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INTERVIEWER: KAETHE SOLOMON

CAMP: BUCHENWALD, LEIPZIG, DACHAU

DATE:

Q: Let's get your name and address and rank at the time that you were in the Army.

A: At the time of the visitation to all the concentration camps, I was Lt. Colonel. My name is Carol J. Williams and I presently live at 1169 St. Andrews Circle, Dunwoody, Georgia 30338.

Q: And your date of birth.

A: June 18, 1910.

Q: And how old were you at the time of the liberating the camps or viewing the camps?

A: 35.

Q: And your prospective profession at the beginning of the war?

A: I was a regular Army officer.

Q: Regular Army and you had no plans before the war.

A: No.

Q: Professionally.

A: No.

Q: And you are retired at present?

A: Yes, I am retired.

Q: Your military unit at the time?

A: At the time I was deputy ordnance officer of the 5th Corps

Headquarters and was also designated as the chief ordnance and intelligence officer.

Q: Your rank at the time of liberation?

A: Lt. Colonel.

Q: It was Lt. Colonel at that time too.

A: Yes.

Q: Which camps are we talking about?

A: I made visitations to several areas. I went up to Belsen Hohne in the British sector, and my reason for the trip was the V-2 missile storage assembly and activity. And they were also loading components for the V-1 warheads. This was a camp that, according to my records, consisted of 40% Jews, 40% Poles, and the remaining 20% were Greeks and Russians.

Q: Where did you get this information?

A: From the British town major in charge.

Q: At that time.

A: Yes.

Q: Did they hand this out to you?

A: Yes, I had the credentials too.

Q: You were unique in having received that kind of information at that time. It was because of the unit that you were involved in that you did.

A: Right. This was 10 days after the capture, and the horrors and the atrocity incidents were still around. The British had initially liberated that area 10 days previously and they were still mopping up isolated sectors and segments of the area that were still under control of or which still contained SS and various army units. The SS and the

Gestapo elements deserted the Belsen Hohne area and left the German civilians there. And I was a little concerned about the visitation to the loading plants -- the fact that they did not attempt in any way to have the safety measures or the health measures that are apparent in our manufacturing plants of high explosives. The German civilian in charge, when questioned, said that he had stressed diet supplements and vitamins, but all the inmates said he was a liar. They would consider themselves as expendable.

Q: Belsen Hohne sounds like a labor camp as opposed to a concentration camp. They were involved in the manufacture of....

A: Yes, but a lot of their concentration camps were also labor camps.

Q: You came in there and you were given orders to go to that specific area?

A: Yes.

Q: In other words you were made aware that this existed.

A: We were interested primarily in the V-2. Up to that time, there were no V-2 assembly operations found in the American sectors. That's why I was interested in that. As far as the safety measures go, as I recall there were 80 people working one shift in this loading operation. There were only three respirators and they all should have had respirators.

Q: Tell me a little about the respirators. Why the need for that?

A: Respirators are required when you are working with picric acid and mercury components and ammonia components.

Q: So you actually have something in front of your mouth which is giving you oxygen.

- A: Yes, filtering the air. It's portable. Our plants were equipped with portable units. Very toxic.
- Q: So, it was obvious that there was no care taken.
- A: I think those three were perhaps for the German officials.
- Q: Did you comment on that directly to any of the German officials?
- A: Yes, they were asked about that. Their answer was that in the disruption of the campaign, a lot of material was destroyed. They told us to rest assured that they complied with...they knew the answers to the health problems of the loading plants.
- Q: They were very well aware.
- A: They were very well informed. Like I said, we could only find three respirators there and there was room for 80 people in that particular area. The assembling of the rounds necessarily did not require respirators, but it did require safety clothing and they did not have safety clothing. In our plants, we have to wear cotton clothing -- bone buttons, nothing metallic. The floors for the assembly area were to be grounded. Some of their floors were grounded, but they knew the answers. They didn't care about the health of the people.
- A: What was the turnover of these people?
- Q: According to the inmates, it was tremendous turnover. They would just cart them out all the time.
- Q: And they were replaced?
- A: They were replaced by others in the camp.
- Q: And this was at Belsen Hohn.
- A: Yes.
- Q: How long did you stay there?

A: I was there a day and a half.

Q: What questions came up in your mind besides your concern for the safety factors? Do you remember thinking about any of the human factors? I know you went there with a job in mind, that you were ordered to go in there and you needed certain information obviously. But beyond that do you remember thinking about what were they doing to these people, what was going on here when you recognized that they didn't have the safety precautions?

A: My opinion was that they were really out for extermination.

Q: You remember thinking of that term at the time?

A: Yes. They had to be when you see hundreds of bodies stacked up. I mean they didn't care. It didn't faze them a bit. And of course, we all knew of the propaganda about the Jewish race and the Slavs as inferior people.

Q: How did you know about this propaganda? Where did you see it? Where did you hear it?

A: We heard it through our Intelligence area and, of course, the press had a lot of it too. The *Stars and Stripes* were citing speeches on it. Goebbels was broadcasting.

Q: Goebbels. This was in 1945 that you went in?

A: Right.

Q: February?

A: As I recall, it was two or three months prior to VE Day. I don't remember the dates on that one in particular.

Q: March maybe. Was it cold or warm?

A: It was chilly.

- Q: Probably in March. Was there any further discussion?
- A: No, we took a lot of pictures of the V-2's and we were glad to get them to forward them back because we knew very little about them.
- Q: So, really, acquiring that information was uppermost in your mind.
- A: That's correct.
- Q: Was there any discussion about your thoughts on extermination with your fellow soldiers?
- A: Yes, it was quite apparent to the Americans who saw the camps.
- Q: Do you remember how any of the discussions went between the men? Was it rather superficial, one sentence type of comments?
- A: Among the tactical units it was sort of superficial, although they were horrified; they couldn't believe it. The correspondents that were with us couldn't believe it. It was a horrible sight --- man's inhumanity to man, definitely.
- Q: Which remains with you, doesn't it. Was there any feeling about what was being done for these people, do we have a job to do, or is anybody being sent in from our Army unit to help these people?
- A: The British counterpart of our military government was doing this. They were trying to bring the German villagers in to view every process of it, and they were bringing the Germans also in to help bury the dead.
- Q: So you saw that.
- A: Yes. Definitely. That happened at all these camps. That was part of the plan.
- Q: So the British were really taking on the job of medical care and food and shelter and plumbing, etc.

A: That is correct.

Q: Now, from there you went where?

A: Neustadt which was the first discovery in the American area. I was there two hours after the resistance. The camp was a labor/concentration camp devoted to loading V-2's and this, apparently, was the first facility for loading V-2 warheads. There were 1,000 inmates. They were guarded by a 100 SS and 75 dogs. All that remained were the German civilian engineers. It had been deserted by the Army, the SS, and the Gestapo.

Q: By the time you got there they were gone.

A: The estimate was 860 Jews died because of diets, exposure to chemicals, and starvation.

Q: How many others were there?

A: There was 1,000 total there, and the German civilian in charge knew all about safety and health practices.

Q: You were impressed with their knowledge, obviously.

A: Yes. He insisted that he complied with everything. The inmates said he hadn't.

70% of the population here was Jewish and the rest of them were Greek, Polish, and Dutch. I was surprised at Greek. These German engineers were very autocratic. We locked them all up because we wanted to milk their brains on the V-2.

Q: You came there by orders. You knew where you were going.

A: I knew where I was going.

Q: You knew exactly where you were going. You knew what you wanted when you got there and so you came there once again with

one mission in mind -- to get information.

A: That's right. And we shipped these German civilian engineers back to SHAPE headquarters.

Q: What happened to them there?

A: I've no idea. Now I do know what happened to the prize people who were part of Pennumende, which included the Von Braun brothers -- Magnus and Werner -- and Dieter Huenzel. Pennumende was the research center. The majority of the population there was Jewish [referring to Neustadt now]. 70% of them Jewish.

Q: Did you talk to any of the civilians there?

A: Oh, yes. We talked about the technical problems first, and that included the safety problem. And I talked to many of the people there. I was surprised at the Dutch, who were very fluent in English. They really spilled their guts, you might say.

Q: What did they say?

A: How they hated anything that was German and they would never have anything to do with Germans again, and they were glad the war was over and glad that their countrymen could kick the Germans out.

Q: Did the Dutch people in the camp share some of the experiences with you that they had?

A: Only the fact that they used to sic dogs on the people too weak to defend themselves.

Q: You spoke to people from Holland. Did you speak to any of the Greeks?

A: No, they couldn't understand English.

Q: But they were there. Were there any Jewish people left?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you speak to any of them?

A: No, I did not.

Q: So you had no idea of comparative treatment?

A: No, they all seemed to be treated the same.

Q: How did they look?

A: Emaciated. All emaciated. Some of the new people that came in looked in better health.

Q: Looked in pretty good shape.

A: Yes. But most of them were emaciated.

Q: Did the people that you spoke to from Holland tell you how long they were in that camp?

A: One group said that they had been there for about 10 months and that they came from Czechoslovakia of all places.

Q: These were people that were obviously being used in the plant, and they were now being taken care of. What care was given to these people?

A: The Military government set up a hospitalization and feeding facility. The feeding facility naturally was K rations and C rations. They made the German cooks prepare the food. That was about it. They also made the German overseers help clean up the place. Orders were that they were not to be afforded "country club" handling, so they were put to work and they were doing the menial tasks. Occasionally, they would take several of the inmates and put them in charge of Germans. Of course, sometimes they really took out their frustrations.

Q: What did they do?

A: They beat them and kicked them around.

Q: Were there a lot of deaths?

A: Not in this place at the time I was there. But they were really using a physical means to let the Germans know how they felt.

Q: Let them know how angry they were with what they did to them. What happened with the feeding process? Were you aware of many deaths after the Americans came in?

A: There were quite a few people dying. There were some that you could not do anything for. What happened after that I don't know.

Q: You mentioned K rations. We know that a starving body could not handle K rations. What else happened at Neustadt for you that you remember? What stands out in your mind?

A: I remember that it was a very well-designed facility. The German civilian skill was outstanding. I remember the officiousness of the German engineers. They were brilliant people and they were in charge. They were doing a job and that was all they cared about.

Q: When you mention the term, you mention it as if to reflect their feeling of pride in what they were doing?

A: Yes, they were German scientists and physicists and engineers, and their only thought was the engineering perfection of their production. They got all so enthralled in it that people didn't make any difference. It was what they were doing.

Q: When I listen to your telling this, it sounds as though it would be very easy to respect their intelligence, their ability to develop, and certainly their scientific and engineering skills. Did you have that feeling?

A.. Definitely. No doubt about it. They were excellent people in that res-

pect.

Q: But you know also what happened, what they did against humanity.

Do you remember thinking about that? Was there a conflict?

A: Oh, yes. Seeing these people and listening to them speak....

Q: They spoke English very well?.

A: Definitely. The king's English, too. Science was their life and if things were to be done for science for which they were responsible that was the most important thing. People or no people. And that's the logic of the scientific mind, too, even here in academia. A scientist gets so wrapped up in his project that he forgets the world around him.

Q: It sounds like you have a lot of insight into the scientist's personality.

Do you see that that can happen to you, too? That you can get wrapped up in your scientific goals?

A: Definitely. I worked in atomic energy after the war at Rock Island Arsenal. We were making the mechanical components. We had to go to Sandia Base, New Mexico, and I recall this one woman physicist sitting at a dinner table next to mine and she looked very haggard and sloppy. Her husband was young and handsome, and I was surprised that they were married but they were about the same age. The next morning it turns out she was the person I was supposed to contact about welding an assembly. If she looked sloppy the night before, she was more sloppy then because she had slept all night in the lab working on an experiment. She looked real haggard. Her world was strictly with her project, which was developing the use of isotopes to grow fruit and grain in sandy desert areas. That was her life.

Q: She was married to her project.

A: Married to her project and so you can readily see why the Germans here were parallel in that instance.

Q: So what you are saying is if you are going to be so devoted and it's going to really grip you in such a way to a specific project, then there is no room for any other....

A: That's true. I think that it is true of certain business tycoons of the past, too, here in America. Certain industrial leaders. I think that it helped promote and accelerate the labor unrest. I'm talking about the Pullman people.

Q: The railroad people.

A: And the Vanderbilts. The early robber barons. So it's a disease....

Q: Do you think it's a necessary disease for progress?

A: No, I don't. There are some other people who have accomplished just as much who were very considerate people and had a lot of empathy. I think you can combine both. The thing that has done it has probably been the labor movement that came into its own during the 1930's. But now, the pendulum has turned the other way so they have no use for management now.

Q: You're talking about labor unions' use for management.

A: Right. The employees have no use for management. They are not loyal and to me it is very evident in the automotive industry and the problem we have today. In Japan, the workers are very loyal to their employers.

Q: And you get a better product.

Q: You get a better product. Right.

Q: That's a very interesting perspective.

- A: So it gets back to these people, too. It happens here, too, but we have to safeguard ourselves to ensure that it won't happen like it has happened.
- Q: Exactly. That's why I wanted to stress this point. When you lose your humanity for anything, I'm not too sure the resulting product is worth developing.
- A: Then it can be taken away by the other aspect. There were many unexploded bombs in the London, Bristol, Plymouth, South Hampton, Leeds, and Birmingham area. UXB's, we called them.
- Q: I'm going to have to ask you to explain that to me. They had not been used or were dropped and never exploded?
- A: They were dropped and never exploded so the English in their propaganda said that this was the result of slave labor. They said a free people would have been more certain to have made a bomb that would have exploded. Therefore, these people were sabotaging. So the propaganda was disseminated through the BBC and all over Europe. So what did the Germans do? They made delay factors on the fuses of the bombs and made anti-withdrawal devices because the English were telling how the Duke of Essex was removing fuses from all the bombs. One time the Duke removed one in Plymouth and that was the last you ever saw of the Duke. So the Germans made anti-withdrawal devices on fuses that would activate the bomb. They made some that would go as high as 72 hours without exploding. It created a morale factor in the population of the area. They were afraid to run trains near there or something.
- Q: This is highly publicized.

A: The Germans finally made anti-withdrawal on anti-withdrawal which doubled and tripled the activation chances for an unexploded bomb and these are the kind of people we are talking about.

Q: When the British said these bombs are being made by slave labor and that's why they're not working we're talking about German bombs?

A: Right.

Q: Very, very interesting story. Not too well known I'm sure.

A: That's the way it started. That's why bomb disposal became a highly professional skill. I had bomb disposal people working under me.

Q: Going back to Neustadt. You were there for how long?

A: I was there a couple of days.

Q: You acquired all the information you needed.

A: That is correct.

Q: So the determining factor as far as how long you would stay there was how much information you could get. When you got the information you moved on.

A: Right. The war was going fast so two days is all we could spend there and we turned it over to Supreme Headquarters.

Q: The next stop was?

A: Merseburg. It's beyond Neustadt and it was sort of on the way to Jena. In the Merseburg area, they had quite a few concentrations of labor camps or concentration camps and dual industrial missions. There was a town called Leuna which was an industrial gas facility. They made hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and a lot of synthetic rubber. They also made cyanides for the furnaces for the people who were killed by gas. This had also been deserted by the SS, the Gestapo, and

the Army. The civilian scientist, Dr. Essenger, was left in charge. He was extremely mad because the Jews and Poles and Russians had deserted when he wanted to continue production.

Q: He wanted to continue production. And this was in March?

A: Yes. March or the first part of April.

Q: April, 1945. Under whose orders at that time did he want to continue production?

A: He didn't care. He wanted to continue production.

Q: A little bit of a Napoleonic complex present in most of these people, obviously.

A: Definitely. There were 4,000 people there.

Q: 4,000 were still there when you got there. They were still producing?

A: Yes.

Q: For what? Did they tell you what they were producing?

A: The synthetic rubber was for their vehicles and tires. The cyanide components was for the shower baths prior to cremation.

Q: Did they tell you this or was it documented?

A: It was documented. The oxygen was for supplies for welding. Oxygen was for fire control. The nitrogen was also for artillery weapons and for range finders. The hydrogen was for welding. They had atomic hydrogen welding. The only other use they could have had for hydrogen would be for observation balloons which use hydrogen. By observation balloons, I mean those that were set up above the cities to impede fighter aircraft from coming in. They were contained with steel cables or rope cables for several hundred feet into the air, and that would be an obstacle if you crashed into them because they

would explode.

Q: Obviously a highly sophisticated....

A: Yes, a very fine plant. Well laid out. And this Dr. Essenger was mad because when the place was liberated, the Poles and Russians deserted when he wanted to keep going. He was willing to sell or give...we would never have bought it. We would have taken it away from him if we needed it, but we didn't need any of this stuff.

Q: But he was willing to sell.

A: He was willing to furnish the American Army just to keep him going. He was all wrapped up in production.

Q: Did you talk to any of these people about what they did before the war or was it purely a business conversation?

A: Strictly business. I never got to talk to many people over there. It was such a rat race. Like I said, I was there probably an hour or two after the place was run over by the American Army.

Q: I am going to ask you again, at the risk of repeating myself, what did you see that the American Army had been doing when you were in the camp?

A: They were rounding up what Germans were there and using a little physical force.

Q: You say a little. Is that being very cautious?

A: That's very cautious. Yes. But I need not say they got the full treatment and they engaged some of the inmates to help them with the treatment and the rounding them up.

Q: And they had seen emaciated bodies?

A: Oh, yes, there were bodies around.

Q: Bodies around that had not been buried yet and they were taken care of them?

A: At that time, the military government had not yet set up at Leuna. It was too early for them to get there. It was a logistical problem, too, because we were running into places too fast for logistical support, as we refer to medical care and food, etc. But there were rations there . We took the choice rations that were abandoned by the SS and started feeding them. That's the way they were initially handled. We were running too fast for a military government to give the regular civilian support.

Q: Did you talk to any of the inmates?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember any of the conversation?

A: Nothing in particular. They hated the SS, naturally. Safety was pretty well handled here because Dr. Essenger was very capable. He wanted production.

Q: Did you find that the mistreatment was less?

A: Yes. The mistreatment was minimal, but evidently, there had been. But he also made the statement that with the government furnishing free labor, sometimes the outside details were not necessary, that humane treatment was not necessary as far as he was concerned. He was only concerned about producing supplies for the German troops. He said to me that he would sacrifice people since he had a large reservoir of free labor. His only mission was to get supplies to the troops. So there again is the scientist being involved in his small orbit of interest.

- Q: That's very interesting in how it repeats itself from place to place.
- A: Very definitely.
- Q: Was there anything unusual there that you did not see in the other places?
- A: Yes, the physical status of the people was much better there.
- Q: You went in there. The slave labor was still there in all three of these places. The British had been there first and the Americans had already come in so there was no attempt to run away on the part of these people. They felt that they were being cared for.
- A: That's right.
- Q: So there was no attempt to escape. Did any of these people ask you to make contacts for them outside?
- A: No, none whatever.
- Q: Did any of these people come to you, even though you were not the first of the liberators, but as sort of "peace-keeping" faces to appear, and want to touch you and talk to you and be with you?
- A: Oh, yes. They all wanted to hug and kiss you.
- Q: All right. How did you feel when they wanted to do that?
- A: I kind of had to brush them off.
- Q: Was that a feeling of disgust or repulsion?
- A: Yes, it was for me.
- Q: Was it the way they looked?
- A: The way they looked. I am kind of funny that way.
- Q: It was too much to take. What was their reaction when you brushed them off?
- A: I would try to do it tactfully.

Q: These were mobile people. They were able to walk. Emaciated, but less emaciated than some of the others. Was there a problem in considering them as human or inhuman or was there not the degree of emaciation there?

A: I think that this Dr. Essenger, as I remember, didn't care. He wanted production.

Q: But for you, when these people approached you.

A: They hated the place and they hated the Germans. That was about the only thing I took time to find out about them. This one was one of the better places if you can call any of these places "better."

Q: Relatively speaking.

A: Yes. Now the place next to it was Lossa. These were laboratories and a chemical plant, and the inmates were running a control of SS. Here there was a disregard of health on purpose. The Commander there was very grateful for an unlimited amount of free labor and his whole ideology in life was to meet the requirements of the Wehrmacht.

Q: A repeated total allegiance to the "Cause."

A: To the Cause. Their own personal desire and the Cause. Yes.

Q: It would have been interesting to hear some of the backgrounds of these people.

A: Yes, it would. The next area we have is Schkenditz. Here was a plant that had 2,000 inmates -- miserable, wretched people. They manufactured metal components and they had a huge machine shop facility, a forge, and foundry. They supplied Pittler Machine Fabrique of Leipzig, and I was there so I will tell you more about Pittler later. The Germans in charge blamed the U.S. bombing for interfering with their

food supply. That was their answer to why these people were starving. They were tough and belligerent. This Commander was mysteriously shot. I don't know how. There were 800 Polish Jews there, and there was 300 Czechoslovakian Jews, and 100 French Jews, 100 Russians, and 62 people from Holland. Poor miserable people. Miserable, wretched, and haggard.

Q: Did you consider them human at the time you saw them?

A: About half of them had a human element about them, but the rest of them knew not where they were going or where they had been. They were just on the brink.

Q: Totally disoriented. Did you talk to any of them?

A: Oh, yes. The real skilled people like some of the Czechs and the Dutch were pretty good machinists, and they had a little more preferential sustenance than the laborers. The Germans had a view there that if they needed this man's skills, then they had better feed him a little more. That was done.

Q: They carried that whole thing out very scientifically.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you speak to any of these Czechs?

A: Yes. They told me about that.

Q: And they recognized the difference in treatment according to skill as opposed to religious persuasion?

A: Their skill was foremost. If you can picture the production-minded people of the installation. They used the utmost of the skill and then gave them a little more bread because they were skilled. The Germans were running short of skill and they were willing to pay that much for

skill.

Q: And you remained there for a period of time?

A: Yes, about a day and a half there as I recall. Then I got to Pittler in Leipzig. This was a tremendous plant. It only had a few broken windows in it and it covered about 60 acres in the center of Leipzig. They had a lot of inmates there. They had the same treatment. Those who were skilled were given a little more food and sustenance. I met the director, Mr. Wilhelm, and we threw him in jail overnight and questioned him. The next morning, we started interrogating him as to what his plant mission was.

Q: You [unintelligible] to cool him off. He gave you a hard time apparently.

A: Yes, he was kind of protesting because he claimed Swiss citizenship.

Q: What happened to him when he was there in jail?

A: Nothing. He was guarded. The next morning we brought him out and started interrogating. He said, "Do you want me to be interrogated in German or English?" I said "Well fine, English.. You speak English well?" "Yes, I was a visitor to your country for about two or three months every year from 1921 through 1939." I said, "Oh, how interesting. What else have you done?" He said, "I'm the Japanese Consul to Leipzig." The war was still going on with Japan, so I said, "Well, that is very interesting." He said, "It's an honorary assignment. I only receive a few hundred marks a year to entertain Japanese visiting dignitaries. It's an honorary job like your Kentucky Colonels." To make the sequence proper, I asked him how he knew about Kentucky Colonels, and he said from National Acme in Cleveland,

Ohio. He worked for a subsidiary of National Acme. He was a pretty brilliant man. He might have been Swiss, but we turned him back to the CIC for further questioning. The plant was practically intact -- beautiful inventories of strategic metals and the furnaces were still going for the foundry, etc.

Q: Did they also make gas?

A: No, they were making all metal foundry components for German Army equipment --the Navy, the Luftwaffe, hydraulic mechanisms. They also made machine tools. He was quite disgusted with the Japanese because he had shipped them machine tools and they had never asked for any more. He guessed that the Japanese had duplicated them. But the format and design of the machine tools were similar to those of National Acme, and I often wondered why the place was not bombed. I found an insight into that a couple of years after the war was over when I was assigned to the Rock Island Arsenal. Like I told you, we were building components for the atomic bomb and we wanted a specialized welder -- a spot welder or seam welder. The best one made in the whole country was made by Sciaky. They were a very prominent engineering family in France and they had a plant at Ruen. They were tremendous people. Maurice was the one I did most of my business with. They were related to Delesseps who originally started the Panama Canal and failed, but he built the Suez Canal. Their process of welding helped win the war for us as far as aircraft production with aluminum and non-ferrous metal welding. They made the best welders in the world and their machines took less current, too. He told me that he gave permission to the Air Force to

bomb his plant in Ruen I kind of brought back that aspect from Maurice Sciaky to National Acme. And I know for a fact that Ford Motor Plant in Cologne was not bombed, but it was later destroyed by American artillery. I do know that the General Motors plant in Antwerp was not bombed, but it was destroyed by V-2's so that gives you a picture of how intermingled war can get with the enemy and the foe and business.

Q: Top priority.

A: So this company wanted to make money and had quite a few skilled people who were refugees from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Holland, and France. They weren't in too bad a shape. Anything they wanted in labor they could pick up from another camp that I will show you or talk to you about and that's Torkla, near Leipzig. Here was a bloody mess. This was absolutely horrible. I have pictures here of that.

Q: This was another war production labor camp?

A: A subsidiary, yes. When the Americans were coming into Leipzig, the Germans had 1,000 Jews. They picked out the Jews and they were killed. The rest of the inmates were burned to death. They rounded them up into one central building and set fire to the building. They had the electrified fences around it and a lot of them ran out burning.

Q: The Germans did that before the Americans came in?

A: Yes. And it was really, I have to say, a stinking, horrible mess.

Q: Stinky because you remember the smell of the burning bodies?

A: Yes. Here there was a Dr. Blank, who was in charge of these people. He was carted away, but we talked to him. He said it was a dreadful situation, but necessary really because, "I had orders to do it."

Q: This was a German Wehrmacht?

A: No, he was a civilian.

Q: Civilian. He had orders to do what?

A: To dispose of these people. My comment is that scientists can't be humane when it comes to their technical mission or purpose or activity. That is the statement I made because elsewhere previously it was the same thing being repeated.

Q: Can't be humane in that society because of the way that the Germans were oriented. Do you have any fear of something like that taking place in America?

A: I've been exposed to scientists as in the case of this atomic energy woman, and there must have been others there in our atomic energy laboratories that probably worked and performed and thought the same way. Usually, they are not very sociable. The only thing that rings an interest is their job. At the Rock Island Arsenal, they were a little more human in that respect. They were all glorified in their accomplishments of making weapons that would do a better job, as an engineer would say, but since they never had to face the reality of slave labor and war and prisoners, etc. they were pretty well ... I'd be happy to have those people, but when a scientist goes all out they lose something; they lose humanity, I think.

Q: Were you formally educated in engineering?

A: No. Business.

Q: Do you think we have a job to do in the education of our scientists in our schools? Should we add philosophy to knowledge?

A: In my work, I was vice-president of St. Andrews College after I

retired. Usually the PhD's are slanted in their own area only. They are very limited outside of their area. That's a definite trend in our colleges and universities.

Q: Very narrow focus. So what we are saying here is that if you have never experienced what can happen with such a narrow focus, there is no way you can eliminate that narrowness or at least....

A: I hate to think that it could happen here and I'm sure it wouldn't, because I think that our people are, for the most part, charitable minded people. Take the GIs who were engaged in killing the enemy. They were suckers for little German kids who were starving. They would feed the little children.

Q: There was a lot of hunger in Germany, too, certainly during the war.

A: Even after the war. If a German orphanage needed something, the GIs would empty their pockets to them.

Q: Did you have that experience personally?

A: Oh, yes. You'd hear about it. So I think that the Americans have a little more charity in their hearts than the Germans. Finding Germans with charity is even a difficult job today, I think, compared to the liberalism of American charity. And I think that there's a reason for it. It's the type of government. For example, Germans have a withholding tax for the Church automatic like social security withholding.

Q: In Italy they have the same thing.

A: That relieves them of a church obligation.

Q For charity.

A: The charity among Germans is very limited, really.

Q: Good point. That has never been discussed in our project and what

that specific aspect of our liberal society can do if charity is eliminated. There's a charity of the pocketbook and there is a charity of the heart and there is a charity of human exchange, certainly. If it is eliminated on all levels, then we have a problem.

A: We really do. That's one thing I have to say about our people. I think that our people in all branches of life have a charitable outlook on situations more so than the Germans. Definitely more.

Q: It sounds like a very silly question to ask, but how do you feel about the Germans today?

A: I have a natural distrust for many of them. We have some German friends that I would trust, naturally. This one lady who just visited us. I would certainly trust her and her husband. They were very nice to us and they went out of their way.

Q: You were with them when you were in Germany?

A: The second time, yes. They were well reimbursed by us. We appreciated it; otherwise Mrs. Williams and I could not have gone and left the family in their care at our home. They were thorough, they were loyal, and very friendly and liberal to the degree that they could be. I imagine that you can't make a generalized statement that all Germans are not kind or considerate people. There are some that are. But there's a mob psychology of Germans compared to the English. During the war, the Germans were like wild cattle getting on trains and so forth, and going into air raid shelters. They would trample over each other just to get in.

Q: You experienced that in Germany during the war?

A: Yes, this is from this lady. Now the English, I know, were very

methodical. They took their turn, they queued up, and they went in in order. There's a personal discipline that the English had that the Germans didn't have although the Germans had an external discipline that the English....

Q: The English discipline is from within and the German discipline from without.

A: That is correct -- you said it right. And I don't think you will ever get it out of the Germans any other way.

Q: An interesting observation. You have another story that I know you said you wanted to share with us.

A: We saw another area, a power plant at Sternself. I have a date on that - - 28th of April. The SS killed a trainload of Jews that was shipped in by setting fire to the boxcars.

Q: This is before they had ever arrived?

A: They had arrived and were in a railhead. We were getting close and they killed 1,000 Jews in about 35 cars. Those that did run out were machine-gunned down. They were to furnish labor for a power plant.

Q: This information was documented.

A: Yes.

Q: I remember reading G2 forms. Would this type of information be found in a G2 form?

A: I can show it to you in a record I have.

Q: I would be very interested in that.

A: Then Buchenwald.

Q: When did you get into Buchenwald?

A: Two hours after it was liberated. This was about as gross as you can

find a place. It reminded me of Belsen and it reminded me of Torkla near Leipzig, only on a bigger scale. This plant, as well as being a concentration camp, furnished labor for a small arms factory in Weimar and for optics and metal finishing work for Carl Zeiss in Jena. It also furnished labor for metal finishing and assembly of airplane components at Gotha. Here you could see a reverse in the German psychology. I'll never forget this guy. He was a colonel. His name was Frank. He wasn't the Commander, but when we carted him away, he was certainly against Hitler. [laughter]

Q: By the time you carted him away, he was against Hitler?

A: He blamed Hitler for everything.

Q: Really? Or in order to be well taken care of?

A: Yes, he wanted that.

Q: What was some of the discussion with him that you had?

A: He gave us information about where they farmed out labor and that what happened when they were away was not his responsibility and he was against the way people were being treated. He was an SS Colonel.

Q: Did you interrogate him?

A: Yes, and he said it was terrible the way people got treated.

Q: Was he willing to give you the kind of information you were seeking?

A: Yes, we got that. I went on to these plants, and these plants were all devoid of people. They had all deserted.

Q: You came in two hours after they had been liberated.

A: Two hours after Buchenwald was liberated, but the ones I went into in Weimar and Jena and Gotha were all deserted.

Q: What happened?

A: The people were on the roads.

Q: Being marched by Germans?

A: No. Marching West.

Q: Marching towards freedom.

A: Right.

Q: The Americans had come in. When you went in there there was no one. No Germans left, no civilians there. Nothing

A: There were German civilians at the Zeiss works, which was a tremendous plant. You know the Zeiss cameras, beautiful cameras. There were a few minor people there, but for the most part they had all got out everywhere. But this Oberst Frank sure was against Hitler.

Q: You kind of skimmed over Buchenwald there and I certainly understand why, but that is something we want to concentrate on.

A: I've got pictures here, that's Buchenwald.

Q: These are your photographs?

A: My pictures.

A: That's a soldier that was still there.

Q: He was still there when you came in. Did you talk to any of these?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What did you say? What happened? What did they tell you?

A: Some of the inmates rounded up Oberst Frank for me. Some were good. Some were in bad shape.

Q: [Looking at photos] These were in excellent shape.

A: That's me there in that picture.

Q: What am I looking at on the ground here?

- A: Those are people that ran out of that burning building and ran up against the fence.
- Q: And were electrocuted.
- A: Electrocuted.
- Q: And rigor mortis has set in.
- A: Right.
- Q: And these [referring to more photos] are German civilians?
- A: Yes. They helped bury.
- Q: Is there any way we can duplicate these because we are developing archives, which are becoming well-known.
- A: Here is a French political prisoner. He was a retired general and he was in Leipzig and he [unintelligible]. He's grasping his rosary there.
- Q: Are these all labeled?
- A: Yes.
- Q: This is a very unusual photo for us to get with the German ... and this certainly does document Buchenwald without a doubt. If I were to show this to some people, they wouldn't believe me.
- A: Yes, that's true. Now the Buchenwald figure -- this thing was put up in about three hours by labor and they claim 51,000 dead.
- Q: Now that was in 1945?
- A: Yes. That was put up in three hours by the inmates there. 51,000 that they had record of.
- Q: "H L B" *H. Lager Buchenwald*?
- A: Right.
- Q: Oh, this is an incredible picture.
- A: Which one is that? Oh, yeah right. They were herded out.

- Q: I've seen pictures, but...these are all labeled. I'm going to stop you and ask you what the mechanics are of us being able to copy these. I know you want these, certainly.
- A: I had more, but I've loaned them to people and they have disappeared. Is there some way I could have them duplicated and give them to you?
- Q: Would you do that for us so that you don't have to take them out of your hands? I can certainly understand that. Can I make the selection of the duplications?
- A: Yes.
- Q: I'll do that immediately. Let me shut the tape off for a second.
- [Interruption in tape. Conversation resumes as follows]
- Q: We're back on tape after having gone through these incredible pictures. You have some more material that you want to share with us, I know. I asked you the question about Buchenwald and, as we looked through the pictures, you said, "Oh these bodies." You saw that wherever you walked.
- A: That is correct.
- Q: It became a common sight, in other words.
- A: Yes.
- Q: It was part of the environmental picture. What was your initial response when you walked in? You walked into Buchenwald after having seen so much inhumanity to humanity. Was your entrance into Buchenwald any different?
- A: Yes, because of the vastness of the horrors. It was a sickening thing and I was glad to get out of there
- Q: Couldn't take it too long?

A: No, you can't.

Q: It smelled.

A: The smell and odor and the sight and....

Q: Sound.

A: And the filth where these people were living -- their quarters. It was just drenched with human filth. There is no way you can ever describe it. Sometimes, when I'm in a pensive mood, I can sort of smell it today. It is an indelible memory.

Q: If you would ask yourself what is the sharpest memory of that camp, what would you say?

A: I'd say the living quarters of these people and the furnaces and the gas chambers.

Q: What happened when you saw the furnaces? Do you remember your thoughts?

A: Lord Almighty, I just couldn't believe it, but it was there; it was reality. Then the hair that they saved for mattress material and the jewelry collections -- -the bags of teeth with gold and silver.

Q: In an effort to gain some insight on our own psyche, you mentioned the jewelry collections that you saw. Do you remember any feelings of, "My God, what I could do with this?"

A: No, it was just the contrary. I wouldn't have wanted any part of it.

Q: I'm just kind of wondering what happens to the mind at the sight of something like that.

A: I wouldn't want any part of it. I couldn't consider that as a "prize of war" although I did bring a lot of war prizes home but they were mostly German equipment.

Q: And where were the prizes collected that you brought? At some of these places?

A: No, no. At crashed airplane sites or plants where they were making materiel that I just took.

Q: You were in Buchenwald, obviously, while American soldiers were there. There were some of those left that had liberated and blitzed through like many of them did when they went through these camps. You spoke to them?

A:: Yes, it made them very nauseated, too. A lot of them just couldn't believe it. They knew about it, but this was on a scale that was beyond the human mind.

Q: Do you know of anybody that asked to be relieved of duty?

A: No.

Q: You went through there. You walked from one position to the next. Describe it as you walked through there.

A: These inmates that remained were very friendly. Here you were accosted by them who wanted to love and kiss you and hug you and shake your hand and paw you over and they would ask for cigarettes and candy and kiss your hand and everything else. It was very nauseating to me. I wasn't there for that. I never told you about the Jewish women. At this one place that I'm trying to think of now, it was strictly for the....

Q: In Jena?

A: No, it wasn't Jena. The Gas plant. They had quite a few Jewish girls held bondage for prostitution strictly. That's all they were good for and that was that. They told us and talked to us.

Q: What did they say? They spoke English?

A: Yes. Several of them did. They felt that their life was wrecked. Their families were wiped out or exterminated. They didn't know what the future held for them. They were helpless and some said that they wished they could have died; they blamed themselves. I think they were enticed by the material things of life. That's a human frailty. They were so ashamed.

Q: Guilty for what they had gone through. Did they mention any specific treatment at all?

A: No, they were well fed and they got to live in a little better quarters, but they were just there for a purpose.

Q: That came to your mind as you spoke about Buchenwald. Did you have some similar experiences at Buchenwald?

A: No, that one place was the only place I saw many women. It was a very sickening thing. You had a lot of empathy for those young women.

Q: Did you see any children at Buchenwald? Any young boys?

A: Some of them looked like young boys.

Q: Emaciated?

A: Emaciated.

Q: Alive?

A: Yes, some were alive.

Q: Did you talk to any of the inmates that were able to speak?

A: Yes. Yes, I did. Yes, that's where I finally got all this other type of information about where they worked and who they worked for.

Q: I see that you have pictures of inmates that look pretty well fed. Were

those the ones you spoke to?

A: Yes.

Q: Any background on these?

A: I don't remember that. They told me where they worked and what they did and who their German supervisors were.

Q: Not how they were treated?

A: Oh, they were treated rough. There's no doubt about that. They were on a starvation diet. But at that time, we were interested in picking out the bigwigs.

Q: Did you find any?

A: Oh, yes. A lot of them were found.

Q: What happened when you found them?

A: They were turned back and held in custody for war crimes.

Q: At Buchenwald, you certainly weren't looking for scientific information at all. What brought you to Buchenwald?

A: It was because it was in a heavily industrialized area. Knowing how these camps would furnish labor for other allied production interests, we knew that there must be something there.

Q: Did you find anything?

A: Oh, yes. We found...close by at Jena, Weimar, and Gotha....

Q: And they were all subsidiaries of Buchenwald?

A: Right.

Q: And those were mostly cleared out as you told me before. The civilians that you have pictures of there, did you speak to any of them?

A: No, I did not.

Q: Do you know of anybody that did and did they share any of it?

A: Military government handled that. Maybe I had that mind of a scientist. I was only interested in the industrial and ordnance and intelligence. I let that go by to the military government.

Q: Protecting yourself a little bit, too, I guess. You could take just so much and no more.

A: I was taking as much as anyone else, but I was interested in the bigwigs.

Q: I detect a conflict between respect and disgust with the bigwigs.

A: Definitely.

Q: How did you compromise that for yourself? How did you treat that knowing that you had a job to do and respecting their obvious intelligence in production and disgust with what it was used for and what happened?

A: I considered them trash, really. I respected their great technical ability, but I had no use for them as men. Only one of them criticized Hitler. That was that Oberst Frank and that was a sham, no doubt.

Q: That was probably an unusual happening to do something like that. You are a Catholic. Were you a practicing Catholic when you entered the Service?

A: Yes.

Q: Would you call yourself a religious man?

A: I think so, yes.

Q: Did religion play any part in your reaction to this war experience, specifically the going into these labor camps? Did you think of religion at all?

A: I think the most touching thing that kind of reminded me that I should say a prayer for these people was the French general. That spread out my thoughts of all these other poor souls that were maltreated. I don't know if it was the look on his face -- he was down in a hole there. He had suffered. He was burned, but he clutched that rosary.

Q: There was power even in his death.

A: Definitely. Definitely.

Q: When did you first share some of these experiences beyond what you may have done in the Army?

A: Oh, I've given speeches about it, and I've lectured at colleges and high schools.

Q: As far back as?

A: The last one was probably about 1970.

Q: And you have children?

A: Yes, five children.

Q: They are aware of your experiences?

A: Yes.

Q: You have grandchildren?

A: Except in New Orleans this past week, the oldest boy in the family was anxious; he didn't know that this stuff really happened. I just talked to him a little bit about the war. He's at that stage of the game where he likes the weapons and guns and reading about battles. He didn't know much about the concentration camps. I asked him if he had ever read anything about it, and he said no.

Q: How old is your grandson?

A: He is 10. However, this spreads to the college student. They have no

idea that this happened. If I take him next door to a neighbor's, I doubt they would because they were born at the time the war was started. So what they learn would have to be what they read. I find that true everywhere though. The generation born in the 1940's and subsequently have no idea that this happened.

Q: Do you belong to a church?

A: Yes, St. Jude's Church.

Q: Do you think this discussion about the Holocaust has a place in the Church?

A: Very definitely.

Q: On what level?

A: I would say it would be on the junior adult and adult level. It brings a story of people who defied the laws of God and the so-called laws of warfare; defied the faith of all people who are religious; it brought up how quickly and how suddenly genocide could be created in the minds of men. And that's [unintelligible] humorous or something, but I was just thinking about the Indians. The pioneers did a lot of that to the Indians, didn't they?

Q: Yes, they really did. They just came in and shot them down.

A: And yet in all our polite society here, we have done it to different races of people. We've done it to the Blacks, we've done it to the Jews, to the Irish, Italians, and Poles.

Q: Try to be candid in this because it is important for us to hear. You're in a situation where you are under a government that says we're going to round up the Jews. They've been thoroughly psychologically brainwashed and you have a neighbor down here and a neighbor four

doors away and anybody that is found, who doesn't turn them in, their family's life is in jeopardy and their own life is in jeopardy. How do you think you would react to a political situation like that if, Heaven forbid, it would ever take place? It's difficult to project, very difficult.

A: Yes, it's difficult to project, but I think I would stand for justice.

Q: How would you mobilize that justice?

A: That's difficult by yourself, not knowing what your neighbor would do. It's difficult, but I think I would stand for justice. What have I got to lose now? I'm in my seventies. I think I would try to do what my faith tells us we should do. I would try. I had one personal quirk and I can't get used to it. It was the Blacks. I had that. I'm kind of ashamed of it, but maybe I have never met the right ones. For example, black students in colleges were always trouble makers. I'm not what I should be there, and I confess that, too.

Q: We have a problem when we know we are giving welfare constantly, perhaps, to people that we see as not being productive when they can be and when the majority of the crime is taking place with the Blacks. How do we justify all of this?

A: That's true and that's my problem. They are not all Ralph Bunches. Neither are Whites.

Q: Neither are Whites or any other race, certainly. You brought up a very interesting point, Mr. Williams. At your age, what do I have to lose? You have children, who have their own children. What happens to them if they are confronted with that type of a problem? It may be unfair of me to ask that of you, but, if you can keep your own children in mind, what is the way of mobilizing justice?

A: We have five children. Two are adopted. My own three children operate with a sense of justice. Now here's the ironic thing. We adopted two stateless German children, ages six and nine, back in 1955. One of them relishes the great German war tradition. He's a surgeon in Cleveland now. If he put a mustache on, he would be a perfect Hitler. His father was the technical director of Opel Motors in Germany.

A: Opel. The car.

Q: He was very proud of that. His father was a Nazi, his mother was a Hungarian. We adopted his half-brother. They had the same mother, but different fathers. This half-brother is obliged, I think, to justice. His father was an Air Force flyer, a graduate of West Point, as far as we know. They only had their mother's word for it, naturally.

Q: These children were adopted while you were in Germany?

A: No, they were adopted here in the United States. They came in on the McCurran Act and through Catholic charities. The one with the American father is much more charitable and more imbued with justice than the one with the German father.

Q: You think it's genetically inherited?

A: I didn't think so, but it sort of adds up that way many times.

Q: Certainly, your experience adds up that way. So you feel that your children have that type of feeling of justice -- right and wrong?

A: I'd say that four of them do.

Q: As for the impact of this particular part of the war experience on you, did you ever have any nightmares about it?

A: Not on this part. I had a lot of memories of it. As the years roll on it

does seem like a big dream that a thing like this could happen. But the one thing that had the greatest impact on me was this kid...on D-Day, June 6. We couldn't get in further than up against the banks of the Normandy cliffs at Omaha Beach. A lot of soldiers lost their weapons. They lost their crucial weapons like machine guns. Since I was one of the earlier arrivals on the beach, I went around picking weapons off the dead soldiers. I had never touched a dead body before, and I remember this one young, handsome blond boy, who had fallen on his gun and was shot through the middle of the head. His brains were all over the gun, and I wrestled with him to get that gun away from him. I still remember that blond kid to this day, and every June 6 I always think about him.

Q: [Unintelligible]

A: Then it got to be sort of a habit later on in the day, but that first initial touch of a dead person I will always remember. On June 6 I always think about that kid.

Q: Which brings me to a question I would like to ask. You said that was the first actual physical contact with a dead body. Since that time, you have probably had more. Did you see any difference between the death of war -- shooting, combat -- as compared to death through starvation and mistreatment? Do you remember thinking about it?

A: Yes, there's a big difference.

Q: Did you think about it then?

A: No, I didn't. I did not think about it at the time on June 6. I thought about that these young boys had girl friends back home and they had plans for themselves. They had parents. They all had written letters

home a day or two before the invasion and how much of a shock this was going to be to their parents and friends; a good life snuffed out in a matter of an hour or so of landing on the beach. And then you see this thing [concentration camps] and you see people who had died every day, who had no hope. There probably was hope for these casualties who were killed. There's still an eternal rest and a heavenly goal we all look forward to or want for the most part. But these people suffered every day. They wanted it, but couldn't get it.

Q: You saw them as wanting death?

A: Yes. Does that seem logical to you?

Q: It's an interesting perspective, an interesting thought. You gave the man on the beach at Normandy, that had suffered a tragic death by war, a family and an environment in your own thoughts. You gave him loved ones, girl friends, mothers, fathers, children. Did you do that for these emaciated people? Did you give them families, in your own mind?

A: No, I looked upon them as individuals. It was sort of a muddled expanse of humanity lying all around there all over Europe. I had a deep feeling for them and I still remember. These things are fresh even today. But it was a little less personalized than those first ones I touched and wondered about and handled. I didn't handle any of these people, naturally.

Q: So those same thoughts they were not there. They were there for the one, but not the other when you see mounds of bodies.

A: But, take this here. [Looking at photograph] Here there might have been some great minds, some great people.

Q: But when you saw something like that, when you were standing there and you saw it, it became a mass. It wasn't individualized like the soldier.

A: No, it was all the same and all you could say was "poor people." It was the same thing in every other camp. Those "poor people." The German attitude was "Well, we were made to do it." There's that logic again, that external discipline. "We were made to do it."

Q: You watched the TV show, "*Holocaust*"?

A: Yes, I saw that a couple of years ago

Q: How did you feel about that?

A: It rekindled what I was personally involved with.

Q: But you watched the whole thing?

A: I sure did.

Q: Was it disturbing to you?

A: Yes. It was disturbing, but I thought it was a marvelous production on what really happened in the thoughts of the Germans. For example, that young, real snotty SS officer with the wife and the child who took the poison at the end. A lot of them took poison at the end.

Q: Did you experience any of these men taking poison at the end of your interrogation?

A: No, not at all. They were friends once and, then all of a sudden, when the German and Jewish feeling developed he changed into a turncoat.

Q: Did your children and grandchildren watch the show?

A: I don't think so. It was on pretty late in the evening, but I saw it in Davenport, Iowa where we lived and it was kind of a late show. We didn't have any children with us.

Q: Do you think that anybody can learn from this experience?

A: I thought for a while that you could, but I feel the Russian mind will develop the same way as the German. Just like the present Iranian situation is developing into mass murder. You eliminate for an excuse anyone who they feel is a plot against the government or business. I fear that the Russian mind would be very adaptable to this kind of a deal although they lost many people by this. The Russians are very ruthless. They committed atrocities that never came out. People seemed to forget about the Russians doing it against the Poles.

Q: Did you have any experience with the Russians?

A: Only at the end. I came home in 1945 and told all my friends and relatives and associates that these were the people to watch because I don't trust them. Their attitude is one of aggression, and we should have fought them, too. Those were the exact words I said. That was 35 years ago. They were suspect in my mind then after meeting them.

Q: What particularly about them made them suspect in your mind? Was there any specific incident?

A: They were non-cooperative. We were supposed to cooperate in Intelligence. They refused to cooperate and, yet, they wanted a unilateral feed of information to them, but nothing the other way around.

Q: Can you give us a little bit of your background. You were raised where?

A: In Iowa.

Q: In Iowa. One of how many?

A: Two; my sister and I were the only children.

Q: In a religious family?

A: No. My folks belonged to a church but never attended very often and it was the same way with myself. I converted to Catholicism in 1940 and I have been very faithful and fervent since then.

Q: At the risk of being too personal, if you don't want to answer you are certainly at liberty not to answer, what made you convert to Catholicism?

A: I felt that I had to have something and my wife was a very fervent Catholic. I thought what do I have to lose or gain by joining? I thought I would gain more, and I did.

Q: Your father was a business man?

A: No, my father was a farmer. He later was a victim of the Depression and went without work for many years.

Q: Your mother was working on the farm, too?

A: Yes, my mother was a schoolteacher prior to that; so I supported them for all those years for the most part.

Q: Your education goes how far?

A: College. A Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce.

Q: Your sister also was educated?

A: Yes. And she also converted. She married an Irishman.

Q: Your family life in general was economically pretty rough, when you talk about that period, but as far as support and relationships and things it was pretty good?

A: Yes.

Q: You had a large family yourself. You are a military man, obviously. Was it sort of a strict structure in your family or sort of loose?

A: No, it is a pleasurable relationship. Nothing demanding, nothing autocratic. We're all for one and one for all.

Q: So it sounds like a pretty cohesive type of background. I appreciate that information. It gives us a little bit more insight.

A: I want to get that report.

Q: That report you said you had. I would like to see that. Thank you.

Q: What is that book?

A: This is the section relating to the history of the V Corps in Europe. The United States in Europe. It has all the units and personnel.

Q: This book was given to whom?

A: Every member of Headquarters, V Corps. There I am. Ordnance Section.

Q: Was this the book [unintelligible]?

A: Part. The thing about that train deal...I had a little more information on it than they wrote here about it. [Leafing through book] I'm trying to find what section. They call it History of Headquarters, V Corps, 1941 - 1945. We had a reunion last month up in Indiana and our speaker was one of the prosecutors of the Nuremberg Trials. Do you know who was the most intelligent among all those who were executed there? They gave them an IQ test and several other psychological tests.

Q: Who was that?

A: Speer and Goering. High intellect, tremendous minds. Speer was #1 and Goering was #2. Ribbentrop was way down on the bottom -- a champagne salesman.

Q: Those reunions take place once a year?

A: Yes. I'm having it in Atlanta next year. Mrs. Williams and I are the hosts. [Reading aloud from a book] "According to civilians, German SS troops had killed an estimated thousand Jews in the woods near Sternself, forcing the people in the town to bury them." Well, they had to bury them, but they were on trains. It doesn't mention that here.

Q: It doesn't mention the trains.

A: But that's on page 448. You must remember that this is more of a tactical history than a technical history. My work was technical.

Q: I want to thank you again. Is there anything you want to add?

A: We had a little problem at the end of the war after V-E Day. Oh, I didn't mention Scoda. Scoda was one of the largest armament firms in the world and the main plant was located in Pizen, Czechoslovakia. 47,000 employees and 3,100 slave laborers. They made everything from sewing machines, and armaments, and locomotives. They had 3,100 inmates in the labor force that were concentration camp people. Nine hundred were supposedly sent to gas chambers when the Germans were fleeing. We could never trace that down.

Q: When you got in there, what was left?

A: Oh, the plant was intact. That was propaganda that we picked up. Whether it was propaganda or fact, we couldn't substantiate. But we did know it had 3,100 inmates. They were housed in that general area of Scoda. It was quite a plant, old fashioned tooling...you could compare it with our Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois. They were a big productive source of armament material for the German Army.

Q: Did you get any different reactions from that plant compared to those you had on the part of the personnel [unintelligible]?

A: Yes. The personnel...of course that was considered a private company like all the [unintelligible]. We couldn't do as much due to what I felt was a milk-toast approach by our State Department. For example, the main concern at the end of the war was to help Russia with reparations against Germany. What good tooling existed and what designs of material they were making for the Germans became joint property. I was disgusted with that. Utterly disgusted.

Q: The tooling in general became joint property between the Russians and the Americans?

A: We gave the Russians part of the drawings and prints of new material being readied for manufacture. We got the same thing but we gave it to the Russians -- not at my level but at a higher level. I was very disgusted. The Czechs were definitely anti-German. The jubilation of the liberation of Pizen sort of deadened me.

Q: That was liberated before you entered or you were part of of the liberation force?

A: We were part of the liberation force, but the only thing we ever got out of that area was the fact that they had that number of people.

Q: And they just took off?

A: They took off, yeah. There's nothing there in Scoda that amounted to much anyway except the fact that we were so liberal in sharing our information with the Russians while the Russians were not so liberal in sharing what they had in other areas like the Herman Goering Works in Austria. They wouldn't give us a thing on that. They were making track vehicles, tanks, etc. The Russians were involved in that part of Austria and you asked them to share the information and there

was no sharing of information. They wrapped us up in bureaucratic paper. The same thing happened at Zeiss. They had several big jigboars. That's a very complicated machine for making dies and tools and gauges for manufacture made by a Swiss firm -- Societe Genovase. Finest jigboars made in the world. Still are the finest. There were six of them there and I put the tags on them to send them to Watertown Arsenal, [unintelligible] Arsenal, and Rock Island Arsenal as prizes of war. But they all went to the Russians. Some general thought we ought to make restitution. There was another finding about this Herr Wilhelm at Pittler. At Rock Island Arsenal, we had a teletype from the Pentagon telling us to let the American representative of the Giddings and Lewis Machine Tool Co. and three Swedish engineers from Bofors Works in Sweden visit the Arsenal because we had the most comprehensive outlay of Giddings and Lewis machine tools of any place in the country. So, when this gentlemen brought these three Swedish engineers in, I talked to them. I asked this one, Mr. Rosen, where he had worked in Europe. He said that he worked for Pittler, Springer and Mueller, and Alfred Bofors. I said, "How long did you work for Pittler?" He said, "About six years." "Do you know Mr. Wilhelm?" "Ah, yes, a very good friend of mine." It's a small world.

Q: Did your experience in any way change your political view about the civil rights movement? I know we discussed a little bit about your feelings vis a vis the Blacks. When you reflect on the experience, do you think there was any change or are your feelings present history?

A: I can say that I never possessed any general hatred or dislike for a

group of people until I had the problem at the college with the Blacks.

Q: What about the Vietnam War?

A: I had two sons in it. One was wounded and one of the German boys was in it. I dislike no little bit the political interference that precluded winning. I learned that if they were attacked, they couldn't shoot back until they had clearance from headquarters in the rear, identified the area. I disliked the war because of the way the campaign was operated. We became casualties to the drug habit. Drug addiction became prevalent and it was a planned campaign against us. Although there were drugs going on before that, it made a lot of them addicts. It removed the desire to accomplish anything. I know the German boy was smoking marijuana and hashish. We kicked him out. He didn't finish college and, all at once, a renaissance appeared in him and he came back and graduated last year from the University of Illinois Medical Center with honors. We saw him over the weekend. He's a very fine person now. He was strong enough to come back out of it.

Q: You were strong enough to kick him out.

A: Yes.

Q: How old was he at the time?

A: We kicked him out twice. He was born in 1948. He was kicked out in 1970 and 1972.

Q: He was living with you.

A: Yes. In Davenport. The second time we found...my wife had told him to clean up his dresser drawers and he wouldn't do it. So she decided to do it herself and that's when she found hashish and a pipe so out he went.

Q: A degree of strength that I think many of our parents are missing today, if I may allow judgement on that.

A: He had an IQ of 149 and flunked out of the University of Connecticut so he was on it there. He came back to St. Andrews and, when we kicked him out, we kicked him out of the school, naturally. He got married, settled down, and did well. He worked for Illinois Research at the University of Illinois in the College of Pharmacy. He's anxious to get his Ph D. now in biochemistry. So, that came out.

Q: That's quite a story.

A: My oldest boy and Robert were in the Vietnam War. I thought it was a waste of manpower not to try to win.

Q: What about the draft card burnings and things like that?

A: It created quite an upheaval in me. I blamed the liberal thoughts and elements of higher education somewhat for that. I think if we had gone in to win instead of allowing ourselves to be victims of heavy casualties and no progress, it might have changed that attitude.

Q: Your feelings about the Middle East?

A: I would hope that the Israeli Government would have more of a conciliatory attitude about the West Bank. I don't know much about the realities of it, but it seems that they have gone this far and I think and hope that Sadat is trying to live what he's speaking. They ought to give him a chance. But I know that Sadat turned once on a surprise attack. I know that's happened. Then Nasser, his predecessor, did the same thing. But I feel that Sadat is trying. From what I know, I give him A for effort. I know Begin's background has been an uphill fight all his life. He has been a campaigner, he's done a lot. He's a hard-

liner but to keep up the hard line and not try...maybe there's a better solution to whatever. Now what irks me on the other side of my thoughts is the fact that in the Arabs there is not much conciliation in them at the present time especially with the Palestinians; yet they want this area that the Jews have worked hard and built up and turned green and productive which they had for several hundreds of years and did nothing with. That's the part I don't like about the other side.

Q: So that's where the conflict comes in.

A: How do you feel about that? I ask you.

Q: I have conflict and my conflict is based on lack of in-depth knowledge.

A: That's true with me too.

Q: I don't live there and I have visited there several times but the conflict is my knowledge of history knowing that the Israeli people have to be able to protect themselves and how can they protect themselves but to surround themselves with sort of a protective wall. Now if that is the objective, just to surround themselves with a protective wall, I would have to go for that based on past history and upon present history. Not history but which will become history. With the oil crisis and certainly the Third World and the Arabs holding the purse strings in the oil, I think once again the Jewish people will be the number one target. And having that in mind and knowing what the history is of the country, I would have to say that we must fortify borders for this country.

A: What do you think of Sadat?

Q: I admire him. A brave, brave man. He has put his life in jeopardy on

the line. I cannot help but admire him for that. We are at a disadvantage and I share this with my family because we do not know the thinking of the Third World. Even our words, our terminology, our body language, our ability to interpret....

A: What do you think about Hussein of Jordan?

Q: I can't trust.....

A: He's on the line, too. He's a target.

Q: He's on the line also and I'm not sure. I don't see the dedication of Sadat. That sort of thing. He wants to walk both sides, take the safe path. So again, my lack of in-depth knowledge doesn't permit me to make any very hard and fast judgment. I'm cautious, very cautious. With Sadat, I would say that this man has tried and he deserves some....

A: I think that the Egyptian government is trying behind him, too.

Q: Right. And that's exciting. But that doesn't mean that we don't continue to really substantiate a protection for this country. The history that we were just talking about of World War II and the Holocaust ... would this have happened if Israel [unintelligible]?

A: Here's the interesting thing about the Holocaust. I never encountered any Danish Jews in any of these camps. No one ever spoke of Denmark. We have a Jewish friend in Grand Rapids, Michigan and we stopped up there before we went to the reunion. I read a little paperback about the Danish Jews and the insistence of the king not to expatriate any Jews for labor concentration camps. Are you familiar with that book?

Q: I don't know which one you read, but there's a lot of documentation

on it. They are an incredible example of what can be done when the philosophy of justice is normalized. We were talking about that before, and it is something we have not explored enough in our country. I am a firm believer that the philosophy of Denmark should be studied so carefully to see what we can learn.

A: Denmark is a wonderful little country. They stood their ground.

Q: They certainly did. Interestingly enough, in Israel there is an Avenue of the Righteous which is really a pathway that leads you to the world renowned center for world Holocaust museum which is called Yad Vashem....

A: Belgium did a good job. I never ran into any Belgian Jews. In Antwerp about a month after the war was over, there were all kinds of them there. How did they stay there, I wonder?

Q: There may have been individuals hidden, but the government I don't think made any effort.

A: It was an interesting thing. After I read that book I went back in my mind and tried to recollect in my memory. I never did run into a Danish Jew.

Q: They were very low key, by the way, with everything that they did. They did not want to be known. This is why I mentioned Avenue of the Gentiles. What they are trying to do is to get these Danish people who risked their lives to come out and say so because the Israeli government would like to honor them. I think it's important to let the world know that when you do risk your life for another people or for a sense of justice, there is recognition. It's not done for nothing. So that whole aspect is very important I believe. The executions in Cambodia

is next on the list here. When we do have so many mass murders, I ask you, do we learn anything from the past?

A: No, no. And what gripes me again is my 1945 suspicions of the Russians, who will aid the forces that are doing that...Cambodia is genocide in a big way.

Q: It certainly is. Did you see the Holocaust as primarily a Jewish persecution? I guess it would be a reflective answer that you would have because when you were there...I don't know.

A: Not all the persecution was directed against the Jews, though. It was directed against Catholics and politicians. Adenauer was a great foe who spoke out against the Hitlerian government. He was a staunch Catholic. Many Catholics were persecuted and sent along to the concentration camps.

Q: Are you familiar with Hitler's theology?

A: I didn't know he had much theology in his mind except the mythical Aryan he was setting up to last for 1,000 years.

Q: He had an orientation that this was going to be a new [unintelligible] and the basic premise that Judaism interfered with that.

A: He brought it down to people that the interference of the Jews was business and economics.

Q: But you are absolutely right. Certainly it was not primarily...there were many others. There were 11,000,000 with 6,000,000 Jews, 5,000,000 others.

A: I went to a Jewish Synagogue in Stuttgart with this friend I was telling you about. Her husband was my adjutant in Germany this last time. He's Irish and she's Jewish. She's a very personable person and we

think the world of them. They are going with us on a cruise over New Year's to the Caribbean. Anyway, we went to this synagogue. She wanted me to have dinner there at the synagogue. Outside the synagogue, they had a Jewish restaurant that observed the Orthodox rules. She took me into the synagogue, and they had a pretty good record of all the names of the people who died in the various camps. It was remarkable how they kept record. Who kept the record of all these people?

Q: Ah. I don't know.

A: There were plaques all over the place.

Q: This is the record of the Jews at Stuttgart that were killed during the Holocaust.

A: Yes.

Q: Has your opinion of Jews ever changed one way or the other?

A: There was a time in my life when I heard the common...my background was a Wasp. I thought the Jewish people were not good for the general welfare of the country. But after I got out of high school, I learned differently. I moderated when things started to work well for me.

Q: Very interesting comment when your own development took place economically....

A: I suppose I was jealous of their well-being. But I know this. They work hard and they are unified in their family structure. You could hate the Mormons just as easily as you could hate the Jews, really. I got to know them and was talking about the religion and so forth and they are nice. I admire them. They've battled all throughout history.

They've had a battle to survive. And I found that they were very tolerant, too, of other people. I was amazed at that.

Q: Do you think that comes from having been selected as a people to be most intolerant against very often that they've learned to be tolerant?

A: I guess so.

Q: Do you feel the need to do something today to make sure that this never happens again whether it be in politics, education?

A: I feel it will have to evolve from a religious base in the home and an ethical base in education.

Q: Do you think our colleges and universities are doing the job?

A: No, I don't. Even at the college level, a professor can change the thinking of an individual, especially in the social sciences. That's the area that gripes me most -- psychology, history, sociology. It's pathetic. It doesn't seem to hold in the scientific or the business aspects of a university.

Q: As you mentioned before, there was a jealousy of an accomplished Jew in the business world. Did you ever get the feeling in the business departments of the university there is still...does that ever come through? The stereotype is what I'm trying to say.

A: No. Stereotyping, possibly...but you research it and analyze it, and statistically it doesn't work out that way.

Q: You haven't heard of any instances of the stereotyping being used?

A: You can read the Ku Klux Klan propaganda, but you can refute that with statistics that actually are a matter of record.

Q: You know the statistics and you know the record, but you're in the minority.

- A: And I follow the markets of the country. I love the stock market. There's no business controlled by Jewish people...I might say that there is an element that the Jewish people take to in business. The Ku Klux Klan says they control all the food business. They don't control the food business or the entertainment business or the retail stores.
- Q: Being a follower of the stock market, you have quite an insight into that, which is unique. Most people do not. That's stereotyping again, which is what we talked about. Is there anything you feel you would like to share with us that you haven't so far? I didn't ask you for complete physical descriptions of the camps that you entered into, because you really went into a lot more.
- A: They were pretty well stereotyped in their construction. You could figure a large turkey house where they raise turkeys or chickens.
- Q: You're the farmer. Since I'm from the city that would be hard for me to imagine.
- A: It's just a wooden frame building and where they slept it was like big troughs. Where there was room for two people, they made room for four people -- piled each other in, no ventilation, cold and miserable, vermin infested.
- Q: No water?
- A: No water.
- Q: No heat?
- A: No heat.
- Q: The floor was covered with what?
- A: With dirt, human feces, vomit.
- Q: Urine.

A: Yes. Everything else.

Q: Did you come across any typhoid?

A: Typhus, yes

Q: Typhus you did. And did you observe any of the medical experimental [unintelligible]?

A: No, I didn't. I heard about it. It was probably the only chance in history that people ever had a chance to use humans and they flubbed it. I know there was some place in Bavaria where they were dunking people in ice cold water to see how much they could stand exposure to 30 degree water and 20 degree water and all of that. It was just strictly a party effect like in Dachau they used to take so many people out a day and they would have target practice with the people. I never had any first hand exposure to Dachau like I had here. Dachau was a place I visited when the war was over. I looked at the bloody creek right back of the building. That was a small arms manufacturing plant in Dachau. The bloody creek is still there, it's not bloody any more, but that's where the SS would take target practice.

Q: And that documentation you were made aware of when you went back?

A: Yes. And if you go to the town of Dachau there's a sign there, but the people want that sign removed. It's a direction sign.

Q: To Dachau. You went to Dachau over there? Were there other people at Dachau?

A: Oh, yes. It's quite a visitation place now. I was last there in 1959 and I think there were about 26,000 remains that they don't know where to send.

Q: Did you hear any conversation there when you were there visiting?

A: Most of them were American soldiers. There are a lot of families that go through. The thing that's startling there is that they had special ovens for children there. The first ones I had seen. They used a standard burning oven for heat treat furnaces, but they had [unintelligible] crematoria in the other camps. But they had a special one for children there.

Q: It did not look like the picture of the ones we have in Buchenwald?

A: No. A special smaller size oven for children only. I thought that was something. But the people in the town of Dachau want that sign removed. I guess they have to keep it there.

Q: When you went into some of these places, you knew what you were going to see?

A: Yes.

Q: The mood of the people [unintelligible].

A: I usually went with 3 or 4 people.

Q: And they all knew what they were going to see. We have some questions here on the military -- talking about coping with the experience, relieving any sort of tension any particular way after having gone through these camps. Did you find a need for that?

A: No, I think the soldier was pretty well acclimated or oriented to the horrors of war anyway. This was something of the same type, only more unusual and more vast than the things encountered in battle.

Q: Did you come across any Chaplains at all?

A: German Chaplains? No.

Q: American?

A: Oh, yes, a lot of American Chaplains.

Q: Who were in any way involved in seeing the concentration camps or the labor camps?

A: I can't answer that because I don't know.

Q: In other words, a discussion never took place. If you did come across any that had seen it there was never any exchange about it.

A: No.

Q: This has been a very long long interview and I'm sure I must have tired you out.

A: No, I'm not tired.

Q: Evidence of the military man -- you're not tired. Thank you very much.

A: What I will do this coming June is I will get in touch with you. I have your card here.

[Interruption in tape. Conversation resumes as follows]

A: The Hitler Jugend were still fervent with Nazism. They created a lot of atrocities and attacks on Americans after V-E Day.

Q: These were teenagers, youngsters. They were under whose organization?

A: I don't remember recall who was in charge of the Hitler Jugend. I would think someone out of SS.

Q: And they continued the operation even after V-E Day?

A: Yes, until several hundred of them were killed.

Q: Did you have any personal involvement with them?

A: No, I only saw the aftermath. For example, they had hand grenades, and when the Army of Occupation was coming in and the tank turrets

were open, they would throw one into a tank turret and kill the crew. It was things like that. If an isolated truck was going some place on the highway, they would throw a hand grenade. Sabotage. But they killed a lot of these German kids. There was a new generation coming on to carry on. That's what I wanted to make reference to from a sociological point of view and a political point of view.

Q: Did you have any experience with the remnants of the Hitler philosophy when you went back to Germany?

A: No. Now this lady that is going to visit us in May. Her father was a Nazi. All he said was that Hitler was crazy. Now was he crazy because he lost the war, or was he crazy because he actually was. That's the point I always think about German attitudes. Do they dislike him because they lost or have they taken a turn-around? I don't know.

Q: This woman whose father was a Nazi, has she ever talked about it?

A: I've never conversed with her. She seems to be a doting grandmother to the children, but....

Q: I've often wondered what a really sensitive person would feel about having had a Nazi as a relative.

A: I know this one lady sort of resents the rather handsome pension that she gets.

Q: This woman in Germany gets a pension because her...

A: [unintelligible] was in the Army. He was probably with the the SS troops.

Q: This was her husband.

A: Yes. And he died or was killed, I guess. But this woman resents that pension. It's because it is more than her husband would get...I don't

know. If I could figure the German mind. Now this lady is very gracious and kind; she knows all our kids...she phoned and talked to our son on Patrick's death here last week - she wanted to do something about it. Now I don't trust her, but the other...

Q: Trust her with a clause of not knowing....

A: She was very nice and the kids all loved her and everything, but how far...would she be regimented? I'd like to give her the benefit of the doubt. But talking others...I wouldn't give them the benefit of the doubt.

Q: In other words, as a human being as you see her, there is a great deal of admiration and trust and respect, but if you put her into a political situation again where she had to function the way the Germans functioned....

A: I don't think she is too well informed politically. We were talking about gays and she said, "We don't have that problem in Germany." We said, "Why not? It's everywhere. " And she said, "Oh, no, it's illegal. Hitler made it illegal."

Q: Hitler made gays illegal.

A: He got rid of them, see.

Q: There was a question as to Hitler's own sexual orientation.

A: Right. Anyway, there's a girl who is from the very same village as Shola. She lives in Fairburn now and her husband works for Delta Airlines. She said, "Shola, you don't get around. If you would go to Stuttgart, you would have your eyes full of gays. You don't get around." And Shola couldn't believe that.

Q: That might be an indication as to why you are hesitant in being able to

trust what she could perceive as being right and wrong.

A: She knows it's wrong.

Q: I mean as far as government...Hitler outlawed it.

A: Outlawed it, and, of course, they were persecuted. This Herr Huffman who captured Roehm was Hitler's staunch supporter. And he was killed -- ordered shot by Hitler because he was a gay.

Q: That's an interesting comment that gives you some insight into the thinking. It sort of sounds like brainwashed thinking. Again, many thanks.