend isn't alive anymore.

BB: Is that the one who was forbidden from playing with you?

HK: Yes.

BB: So he was killed as a fighter pilot?

HK: In the German Army. Yes.

BB: Wow. And any of the -- were there other -- you mentioned before that there were some other Jewish [09:00] families in your town, in your neighborhood as well, right?

HK: Yes.

BB: Did any of them return to the area? Did any of them survive the war, and if they did, did any of them return to that area?

HK: [unintelligible] removed cousins went to Australia and they all scattered. I haven't kept track of anybody except Fritz Schmidt. He and I both are the only classmates that still remember each other and are still in contact with each other.

BB: Had he been in the German military during the war?

HK: No. Somehow he escaped serving in the Army. I don't know how, but he did escape serving.

BB: When you've revisited your town where you came from, have you found [10:00] -- have you talked to people in the town? Did you tell them that you used to live there, and because of the war --

HK: Oh, yes.

BB: Any sense of what their attitude was, the people who lived in your town, where you essentially had to flee?

HK: Yes, I have talked with some of them. The Austrian government pretended to reimburse people for -- during the Aryanization, as they called it, but nothing ever happened. It was more a gesture than anything else. I've talked to the family that somehow wound up having our house. The house was confiscated and given to a big Nazi [10:41] family, and the Nazi family went to prison after the war, or at least they were disappropriated [sic], and a nice family moved into the house, which they got very cheaply. And while much of the [11:00] family wound up being killed, I discovered a remote cousin in Bruno [spelled phonetically], which now the Czech Republic, a couple. They're both doctors, medical doctors, and he is a Knight of Malta. He got elevated to a Knight of Malta, because he supported the Catholic Church during the Russian occupation. He's allowed to save it, and so forth. We found him in a phone book, when we were over there with

my wife visiting my grandfather's place, where he was a country physician all his life. Elizabeth looked in the phone book and said, "Look. Here is Yelenik [spelled phonetically] spelled with a single L. Do you suppose he's a relative?" And I said, "Well, let's call him up." So we called him up, and he barely spoke German. And I said, "I [12:00] am the grandson of Dr. Zeigfried Yelenik [spelled phonetically] of Breslova," which is the name, [unintelligible]. "Are you perhaps related to him?" He said, "No, but his brother is my grandfather." So we visited there, and we went to the cemetery and we looked at my grandparents' grave. There is a Hebrew cemetery in Bruno, and he went there often. It's funny. He honors his Jewish background, although he's half Catholic. So he wore a Jewish cap and at the same time he's a Knight of Malta in the Catholic Church.

[laughter]

A funny thing. He's the one who took us to visit the battlefield of -- that I mentioned earlier [13:00]. What's the name of the big battlefield near Bruno? Napoleon was there, and Napoleon had 75,000 soldiers.

BB: It's not Waterloo, is it?

HK: No. Waterloo is near Brussels. I was there too. It was -- I will think of it.

BB: Of your family who was from Vienna, your immediate family, but was most of your family in the Vienna area?

HK: Yes.

BB: I should say, before the war.

HK: Vienna and Bruno, Moravia, which was Austria at the time. That's where my grandfather was a village physician.

BB: Okay. Did most of your family make it to the United States, or were you and your parents and brother among just a few that were able to escape?

HK: Among the few [14:00]. The others decided to cling to their belongings. I had an uncle who owned the biggest coffee and tea importing factory, Arabia, in Austria. He escaped and then returned very rich. He was probably the richest person in Austria. He bought up Long Palace [spelled phonetically] that Maria Theresa gave to General Laum [spelled phonetically] as a reward for beating Napoleon, and the Augsburg Palace in downtown Vienna, which is where Mozart did a lot of his playing and composing. He bought them both. He bought historic buildings in every major town in Austria and installed a coffee shop and an art collection. But he's died now. But he had an estate near Vienna. He was one of those guys who always landed on his feet [15:00]. But he escaped Austria and went to Paris, and when the Gestapo went to get him in Paris, he jumped out of a window in an apartment house where he was living, walked along the ledge to a different apartment, got into that apartment. From there, he went up the fire escape to the roof, jumped to the near neighboring apartment and went down and out while the Gestapo was storming the stairs up to his apartment. He was that kind of a guy. The battle of -- there was a battlefield near Brna, where Napoleon beat the combined armies of Austria and Russia, outnumbered more than two to one. Napoleon had 75,000 people. How do you control seventy-five thousand people when you don't even have a radio?

BB: Speaking of [16:00] your family a little bit more, you obviously knew -- you and your immediate family were able to leave Europe, but a lot of your relatives were still behind. Did you just, as 1938 became '39 and '40 and '41, did you just gradually lose touch with more and more of your family as they, you know, were disappearing in Europe?

HK: No. I remained in touch with the ones that didn't run away. We left Vienna and stopped in Bruno, trying to persuade my grandmother to leave, and her son, my uncle, to leave, and they refused to. I told you my grandmother said, "What are they going to do to the beloved widow of a beloved physician who's been here for three generations? So I don't think I'm going to leave." Well, a month later she was in Theresienstadt, Terezin [17:00].

BB: Did you know about the actual Holocaust and genocide that was going on while you were at 1142 [17:12], or did you not?

HK: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, of course.

BB: Did you ever uncover information from interrogations about the Holocaust, or death camps, or anything?

HK: Mostly denial. One of our trips we stopped at a bed and breakfast near Birkenau, within 15 miles of Birkenau, and the lady who ran the house claimed she never knew anything about what went on at Birkenau. And I said, "Trains, cattle trains with people in are going through, and you never heard about it?" "No, no. We didn't hear about it." "There was no station conductor or porter or workman who saw this happen?" "No [18:00]. You find it hard to believe, but it all came as a surprise." Then there was that battle near Brna that I told you about, where Napoleon beat the German Army. In 1912, Emperor Franz Josef built a huge memorial there -- that was in 1911; it was three years before the world war started -- to commemorate all the people. Forty-two thousand people died in one day at that place. They had cannons, modern-style. They were brass cannons with -- and I can't think of the name of the place. Isn't that terrible? To this day, there's a memorial there.

SS: But it didn't come as a big [19:00] surprise when the Holocaust was uncovered; was it a surprise to you? When did you find out about -- I mean, even the world press wasn't informed about the Holocaust until the liberation of the camps, was it?

HK: Well, yes, that's essentially true. The American Army liberated one camp after another. In fact, they liberated my uncle, who was still alive, having survived Buchenwald two years. He was a doctor and a dentist and he did a lot of medical work, keeping people alive. He died on his way home of cholera or one of these intestinal diseases he got there [20:00].

BB: Well, we're about wrapped up. If you want to just give another just a minute or two history of yourself after MIT and just a little bit about -- you know, if you could, in two minutes or less, sum up the rest of your life?

HK: Yes, sure. I can do that. I went to MIT in 1946 as a freshman. I graduated in 1950, with a class of all veterans. It was the big veteran class. I stayed there and got my Ph.D., using the GI Bill of Rights, in 1955, and I was on the faculty. I just never left MIT. I was given a faculty position. I built the MIT National Maglev Lab [20:58], which was dedicated [21:00] in 1961, funded mostly by the Air Force. I did research on superconductivity, eventually developed electromagnetic aircraft catapults. Took early retirement in 1978 or '9, started a private company. Ultimately, I started 12 separate companies, some more successful. They were all high-tech startups. One developed magnetic filtration for sewage, for wastewater. One developed magnetically levitated transportation, known as the MIT Mag Train [21:45]. One developed piezoelectric elements, used in sensors, piezoelectric transducers [22:00], et cetera. One was the aircraft company that operated 135 air charter operation, originally out of Beverly and

then out of Bedford. There were 12 altogether, startups that I was involved with. One was involved in pulse-magnetic-field forming. That's used to this day to -- when you swage aircraft cables to their terminals. Every airplane nowadays has magnetically swaged cables and rotating things that were used -- swaged by pulsed fields. That was one company, called Magneform. They're now independent, and they operate out of San Diego. They're called Maxwell Labs. That was founded by me. And so forth. There were 12 [23:00] altogether. I don't want to bore you with the details. But I left MIT in '78 or '79, took early retirement and became an entrepreneur and bought my own airplane and started this [unintelligible] operation. I've been very lucky and very successful in funding all of these things. I still own a building in Cambridge, which I lease to a pharmaceutical company. I don't know what else I can tell you after that.

BB: After the war, obviously, you were married and had children. Did you immediately tell your wife what you had done during the war, or did you keep a certain level of secrecy about it? Or were you told that you had to --

HK: No, I told my wife the things that were classified, and she never mentioned them to anybody else. But, yes, I had a free interchange [24:00] with her. She was very knowledgeable, and she's fluent in German. She studied her junior year in Switzerland. And, of course, we went over there and we visited various concentration camps, Auschwitz in particular, which had become a tourist center. So has Terezin. Every time we went to Europe, we visited one of the death camps. And we went to Aachen and Cologne. I showed her the place where we escaped from Germany, the Nazis [24:40]. We were all over. And, yes, I did tell her about P.O. Box 1142 [24:46]. She never discussed it with anybody else. But it was part of my life, so I [unintelligible] to her.



BB: Sure. So would you say in closing, is there any way in a minute or so, you can assess [25:00] the influence that 1142 [25:02] had on your career path and the rest of your life?

HK: It taught me an awful lot, not only technologically. Between Paperclip [25:15] and all the people that we interviewed on the island and the German prisoners at P.O. Box [25:23], it taught me a lot about people and about running a team and about organizing things. I was not a very people-oriented person when I started out, but I found out increasingly that if you want to accomplish more than you can accomplish by yourself, you'd better learn how to organize, put together, and lead a team. I've always led my teams by consensus, and I've become a very successful team leader. I consulted all over industry [26:00], all of the major companies, Boeing, Xerox. I had a biography that lists all my consulting companies. I was always very successful in solving problems and putting a team together and running engineers. I learned an awful lot about dealing with people at P.O. Box 1142 [26:34]. I can't think of a better school in terms of how do you deal with people. And I've had business associates all over. And as I said in my biography, I'm proud to say that everybody I've dealt with in my entire career, I could sit down with and have a friendly cup of coffee. I mean, I haven't left a trail [27:00] of enemies. Although I'm not saying I agree with everybody, but my friends may not have outnumbered, but they've always outweighed my enemies. Yes, 1142 [27:14] was an important milestone in my life; no question.

BB: Well, it was extremely important. What we've uncovered through our research and talking with folks and talking with people today, you know, modern military folks, is that what went on at 1142 was extremely important, extremely successful, and really formed the foundation for a lot of tactics and whatnot that are still used today. A lot of the

military folks we've spoken with really stress the importance of 1142 for setting the stage for modern intelligence-gathering and that what you did was extremely important [28:00], and we're sorry it took this long to recognize what you did.

HK: Yes, but I'm glad that it did eventually get recognized and that it becomes a publicly available site of World War II [28:15].

BB: Yes, well, we're doing our best.

HK: I appreciate very much what you are doing to make it a National Park Memorial tourist center. It certainly deserves to be remembered for history. It would have been a shame to discover years later that all of us have passed away and nothing is known about it.

BB: Yes. No, you have been a phenomenal help. The information we've gotten from you over the last two days has greatly added to what we already knew. It's interesting, each interview that we do -- we've done probably almost 15 interviews now with veterans, and each one we hear a lot [29:00] of the same stories, but we always hear a bunch of things that we had never heard before, and this was certainly no exception. All sorts of information, particularly the information earlier today about the relationship with Boston and everything, that was fantastic, so that's really outstanding.

HK: Well, great. Thank you for the compliments, and I'm glad I could have helped, and I appreciate what all of you are doing, in addition to your busy workday life.

BB: Well, we enjoy it a lot, you know. If we had more time, we would do it more, and we would do it for free, probably.

SS: Shhh.

HK: Well, thank you very much.

BB: I'll turn the recorder off, now that I've said that.

[end of interview]

Index

- 10th Mountain Division, [Tape 1A] 23:43
- 1st Army, [Tape 3A] 25:50  
[Tape 4A] 04:37  
[Tape 4B] 06:03, 06:22  
[Tape 5A] 12:44
- 20<sup>th</sup> Division of Patton's 7<sup>th</sup> Army, [Tape 1A] 12:32, 12:38  
[Tape 5B] 06:52
- 220th Armored Engineer Battalion, [Tape 1A] 12:22
- Anti-Semitism, [Tape 3B] 25:16, 26:19  
[Tape 4A] 17:59
- Arndt, Rolf [Tape 2B] 28:04, 28:20, 29:07, 30:14  
[Tape 4B] 18:49  
[Tape 5B] 14:03  
[Tape 6A] 26:23, 27:05, 27:54
- Aschenbrenner, Heinrich (Major General) [Tape 2A] 05:47, 06:10, 06:18, 06:53, 07:09, 08:08,  
08:24, 08:40, 11:14  
[Tape 2B] 06:18  
[Tape 4B] 09:36, 09:48, 10:14, 11:05, 11:17, 12:24, 13:35, 17:57, 22:16, 23:11
- Bicyclists, [Tape 1B] 28:00
- Bissell, Clayton (General) [Tape 1A] 19:47  
[Tape 2B] 15:42  
[Tape 3A] 01:42, 01:54, 04:20, 06:18, 24:14  
[Tape 4A] 12:48  
[Tape 4B] 21:40  
[Tape 5A] 04:36, 05:24, 10:48
- Boston Island, [Tape 3A] 04:57  
[Tape 3B] 14:12, 18:44  
[Tape 4B] 28:17  
[Tape 5A] 17:39
- Buck, Daniel [Tape 1B] 10:50, 11:27, 12:47  
[Tape 4B] 22:32  
[Tape 5B] 18:48, 19:36
- Bush, George [Tape 4A] 16:21
- Camp Ritchie, [Tape 1A] 20:02, 20:31, 22:20, 23:02, 23:14, 25:17, 25:28, 26:27, 26:47, 27:42,  
29:22, 30:35, 31:44  
[Tape 1B] 00:33, 00:57, 01:29, 04:18, 06:17, 07:02, 07:21, 08:26, 10:30  
[Tape 2B] 04:52  
[Tape 3A] 00:32, 01:44, 24:09  
[Tape 4A] 13:00, 13:20  
[Tape 5A] 09:00
- Captain Cohen, [Tape 5B] 26:20, 26:41, 27:04, 27:06

Cardinal Innizer, [Tape 3A] 27:47, 28:32, 28:59  
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), [Tape 4B] 29:21

[Tape 5A] 07:20,  
[Tape 5B] 29:53, 30:24, 30:54, 31:40

Corkham (and Corky), [Tape 3A] 07:20, 19:39, 19:49, 19:56, 20:56, 21:19, 21:29  
[Tape 3B] 04:00, 04:15, 04:19

Corps of Engineers, [Tape 1A] 17:17, 18:39  
[Tape 3A] 00:29  
[Tape 3B] 07:56  
[Tape 5B] 07:53

Eisenhower, Dwight [Tape 1A] 14:02  
[Tape 5A] 22:12, 22:26

Eisenhower, Mamie [Tape 5A] 21:27, 22:00

Fehler, Heinz [Tape 2A] 05:11  
[Tape 2B] 06:55, 21:43  
[Tape 4A] 26:12, 26:48, 28:17, 28:29, 28:48, 29:11, 29:37, 29:58, 30:29, 30:58, 31:45  
[Tape 4B] 02:55, 03:55, 04:07, 07:20, 07:49

Fogel, Walter [Tape 3B] 24:30, 24:51  
[Tape 6B] 08:34

Fort Belvoir, [Tape 1A] 18:02, 20:08, 23:12  
[Tape 3A] 01:37  
[Tape 3B] 15:02  
[Tape 5A] 12:34

Fort Dix, [Tape 3A] 10:46, 11:00, 11:42  
[Tape 3B] 04:51, 05:30, 29:24

Fort Hunt [Tape 1B] 13:37, 28:50  
[Tape 3A] 08:47  
[Tape 3B] 05:05, 05:34, 05:51  
[Tape 5A] 11:08, 19:33, 25:00, 25:21  
[Tape 5B] 10:41  
[Tape 6A] 18:34

Fort Meade, [Tape 3A] 16:09, 17:06  
[Tape 5A] 10:56, 12:20

Fort Sill, [Tape 5B] 25:38

Fort Strong, [Tape 2B] 20:28  
[Tape 4A] 25:53

Fort Wheeler, [Tape 1A] 11:15, 11:59  
[Tape 1B] 00:36

Gehlen, Reinhard [Tape 4B] 29:07, 29:39

General Rundstedt, [Tape 2B] 07:29, 07:46, 09:41, 09:53

Geneva Convention, [Tape 1B] 25:36  
[Tape 3A] 17:58  
[Tape 4A] 16:35

- [Tape 4B] 21:33  
Goering, Hermann [Tape 4B] 24:55  
Grass, Werner [Tape 3A] 11:20, 11:46  
[Tape 6A] 29:38
- Heisenberg, Werner [Tape 2B] 00:34, 01:17  
[Tape 3B] 28:38  
[Tape 4A] 18:22
- Helsinki Convention, [Tape 4A] 16:37  
[Tape 4B] 21:35
- Hesse, Rudolph [Tape 1B] 18:05, 18:34, 19:29, 21:41, 23:00  
[Tape 2A] 02:39, 05:39  
[Tape 2B] 15:18, 18:48, 22:20, 22:40, 23:24, 25:07, 26:57  
[Tape 4B] 12:14, 16:17, 23:22
- Hilger, Gustav [Tape 4B] 29:46  
[Tape 5A] 00:53  
[Tape 5B] 14:05
- Hirsch, Herbert [Tape 6B] 00:02, 00:09, 00:37
- Hitler, Adolf, [Tape 1A] 02:48, 03:12  
[Tape 1B] 18:13, 18:39, 18:47, 19:06, 23:21  
[Tape 2A] 07:18  
[Tape 2B] 01:04, 11:44  
[Tape 3A] 28:36, 29:09  
[Tape 4A] 17:34  
[Tape 4B] 16:55, 24:00, 24:09, 24:43, 25:00, 25:44, 27:48
- Jacobs, George [Tape 6B] 01:11
- Kessler, Ulrich [Tape 2A] 05:54, 06:00, 06:50, 07:07, 07:16, 07:56, 08:36, 11:13  
[Tape 2B] 06:50, 18:51, 22:22, 26:58  
[Tape 3A] 00:05  
[Tape 4A] 28:11, 28:22, 29:47, 30:11, 30:54, 31:19, 31:43  
[Tape 4B] 04:12, 07:12, 07:23, 07:51, 08:32, 09:46, 10:13, 10:30, 11:04, 12:15, 13:35,  
17:07, 17:53, 18:13, 23:12
- Kramer, Erich [Tape 3B] 00:28, 00:48  
[Tape 6A] 28:30  
[Tape 6B] 00:44
- Long Island, [Tape 2B] 03:47, 05:10, 05:32, 14:51  
[Tape 3B] 19:17  
[Tape 4A] 03:39, 05:17, 20:30  
[Tape 5A] 04:38
- Los Alamos National Laboratory, [Tape 3B] 29:15, 29:20, 29:26, 31:17  
[Tape 4B] 02:22
- Lowe, Robert [Tape 6B] 00:39

- Maglev (Train), [Tape 2A] 22:19  
[Tape 6B] 20:58
- Mandel, George [Tape 3B] 00:12, 27:01  
[Tape 6A] 27:15, 28:20  
[Tape 6B] 00:48
- Mayer, Arno [Tape 1B] 01:10, 02:22  
[Tape 2A] 04:28  
[Tape 2B] 7:32, 10:00, 12:34, 22:53, 23:11  
[Tape 3A] 11:04, 16:12, 23:54  
[Tape 3B] 00:15, 01:12, 03:28, 27:02, 27:21, 28:00  
[Tape 4A] 08:56  
[Tape 5B] 25:11  
[Tape 6A] 27:22, 27:53  
[Tape 6B] 01:00
- McBee key-sort cards, [Tape 2A] 21:31, 22:51
- Michener, James [Tape 3A] 08:54, 24:31  
[Tape 3B] 22:29
- Michel, Frederick [Tape 1A] 29:43
- Military Intelligence Division, [Tape 1A] 13:04  
[Tape 3B] 10:42
- Military Intelligence Service (MIS)/ MIS-Y [Tape 5A] 09:58, 10:35, 11:25
- Nazi, [Tape 1A] 01:45, 04:08  
[Tape 1B] 15:44, 17:33, 19:47, 26:04  
[Tape 2B] 08:26, 11:04, 11:40, 19:47, 28:00  
[Tape 3A] 27:36, 28:04, 29:34, 29:55  
[Tape 3B] 14:27, 20:29, 20:41, 22:57, 24:25, 29:47  
[Tape 4A] 17:34, 19:32, 30:24, 31:54  
[Tape 4B] 03:44, 25:55, 26:55  
[Tape 6B] 10:41, 24:40
- Newmann, Joseph [Tape 6B] 00:45
- Nixes Mate, [Tape 3A] 03:21, 03:34, 03:41, 06:14, 22:19
- Nuremberg (Trials), [Tape 2A] 11:28  
[Tape 4B] 14:36, 14:47, 15:00, 16:00, 18:32  
[Tape 5A] 04:27  
[Tape 6B] 07:12
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory, [Tape 3B] 29:13, 29:20
- Oberlaender, Bernhard [Tape 6B] 01:21
- Office of Strategic Services (OSS), [Tape 5A] 07:14, 07:28, 07:38, 07:56, 08:28, 09:13
- Officer Candidate School (OCS), [Tape 1A] 18:00
- Ogster, [Tape 3A] 24:53  
[Tape 3B] 22:11, 22:34
- Operation Paperclip, [Tape 2B] 06:00  
[Tape 3A] 14:22, 24:26  
[Tape 3B] 05:59, 06:00

[Tape 4A] 23:35, 23:42  
[Tape 5A] 03:43, 04:42, 05:07, 05:19  
[Tape 6B] 25:15

Perimons, Paul [Tape 1A] 07:28  
Patin, [Tape 3B] 20:01, 20:05, 20:24, 21:00, 31:05  
Patton, George [Tape 1A] 14:03

[Tape 5B] 06:52

Pearl Harbor, [Tape 1A] 10:25

Pentagon, [Tape 1A] 18:57, 19:06

[Tape 1B] 13:06

[Tape 2A] 26:07

[Tape 2B] 15:45

[Tape 3A] 01:56

[Tape 3B] 11:44, 11:51

[Tape 4A] 20:48

[Tape 4B] 04:32

[Tape 5A] 05:54, 08:48, 10:47, 22:14

[Tape 5B] 00:07, 00:31, 01:22, 19:03, 25:03, 27:16

P.O. Box 1142, [Tape 1A] 21:57

[Tape 1B] 01:56, 06:09, 08:43, 09:29, 09:49, 10:25, 12:00, 13:12, 14:00, 16:00, 23:32,  
24:16

[Tape 2A] 00:38, 07:30, 08:26, 09:40, 16:05, 17:00, 18:12, 18:50, 19:33, 20:25, 23:35,  
24:00, 25:10, 26:14, 28:45

[Tape 2B] 03:41, 03:56, 04 :51, 05:09, 05:26, 07:16, 13:49, 14:57, 16:25, 17:56, 18:14,  
22:34, 25:50, 28:45

[Tape 3A] 04:30, 04:53, 08:43, 08:47, 24:17

[Tape 3B] 01:43, 05:20

[Tape 4A] 13:24, 20:00, 20:08, 22:28, 23:10, 24:28, 25:41

[Tape 4B] 00:47, 02:15, 03:18, 04:18, 05:31, 06:41, 19:34, 19:53, 22:25, 23:04, 26:23,  
28:19, 28:52

[Tape 5A] 01:00, 01:20, 03:10, 03:49, 04:49, 06:00, 06:58, 07:38, 08:37, 09:48, 10:01,  
11:54, 12:48, 16:25, 18:55, 20:26, 23:26, 23:53, 27:48, 30:23, 31:58

[Tape 5B] 00:03, 01:03, 01:48, 06:20, 10:00, 12:37, 13:33, 15:00, 15:47, 19:07, 22:35,  
25:00, 28:17, 30:08

[Tape 6A] 07:03, 15:19, 16:00, 26:15 [Tape 6B] 03:49, 05:00, 17:12, 24:46, 25:02, 25:23,  
26:34, 27:14

Prisoner of war (POW), [Tape 3A] 15:42, 16:05

[Tape 4A] 15:49, 21:46

[Tape 5A] 11:47, 12:00

[Tape 5B] 17:45

Reedel, [Tape 3A] 24:52

[Tape 3B] 22:12, 22:35

Ritchie Boys, [Tape 1B] 05:57

Rommel, Erwin [Tape 4B] 16:42



- Roosevelt, Franklin [Tape 2B] 04:39  
[Tape 3A] 02:40, 02:50, 18:34
- Salomon, Ernest [Tape 6B] 01:07
- Schneider, [Tape 3B] 06:17, 08:37
- Schturm, Yana [Tape 3A] 10:17, 10:29  
[Tape 3B] 30:00
- Schweinfurt, Germany, [Tape 3A] 05:15  
[Tape 3B] 02:57  
[Tape 4A] 14:21, 14:30, 14:43  
[Tape 5B] 19:52
- Schutzstaffel (SS) [Tape 1B] 16:08
- Snow, Edgar Rowe [Tape 4A] 00:51, 01:00, 01:31, 03:02, 03:50
- Squantum Air Base, [Tape 3B] 10:54, 11:06
- Stoolpigeon, [Tape 5A] 06:07, 06:45
- The Foundry, [Tape 5A] 29:11
- Truman, Harry [Tape 2B] 04:42  
[Tape 3A] 02:42, 18:35, 19:15  
[Tape 4A] 21:01
- U-234, [Tape 2A] 06:04, 07:08, 08:31  
[Tape 2B] 00:43, 06:12  
[Tape 3A] 00:09  
[Tape 4A] 24:51, 25:11, 25:53, 28:43  
[Tape 4B] 00:04, 00:24, 00:40, 06:31, 07:15  
[Tape 5A] 05:00
- USO, [Tape 5A] 26:07
- Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day) [Tape 4A] 05:39  
[Tape 5B] 20:58
- Voith, [Tape 3B] 06:16, 06:32, 07:12, 07:29, 08:34
- von Braun, Magnus [Tape 3A] 06:53  
[Tape 3B] 17:20, 17:30
- von Braun, Werner [Tape 3A] 06:31, 07:40, 08:17, 08:37, 09:14, 09:53, 24:57  
[Tape 3B] 17:08, 17:24, 22:00, 22:10, 22:39  
[Tape 4A] 15:21, 24:16
- von Clausewitz, Carl [Tape 1B] 18:23, 18:36, 23:24  
[Tape 4B] 25:13, 25:25
- Waffen SS, [Tape 1B] 15:47, 26:08  
[Tape 2B] 08:25, 27:21, 27:53, 29:02  
[Tape 4B] 26:31, 27:09, 27:23, 28:04
- Weiss, Peter [Tape 1B] 01:17, 02:20  
[Tape 2A] 04:31  
[Tape 3B] 00:20, 27:00

[Tape 6A] 26:54, 28:23  
[Tape 6B] 00:41  
Wilson, Leslie [Tape 1B] 01:23  
[Tape 2A] 04:30  
[Tape 3A] 16:15, 23:55  
[Tape 3B] 00:18  
[Tape 4A] 08:59, 13:40, 13:58  
[Tape 5A] 21:26, 21:38, 22:29, 22:58  
[Tape 5B] 25:12, 26:15, 27:31, 27:51, 28:43  
World War II, [Tape 1B] 06:00  
[Tape 5A] 10:27  
[Tape 6B] 28:15