

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:02,690  
That our interview  
would be recorded.

2  
00:00:02,690 --> 00:00:03,680  
I do.

3  
00:00:03,680 --> 00:00:04,980  
OK, thank you.

4  
00:00:04,980 --> 00:00:07,470  
So we are continuing  
the interview

5  
00:00:07,470 --> 00:00:09,870  
that was just cut  
off technologically,

6  
00:00:09,870 --> 00:00:14,100  
or technically,  
about 20 minutes ago.

7  
00:00:14,100 --> 00:00:21,060  
And if I recall, what we were  
talking about was Stalingrad.

8  
00:00:21,060 --> 00:00:26,370  
And how news of Stalingrad  
filtered down to Hohenelbe,

9  
00:00:26,370 --> 00:00:30,570  
to where you were living, to  
your family through the news

10  
00:00:30,570 --> 00:00:32,601  
and so on.

11  
00:00:32,601 --> 00:00:36,950  
Can you-- can you  
speak to that at all?

12

00:00:36,950 --> 00:00:40,280

Yes, well, that's  
what I already said.

13

00:00:40,280 --> 00:00:45,270

It was very much a main item  
of the news at the time.

14

00:00:45,270 --> 00:00:51,840

And maybe it was [INAUDIBLE]  
because I think Hitler himself

15

00:00:51,840 --> 00:00:55,770

expected that it would be  
another win in the end, which,

16

00:00:55,770 --> 00:00:59,140

of course, it wasn't.

17

00:00:59,140 --> 00:01:03,626

Did you have a  
radio there at home.

18

00:01:03,626 --> 00:01:06,780

Yeah, that's what  
everybody had, a radio.

19

00:01:06,780 --> 00:01:09,570

There wasn't-- there was no  
alternative to the radio--

20

00:01:09,570 --> 00:01:13,950

to the radio, not in those days.

21

00:01:13,950 --> 00:01:16,280

Do you remember any  
of the broadcasts?

22

00:01:16,280 --> 00:01:19,580

And did you learn about  
Stalingrad from the radio

23

00:01:19,580 --> 00:01:21,500

or from people talking?

24  
00:01:21,500 --> 00:01:23,000  
No, from radio.

25  
00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:24,830  
I mean, people talking--

26  
00:01:24,830 --> 00:01:28,860  
the people in Stalingrad  
weren't talking direct-- well--

27  
00:01:28,860 --> 00:01:29,360  
No.

28  
00:01:29,360 --> 00:01:31,970

29  
00:01:31,970 --> 00:01:35,890  
OK, that would suggest  
something somewhere else.

30  
00:01:35,890 --> 00:01:40,510  
But I have to talk to you  
about earlier times than that

31  
00:01:40,510 --> 00:01:48,520  
to explain what my attitude  
was when Stalingrad happened.

32  
00:01:48,520 --> 00:01:50,260  
Please do, please do.

33  
00:01:50,260 --> 00:01:52,780  
What was your attitude?

34  
00:01:52,780 --> 00:01:55,420  
I was already very  
much a skeptic

35  
00:01:55,420 --> 00:01:58,310  
of the outcome of

the war by then.

36  
00:01:58,310 --> 00:02:02,110  
But it was the  
experience in Prague

37  
00:02:02,110 --> 00:02:06,100  
that I had as a  
Hitler Youth leader

38  
00:02:06,100 --> 00:02:14,010  
that really was an  
eye-opener to me.

39  
00:02:14,010 --> 00:02:15,690  
Well, tell me about that.

40  
00:02:15,690 --> 00:02:20,220  
So you traveled all the way  
to Prague on one occasion

41  
00:02:20,220 --> 00:02:23,010  
or on more occasions?

42  
00:02:23,010 --> 00:02:26,670  
I think during the  
war on two occasions.

43  
00:02:26,670 --> 00:02:28,860  
But this was the first occasion.

44  
00:02:28,860 --> 00:02:32,250  
Because the German  
element that had

45  
00:02:32,250 --> 00:02:35,120  
been part of originally  
Czechoslovakia,

46  
00:02:35,120 --> 00:02:38,160  
and that Sudetenland,  
was basically

47

00:02:38,160 --> 00:02:44,130  
an outer ring around the  
main Czech area in Prague.

48

00:02:44,130 --> 00:02:54,670  
So high up above  
leaders decided that we

49

00:02:54,670 --> 00:03:00,610  
would have an annual leadership  
conference in Prague.

50

00:03:00,610 --> 00:03:04,150  
So that everybody had  
a fairly short distance

51

00:03:04,150 --> 00:03:06,820  
to travel to get there.

52

00:03:06,820 --> 00:03:11,020  
And that was my first  
experience of it,

53

00:03:11,020 --> 00:03:15,846  
just after being appointed to  
the leadership of the Hammer

54

00:03:15,846 --> 00:03:20,560  
und Sichel group, which was  
quite a large group, well

55

00:03:20,560 --> 00:03:23,200  
over 100 boys.

56

00:03:23,200 --> 00:03:32,510  
And we were in a sort of  
youth hostel place, which

57

00:03:32,510 --> 00:03:34,270  
is where we slept.

58

00:03:34,270 --> 00:03:41,740

But the actual conference  
took place in very--

59  
00:03:41,740 --> 00:03:45,670  
well-- substantial situations.

60  
00:03:45,670 --> 00:03:47,740  
We had chamber music.

61  
00:03:47,740 --> 00:03:53,310  
It was a very formidable  
kind of building.

62  
00:03:53,310 --> 00:04:00,690  
And on the first evening,  
there was a special theatre

63  
00:04:00,690 --> 00:04:08,100  
performance in German in one of  
the Prague theaters of Bernard

64  
00:04:08,100 --> 00:04:11,580  
Shaw's, the--

65  
00:04:11,580 --> 00:04:12,340  
what to call it--

66  
00:04:12,340 --> 00:04:20,329

67  
00:04:20,329 --> 00:04:21,329  
A play?

68  
00:04:21,329 --> 00:04:23,060  
Pygmalion?

69  
00:04:23,060 --> 00:04:24,670  
No, not Pygmalion.

70  
00:04:24,670 --> 00:04:29,720  
The woman from  
the Orleans, the--

71  
00:04:29,720 --> 00:04:33,380

72  
00:04:33,380 --> 00:04:37,310  
the French woman that  
beat the English then got

73  
00:04:37,310 --> 00:04:38,930  
killed herself in the--

74  
00:04:38,930 --> 00:04:41,090  
Oh, you mean Joan of Arc.

75  
00:04:41,090 --> 00:04:41,840  
Joan of Arc.

76  
00:04:41,840 --> 00:04:47,620  
Sorry, my memory is  
always a little bit shaky.

77  
00:04:47,620 --> 00:04:50,470  
Joan of Arc, and I don't  
know if you remember

78  
00:04:50,470 --> 00:04:52,490  
the story of Joan of Arc.

79  
00:04:52,490 --> 00:04:58,440  
She had got this mission  
directly from Heaven.

80  
00:04:58,440 --> 00:05:04,010  
And then she even tells the  
Cardinal, the French Cardinal,

81  
00:05:04,010 --> 00:05:12,700  
that her mission on Earth  
is directly from God.

82  
00:05:12,700 --> 00:05:18,550  
And what he gets is second

hand or misunderstanding.

83

00:05:18,550 --> 00:05:20,800

And that shook me so--

84

00:05:20,800 --> 00:05:23,950

I mean, all the boys--

85

00:05:23,950 --> 00:05:27,220

a lot of the boys left

after the first act.

86

00:05:27,220 --> 00:05:31,340

Because Shaw's-- Bernard's--

87

00:05:31,340 --> 00:05:37,720

Shaw's Joan of Arc and the young

crowd from Orleans, Schiller,

88

00:05:37,720 --> 00:05:42,280

which we do at high school

anyway, or did in those days,

89

00:05:42,280 --> 00:05:43,420

it's a total contrast.

90

00:05:43,420 --> 00:05:46,340

91

00:05:46,340 --> 00:05:55,150

It's the-- Schiller's

story is pure heroism

92

00:05:55,150 --> 00:05:56,950

of this wonderful woman.

93

00:05:56,950 --> 00:06:03,880

Whereas, Shaw, just shows how

dangerous a person is who's

94

00:06:03,880 --> 00:06:08,050

obsessed with obsessive idea.



95  
00:06:08,050 --> 00:06:12,245  
OK, you think it's  
from Heaven but, you

96  
00:06:12,245 --> 00:06:14,420  
know, how does she know?

97  
00:06:14,420 --> 00:06:18,740  
Anyway, to me, that  
brought me back

98  
00:06:18,740 --> 00:06:21,140  
to Hitler, who  
also seemed to have

99  
00:06:21,140 --> 00:06:26,480  
this sort of Heavenly  
mission feeling

100  
00:06:26,480 --> 00:06:28,410  
or gave that impression.

101  
00:06:28,410 --> 00:06:31,880  
And I thought to myself,  
how dangerous that could be.

102  
00:06:31,880 --> 00:06:43,910  
In the case of the woman, it  
was only herself who in the end

103  
00:06:43,910 --> 00:06:47,300  
was delivered to the English  
and probably killed or thrown

104  
00:06:47,300 --> 00:06:50,870  
into prison, nobody knows  
historically exactly what

105  
00:06:50,870 --> 00:06:53,960  
did happen in the end of her.

106

00:06:53,960 --> 00:07:01,350  
But Hitler, with him, the  
whole country, the whole--

107  
00:07:01,350 --> 00:07:04,290  
the whole of Germany  
was involved.

108  
00:07:04,290 --> 00:07:07,340  
And so, I think she was  
burned at the stake,

109  
00:07:07,340 --> 00:07:09,670  
if I remember my--

110  
00:07:09,670 --> 00:07:11,660  
Well, that's one story.

111  
00:07:11,660 --> 00:07:14,060  
I tried to really read  
it all up at the time.

112  
00:07:14,060 --> 00:07:15,700  
And there are  
different versions.

113  
00:07:15,700 --> 00:07:17,570  
But there's no  
proof either way--

114  
00:07:17,570 --> 00:07:18,230  
either way.

115  
00:07:18,230 --> 00:07:21,060  
Anyway, she probably got killed.

116  
00:07:21,060 --> 00:07:30,560  
And here was Hitler, in full  
charge of the whole of Germany,

117  
00:07:30,560 --> 00:07:33,030  
driving the nation forward.

118

00:07:33,030 --> 00:07:37,770

And, of course, when he started the war against Russia,

119

00:07:37,770 --> 00:07:39,230

it was shortly after--

120

00:07:39,230 --> 00:07:45,520

well, had already-- yeah, it just had happened.

121

00:07:45,520 --> 00:07:49,100

And I really got this kind of shock.

122

00:07:49,100 --> 00:07:53,480

And I said, I just wonder whether where

123

00:07:53,480 --> 00:07:55,650

this is going to lead to.

124

00:07:55,650 --> 00:08:00,000

So I became much more skeptic.

125

00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:04,060

But I felt something to save--

126

00:08:04,060 --> 00:08:08,190

if there's anything to save in this situation,

127

00:08:08,190 --> 00:08:10,670

I must try and do it.

128

00:08:10,670 --> 00:08:15,204

And so I became a kind of--

129

00:08:15,204 --> 00:08:17,790

I talked to my sisters about it.

130

00:08:17,790 --> 00:08:19,290  
And they were, of  
course, horrified.

131  
00:08:19,290 --> 00:08:21,750  
And said, don't touch anything.

132  
00:08:21,750 --> 00:08:27,390  
Just keep yourself, and  
keep down, and so on.

133  
00:08:27,390 --> 00:08:36,120  
But when suddenly a year  
later, in Hammer und Sichel,

134  
00:08:36,120 --> 00:08:39,929  
a full-scale  
Waffen-SS [INAUDIBLE]

135  
00:08:39,929 --> 00:08:45,170  
came to find volunteers.

136  
00:08:45,170 --> 00:08:46,740  
They were so desperate.

137  
00:08:46,740 --> 00:08:49,630  
But they couldn't find  
any volunteers anymore.

138  
00:08:49,630 --> 00:08:54,110  
Youngsters who were 16 were  
really called up by the army.

139  
00:08:54,110 --> 00:08:57,250  
And where would the  
volunteers come from?

140  
00:08:57,250 --> 00:09:00,820  
Anyway, they promised  
me the Earth.

141  
00:09:00,820 --> 00:09:04,460  
I was the only guy there to--

142  
00:09:04,460 --> 00:09:07,180  
who was eligible, If you like.

143  
00:09:07,180 --> 00:09:10,180  
And I said, look, I'm  
already under order

144  
00:09:10,180 --> 00:09:13,660  
that I must finish my  
final exams [INAUDIBLE]..

145  
00:09:13,660 --> 00:09:16,260  
Oh, they just said,  
that's nothing.

146  
00:09:16,260 --> 00:09:19,430  
We get our way.

147  
00:09:19,430 --> 00:09:21,232  
Don't worry about that.

148  
00:09:21,232 --> 00:09:23,260  
And where did I want  
to go-- oh, yes,

149  
00:09:23,260 --> 00:09:26,770  
I want to go with the  
reconnaissance tank regiment.

150  
00:09:26,770 --> 00:09:30,010  
Yes, of course, we'll  
book you in there.

151  
00:09:30,010 --> 00:09:30,850  
It was a kind of--

152  
00:09:30,850 --> 00:09:33,540

153  
00:09:33,540 --> 00:09:37,380  
I didn't really believe it,

but it seemed so unreal.

154  
00:09:37,380 --> 00:09:40,820  
And I thought maybe--  
maybe in some way

155  
00:09:40,820 --> 00:09:45,500  
it will lead me to be able  
to do something about it.

156  
00:09:45,500 --> 00:09:48,190  
And so I volunteered.

157  
00:09:48,190 --> 00:09:52,690  
And, of course,  
all these promises

158  
00:09:52,690 --> 00:09:57,880  
of being called up straight  
away never took place.

159  
00:09:57,880 --> 00:10:02,770  
Even so, the actual  
final examinations

160  
00:10:02,770 --> 00:10:07,900  
were done six months earlier, as  
I told you earlier, earlier on.

161  
00:10:07,900 --> 00:10:15,720  
My call up only came in July,  
1944, exactly on the day

162  
00:10:15,720 --> 00:10:18,820  
when there was the  
attempt on Hitler's life

163  
00:10:18,820 --> 00:10:22,700  
at the headquarters.

164  
00:10:22,700 --> 00:10:27,160  
So that's July 20th,  
1944 in East Prussia.

165  
00:10:27,160 --> 00:10:31,050  
Yeah, that's right.

166  
00:10:31,050 --> 00:10:32,678  
I have a few questions.

167  
00:10:32,678 --> 00:10:34,720  
I wasn't, of course, in  
East Prussia at the time.

168  
00:10:34,720 --> 00:10:40,140  
But that's the day I got my  
call-up papers to go to Riga.

169  
00:10:40,140 --> 00:10:42,480  
OK.

170  
00:10:42,480 --> 00:10:45,690  
So I have a number of questions,  
a number of questions here.

171  
00:10:45,690 --> 00:10:47,140  
Yeah.

172  
00:10:47,140 --> 00:10:54,570  
Number one, I wonder, this  
performance of Joan of Arc was

173  
00:10:54,570 --> 00:10:57,630  
under the sponsorship  
of the Jungvolk,

174  
00:10:57,630 --> 00:10:59,030  
as George Bernard Shaw's--

175  
00:10:59,030 --> 00:11:01,980

176  
00:11:01,980 --> 00:11:07,440  
they called together a  
conference of Jungvolk members

177  
00:11:07,440 --> 00:11:08,420  
to Prague.

178  
00:11:08,420 --> 00:11:11,040  
No, that was Hitler Youth.

179  
00:11:11,040 --> 00:11:12,610  
I mean, that was--

180  
00:11:12,610 --> 00:11:18,580  
that was Jungvolk and the older  
Hitler Youth kind, up to 18.

181  
00:11:18,580 --> 00:11:21,445  
But, of course, in  
those days there

182  
00:11:21,445 --> 00:11:25,740  
were very few people over  
16 who were still around,

183  
00:11:25,740 --> 00:11:28,730  
because they were already  
called up for work services

184  
00:11:28,730 --> 00:11:33,070  
or for Army service,  
and all that kind of--

185  
00:11:33,070 --> 00:11:36,148  
OK, so Jungvolk is different  
than Hitler-Jugend.

186  
00:11:36,148 --> 00:11:36,940  
It is a different--

187  
00:11:36,940 --> 00:11:42,790  
Jungvolk was the early part,  
10 of 14, aged 10 to 14.

188  
00:11:42,790 --> 00:11:46,800



And then 14 to 18 was  
Hitler Youth, the way

189  
00:11:46,800 --> 00:11:49,310  
it started in peacetime.

190  
00:11:49,310 --> 00:11:49,830  
OK.

191  
00:11:49,830 --> 00:11:53,220  
And, of course,  
gradually the whole thing

192  
00:11:53,220 --> 00:11:56,070  
became one mass together.

193  
00:11:56,070 --> 00:11:59,790  
And in the end, it was more  
Jungvolk than Hitler Youth,

194  
00:11:59,790 --> 00:12:03,770  
because Hitler Youth was already  
called up to army service

195  
00:12:03,770 --> 00:12:06,930  
or work services.

196  
00:12:06,930 --> 00:12:08,590  
So, OK.

197  
00:12:08,590 --> 00:12:13,550  
The first thought I  
had is, here this--

198  
00:12:13,550 --> 00:12:17,600  
the Hitler Youth and the  
Jungvolk organization

199  
00:12:17,600 --> 00:12:23,460  
brings all of these young  
people from around the country,

200

00:12:23,460 --> 00:12:26,780  
German speaking, to Prague.

201  
00:12:26,780 --> 00:12:28,070  
Only the leaders.

202  
00:12:28,070 --> 00:12:29,550  
That was only leaders.

203  
00:12:29,550 --> 00:12:33,230  
OK, but nevertheless, it's  
under their sponsorship

204  
00:12:33,230 --> 00:12:36,500  
that you go see this  
play by George Bernard

205  
00:12:36,500 --> 00:12:38,000  
Shaw about Joan of Arc.

206  
00:12:38,000 --> 00:12:38,870  
Yes.

207  
00:12:38,870 --> 00:12:43,450  
And you, as a young  
person, a teenager,

208  
00:12:43,450 --> 00:12:47,600  
make the connection  
between Joan of Arc,

209  
00:12:47,600 --> 00:12:52,490  
and maybe her craziness, and  
the leader of Germany, and maybe

210  
00:12:52,490 --> 00:12:53,600  
his craziness.

211  
00:12:53,600 --> 00:12:54,850  
That's it, yeah, that's right.

212  
00:12:54,850 --> 00:12:58,820

Now, wouldn't it have  
been dangerous maybe

213  
00:12:58,820 --> 00:13:01,730  
other young people would  
make such a connection?

214  
00:13:01,730 --> 00:13:04,340  
I mean, did it not  
come to the mind

215  
00:13:04,340 --> 00:13:06,650  
of the organizers  
that this may not

216  
00:13:06,650 --> 00:13:10,790  
be the best play to  
show their young people

217  
00:13:10,790 --> 00:13:13,100  
at that particular time?

218  
00:13:13,100 --> 00:13:17,147  
Well, there was, obviously,  
as a result of it--

219  
00:13:17,147 --> 00:13:19,640  
because most of the  
youngsters actually

220  
00:13:19,640 --> 00:13:25,250  
having left after the  
first act in protest,

221  
00:13:25,250 --> 00:13:29,480  
that it was somebody's  
big mistake.

222  
00:13:29,480 --> 00:13:33,410  
But as far as the  
meeting was concerned,

223  
00:13:33,410 --> 00:13:35,090

it was completely ignored.

224  
00:13:35,090 --> 00:13:36,620  
Nobody talked about it.

225  
00:13:36,620 --> 00:13:39,770  
It was just what happened  
last night wasn't--

226  
00:13:39,770 --> 00:13:43,890  
wasn't on the order paper.

227  
00:13:43,890 --> 00:13:45,750  
Well, that's interesting.

228  
00:13:45,750 --> 00:13:46,500  
I mean, that was--

229  
00:13:46,500 --> 00:13:47,750  
Because clearly--

230  
00:13:47,750 --> 00:13:51,240  
And that was, again,  
for me, a real shock

231  
00:13:51,240 --> 00:13:55,920  
that people couldn't face  
up to an issue of that kind.

232  
00:13:55,920 --> 00:13:59,720  
But I was given to  
understand that with the war,

233  
00:13:59,720 --> 00:14:02,700  
we're getting more serious.

234  
00:14:02,700 --> 00:14:09,110  
The security police  
were very strong.

235  
00:14:09,110 --> 00:14:13,740  
And obviously, if I'd

been one of the organizers

236

00:14:13,740 --> 00:14:17,100

who'd brought this play to--

237

00:14:17,100 --> 00:14:20,120

which was obviously  
something that had to be--

238

00:14:20,120 --> 00:14:26,070

was on the Prague stage ready  
to be performed at the time.

239

00:14:26,070 --> 00:14:28,950

And so--

240

00:14:28,950 --> 00:14:32,910

Somebody wasn't doing their  
job in the political police.

241

00:14:32,910 --> 00:14:37,200

Somebody was-- because here's  
the interesting part of that.

242

00:14:37,200 --> 00:14:40,170

Is that if you got  
it, and you made

243

00:14:40,170 --> 00:14:43,680

the connection, and those  
other young people who

244

00:14:43,680 --> 00:14:45,930

might have been  
insulted and thought

245

00:14:45,930 --> 00:14:50,330

this is a terrible thing about  
the Fuhrer to have such a play,

246

00:14:50,330 --> 00:14:54,070

they made the connection, but  
took it in a different way.

247  
00:14:54,070 --> 00:14:54,570  
Yeah.

248  
00:14:54,570 --> 00:14:57,810  
That is how could  
you-- how could you

249  
00:14:57,810 --> 00:14:59,490  
insult him in such a way.

250  
00:14:59,490 --> 00:15:01,080  
Whereas, you're  
saying this is very

251  
00:15:01,080 --> 00:15:05,593  
insightful about who he is.

252  
00:15:05,593 --> 00:15:06,260  
Yeah, somebody--

253  
00:15:06,260 --> 00:15:07,290  
Or who he might be.

254  
00:15:07,290 --> 00:15:13,020  
Obviously, I certainly didn't  
jump to any conclusions.

255  
00:15:13,020 --> 00:15:18,420  
But from then on, I was always  
considering the alternatives.

256  
00:15:18,420 --> 00:15:23,850  
And, of course, with the way  
that Stalingrad, particularly,

257  
00:15:23,850 --> 00:15:26,790  
I mean, sort of rammed  
it home in my mind,

258  
00:15:26,790 --> 00:15:30,360  
that really that's the

most likely way things

259

00:15:30,360 --> 00:15:33,630  
are going to happen.

260

00:15:33,630 --> 00:15:35,880  
Did you talk to any adults?

261

00:15:35,880 --> 00:15:38,220  
That is, you say you  
talked to your sisters,

262

00:15:38,220 --> 00:15:40,020  
but were there any  
adults you could

263

00:15:40,020 --> 00:15:41,660  
share these impressions with?

264

00:15:41,660 --> 00:15:43,200  
No, I didn't.

265

00:15:43,200 --> 00:15:44,640  
I didn't share that.

266

00:15:44,640 --> 00:15:46,590  
I just didn't think it was safe.

267

00:15:46,590 --> 00:15:49,560  
But as far as I'm  
concerned, it helped

268

00:15:49,560 --> 00:15:52,190  
me a great deal when I  
was with the Waffen-SS,

269

00:15:52,190 --> 00:15:57,680  
and when I managed  
actually to drag away

270

00:15:57,680 --> 00:16:03,090  
our squadron from an

engagement with the Russians

271

00:16:03,090 --> 00:16:05,650  
and we surrendered  
to the Americans.

272

00:16:05,650 --> 00:16:09,050  
I was materially  
involved in that.

273

00:16:09,050 --> 00:16:12,460  
And it was like a miracle.

274

00:16:12,460 --> 00:16:16,290  
OK, before we come  
to that, that's

275

00:16:16,290 --> 00:16:21,000  
the other question that I had,  
is that if your conclusion,

276

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:25,410  
after seeing that  
performance, and then seeing

277

00:16:25,410 --> 00:16:29,490  
how people didn't refer  
to it or respond to it

278

00:16:29,490 --> 00:16:32,610  
the following day, didn't  
even acknowledge it--

279

00:16:32,610 --> 00:16:33,240  
Yeah.

280

00:16:33,240 --> 00:16:36,540  
--and then your  
conclusion that, hmm, I'm

281

00:16:36,540 --> 00:16:38,460  
more skeptical about this.



282  
00:16:38,460 --> 00:16:40,630  
Yeah.

283  
00:16:40,630 --> 00:16:43,900  
And then you volunteer  
for the Waffen-SS, that

284  
00:16:43,900 --> 00:16:45,940  
sounds like a contradiction.

285  
00:16:45,940 --> 00:16:47,270  
That sounds like.

286  
00:16:47,270 --> 00:16:52,030  
Instead of taking a skepticism  
and going another way,

287  
00:16:52,030 --> 00:16:55,570  
you actually volunteer  
for the Waffen-SS.

288  
00:16:55,570 --> 00:16:58,240  
Now, tell me, is the  
Waffen-SS the same thing

289  
00:16:58,240 --> 00:17:00,180  
as the regular SS?

290  
00:17:00,180 --> 00:17:00,680  
No.

291  
00:17:00,680 --> 00:17:02,770  
Or was it something different?

292  
00:17:02,770 --> 00:17:04,119  
Well, it was--

293  
00:17:04,119 --> 00:17:08,170  
Himmler was obviously one  
of the guys who was trying

294

00:17:08,170 --> 00:17:11,620  
to get control over Hitler.

295  
00:17:11,620 --> 00:17:15,339  
But Hitler was playing  
off all these people--

296  
00:17:15,339 --> 00:17:17,890  
the army people with the--

297  
00:17:17,890 --> 00:17:23,920  
and Himmler conjured up  
an army of volunteers.

298  
00:17:23,920 --> 00:17:28,359  
In other words, the Waffen-SS  
wasn't the security services,

299  
00:17:28,359 --> 00:17:33,490  
but it was an army that  
was consisted entirely

300  
00:17:33,490 --> 00:17:37,630  
of volunteers in [INAUDIBLE].

301  
00:17:37,630 --> 00:17:42,830  
Even that, at the stage when  
I joined, wasn't true anymore.

302  
00:17:42,830 --> 00:17:46,870  
I mean, they were dragging  
in Russians, and Ukrainians,

303  
00:17:46,870 --> 00:17:49,990  
and anybody they  
could get hold of.

304  
00:17:49,990 --> 00:17:53,380  
Whether they were  
volunteers or not,

305  
00:17:53,380 --> 00:17:57,340  
that's sort of questionable.

306  
00:17:57,340 --> 00:18:00,340  
I remember dealing  
with a group of them

307  
00:18:00,340 --> 00:18:03,726  
in Belgium when I would  
an interpreter at the--

308  
00:18:03,726 --> 00:18:07,570  
in the prisoner of war office.

309  
00:18:07,570 --> 00:18:09,610  
Poor devils, they  
were then, of course--

310  
00:18:09,610 --> 00:18:13,630

311  
00:18:13,630 --> 00:18:19,180  
any kind of person like  
them who had been captured

312  
00:18:19,180 --> 00:18:23,170  
and then was released from  
America, or from the Americans

313  
00:18:23,170 --> 00:18:26,710  
and so on, in Russia  
they were all court

314  
00:18:26,710 --> 00:18:27,750  
martialed straight away.

315  
00:18:27,750 --> 00:18:32,320

316  
00:18:32,320 --> 00:18:33,700  
So a couple of things then.

317  
00:18:33,700 --> 00:18:34,200  
Yeah.

318  
00:18:34,200 --> 00:18:36,760  
So number one, you're  
saying that the difference

319  
00:18:36,760 --> 00:18:39,910  
between the Waffen-SS  
and the regular SS

320  
00:18:39,910 --> 00:18:42,970  
is that Waffens were volunteers.

321  
00:18:42,970 --> 00:18:44,905  
To fight or for--

322  
00:18:44,905 --> 00:18:46,980  
Yeah, fight.

323  
00:18:46,980 --> 00:18:51,940  
And, of course, they had to  
prove themselves to fight.

324  
00:18:51,940 --> 00:19:02,830  
So they were-- well, they were  
often sent to the most tricky

325  
00:19:02,830 --> 00:19:06,030  
or un--

326  
00:19:06,030 --> 00:19:09,630  
less hopeful kind  
of battle situations

327  
00:19:09,630 --> 00:19:15,510  
to show that they could  
overcome it by sheer spirit of

328  
00:19:15,510 --> 00:19:16,730  
[INAUDIBLE].

329  
00:19:16,730 --> 00:19:18,720  
And the other trouble

was, of course,

330  
00:19:18,720 --> 00:19:22,470  
that they didn't really  
have the experience

331  
00:19:22,470 --> 00:19:25,620  
that the Wehrmacht had  
and the kind of leadership

332  
00:19:25,620 --> 00:19:27,240  
that the Wehrmacht had.

333  
00:19:27,240 --> 00:19:31,350  
It was all a bit of a  
wild quickly get together

334  
00:19:31,350 --> 00:19:35,050  
volunteers organization.

335  
00:19:35,050 --> 00:19:37,680  
So they would know  
already at that time

336  
00:19:37,680 --> 00:19:43,010  
when I volunteered that they had  
much greater losses in battles

337  
00:19:43,010 --> 00:19:46,255  
than the other--

338  
00:19:46,255 --> 00:19:49,480  
the Wehrmacht or  
the [INAUDIBLE],,

339  
00:19:49,480 --> 00:19:53,340  
who were using  
their common sense

340  
00:19:53,340 --> 00:19:58,680  
and not just charging  
into any battle.

341  
00:19:58,680 --> 00:19:59,180  
Anyway--

342  
00:19:59,180 --> 00:20:01,020  
So why did you join them?

343  
00:20:01,020 --> 00:20:03,350  
So in other words, why  
did you pick the Waffen-SS

344  
00:20:03,350 --> 00:20:05,480  
versus the Wehrmacht?

345  
00:20:05,480 --> 00:20:10,530  
Well, I felt there was  
something I could do.

346  
00:20:10,530 --> 00:20:13,515  
And it turned out I  
could do something.

347  
00:20:13,515 --> 00:20:16,010  
Yes, but what did you  
think at that point,

348  
00:20:16,010 --> 00:20:20,630  
if you're skeptical,  
and you-- actually, it's

349  
00:20:20,630 --> 00:20:24,770  
so symbolic you are called  
up on the day of the attempt

350  
00:20:24,770 --> 00:20:26,780  
of Hitler's life.

351  
00:20:26,780 --> 00:20:28,100  
That's pure coincidence, yeah.

352  
00:20:28,100 --> 00:20:31,310  
Yes, yeah, but it  
is symbolic of that.

353  
00:20:31,310 --> 00:20:33,180  
And then your  
skepticism plays in.

354  
00:20:33,180 --> 00:20:33,680  
Yeah.

355  
00:20:33,680 --> 00:20:39,500  
How-- with what kind of spirit  
did you join the Waffen--SS?

356  
00:20:39,500 --> 00:20:42,260  
And why did--  
explain to me again--

357  
00:20:42,260 --> 00:20:44,750  
I know you did at  
one time, but what

358  
00:20:44,750 --> 00:20:47,480  
was it that they  
were promising you

359  
00:20:47,480 --> 00:20:51,170  
that tried to make--  
they tried to make

360  
00:20:51,170 --> 00:20:54,600  
it more attractive for you?

361  
00:20:54,600 --> 00:20:58,200  
Well, that was  
sort of part of it.

362  
00:20:58,200 --> 00:21:03,610  
The extreme way they went  
around to get me to volunteer

363  
00:21:03,610 --> 00:21:13,940  
made me feel that I might get a  
reasonable chance to influence

364

00:21:13,940 --> 00:21:16,840  
things when I get there.

365

00:21:16,840 --> 00:21:18,830  
As a Hitler Youth  
leader I found--

366

00:21:18,830 --> 00:21:23,150  
again, you find if you  
have the outer appearance

367

00:21:23,150 --> 00:21:30,880  
of being one of them, you  
won't be trapped or anything.

368

00:21:30,880 --> 00:21:32,150  
You're accepted.

369

00:21:32,150 --> 00:21:41,040  
And I thought, if I'm sort of  
a Waffen-SS guy like everybody

370

00:21:41,040 --> 00:21:46,170  
else, I can then,  
behind their backs

371

00:21:46,170 --> 00:21:52,440  
make something or organize  
something that would be helpful

372

00:21:52,440 --> 00:21:53,730  
and save lives.

373

00:21:53,730 --> 00:21:59,475  
That was my-- one of  
my reading in those war

374

00:21:59,475 --> 00:22:03,000  
years was a book called  
Im Westen Nichts Neues.

375

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:06,050



376  
00:22:06,050 --> 00:22:10,910  
And the highlight  
for me was when,

377  
00:22:10,910 --> 00:22:15,680  
I think in 1917, at Christmas,  
on the Western Front,

378  
00:22:15,680 --> 00:22:22,010  
the English and  
the German soldiers

379  
00:22:22,010 --> 00:22:28,610  
came out of their  
duggins and had

380  
00:22:28,610 --> 00:22:31,880  
celebrated Christmas together.

381  
00:22:31,880 --> 00:22:33,230  
And I thought, well--

382  
00:22:33,230 --> 00:22:37,940  
Yeah, this is Erich Maria  
Remarque's novel All Quiet

383  
00:22:37,940 --> 00:22:39,430  
on the Western Front.

384  
00:22:39,430 --> 00:22:41,470  
[INAUDIBLE], yes, [INAUDIBLE].

385  
00:22:41,470 --> 00:22:43,700  
And it's a peace  
novel, which is why

386  
00:22:43,700 --> 00:22:47,270  
I'm surprised you had access  
to it during the Hitler years.

387

00:22:47,270 --> 00:22:49,220

I thought his was  
one of the books that

388

00:22:49,220 --> 00:22:52,670

ended up on the bonfires.

389

00:22:52,670 --> 00:22:57,800

Yeah, if it did, somehow there  
was one in our library at home.

390

00:22:57,800 --> 00:23:02,420

And I certainly read  
it with great interest.

391

00:23:02,420 --> 00:23:09,350

Because at that time, it was,  
to me, the most real story

392

00:23:09,350 --> 00:23:13,800

I had of what real  
war is all about.

393

00:23:13,800 --> 00:23:20,720

But the way these soldiers got  
out of their duggins and so on

394

00:23:20,720 --> 00:23:25,460

and celebrated together, I  
thought that's the spirit.

395

00:23:25,460 --> 00:23:28,610

All this killing becomes  
so murderous and senseless.

396

00:23:28,610 --> 00:23:32,630

397

00:23:32,630 --> 00:23:35,850

Another impression I'm  
having as we're speaking

398

00:23:35,850 --> 00:23:41,870

is that you have some  
sort of dawning on you

399  
00:23:41,870 --> 00:23:45,380  
that what's going on in  
your world isn't very good

400  
00:23:45,380 --> 00:23:50,370  
and isn't very real, but there's  
no one to talk to about it.

401  
00:23:50,370 --> 00:23:51,260  
Yeah.

402  
00:23:51,260 --> 00:23:53,690  
Was there anybody  
to talk to about it?

403  
00:23:53,690 --> 00:23:58,790  
Was there anybody who you  
sensed shared your skepticism?

404  
00:23:58,790 --> 00:23:59,810  
Oh, yes.

405  
00:23:59,810 --> 00:24:04,980  
I think Uncle [? Hannes, ?]  
[?Bertel's?] father, he did.

406  
00:24:04,980 --> 00:24:08,732  
He put it-- he was--

407  
00:24:08,732 --> 00:24:19,750  
he left his directorship job  
in the [? ER ?] [? Kluger ?]

408  
00:24:19,750 --> 00:24:27,710  
organization because of having a  
disagreement with his two elder

409  
00:24:27,710 --> 00:24:31,670  
brothers, who were  
the more senior ones.

410

00:24:31,670 --> 00:24:38,630  
And so he was then made a major  
of the German Reserve Army.

411

00:24:38,630 --> 00:24:42,340  
But he was obviously  
already well in his 50s,

412

00:24:42,340 --> 00:24:47,010  
so he wasn't a front  
line kind of guy.

413

00:24:47,010 --> 00:24:50,630  
But he was-- when  
Mussolini was--

414

00:24:50,630 --> 00:24:53,940

415

00:24:53,940 --> 00:24:59,270  
what do you call it-- when  
the revolt was in Italy

416

00:24:59,270 --> 00:25:07,340  
and Mussolini was removed, he  
was in charge of the control

417

00:25:07,340 --> 00:25:13,910  
of the southern railway  
area, from Naples to--

418

00:25:13,910 --> 00:25:17,240  
towards the southern  
end of Italy,

419

00:25:17,240 --> 00:25:21,500  
as long as the Americans  
hadn't started to invade

420

00:25:21,500 --> 00:25:23,120  
and take over.

421

00:25:23,120 --> 00:25:26,990

And he used to come to me  
when he was on holiday.

422

00:25:26,990 --> 00:25:31,670

And he would say, the only way  
he reckons the Germans couldn't

423

00:25:31,670 --> 00:25:38,210

win the war was if the  
Americans and all their allies

424

00:25:38,210 --> 00:25:44,720

were even worse at  
handling their troops.

425

00:25:44,720 --> 00:25:47,280

He said, as far as  
he was concerned,

426

00:25:47,280 --> 00:25:51,650

the German troops in southern  
Italy were always on the move,

427

00:25:51,650 --> 00:25:54,830

never on the front line.

428

00:25:54,830 --> 00:25:59,030

So they were-- they  
were was retreating.

429

00:25:59,030 --> 00:26:03,370

They were always  
being reallocated or--

430

00:26:03,370 --> 00:26:07,630

we're always on these railways,  
rather than trains, rather than

431

00:26:07,630 --> 00:26:09,170

on the front line.

432

00:26:09,170 --> 00:26:15,960  
And, of course, that exactly  
happened to me a year later.

433  
00:26:15,960 --> 00:26:17,900  
I was being sent around.

434  
00:26:17,900 --> 00:26:22,700  
First of all, to Riga, of  
all places, just in time,

435  
00:26:22,700 --> 00:26:24,110  
before the Russians got there.

436  
00:26:24,110 --> 00:26:28,880

437  
00:26:28,880 --> 00:26:31,310  
I'm coming to that.

438  
00:26:31,310 --> 00:26:35,350  
But before we get there, yet  
another question of mine.

439  
00:26:35,350 --> 00:26:35,870  
Yeah.

440  
00:26:35,870 --> 00:26:39,980  
So the skepticism is born.

441  
00:26:39,980 --> 00:26:40,520  
Yeah.

442  
00:26:40,520 --> 00:26:42,530  
And it is growing.

443  
00:26:42,530 --> 00:26:46,580  
And there is Uncle  
[? Hannes, ?] who

444  
00:26:46,580 --> 00:26:50,885  
you can share this with, who

has his own kind of skepticism--

445  
00:26:50,885 --> 00:26:51,740  
Yeah.

446  
00:26:51,740 --> 00:26:54,640  
--based on what he sees.

447  
00:26:54,640 --> 00:26:56,810  
That's what I particularly  
liked about him.

448  
00:26:56,810 --> 00:27:00,590  
He was one of very,  
very few people

449  
00:27:00,590 --> 00:27:09,450  
who were downright about it, who  
weren't just glossing over it.

450  
00:27:09,450 --> 00:27:16,470  
And my father wouldn't  
say a word about anything.

451  
00:27:16,470 --> 00:27:17,290  
OK.

452  
00:27:17,290 --> 00:27:21,380  
So here is the  
other part of this.

453  
00:27:21,380 --> 00:27:24,550  
The question that I have is  
one that is in hindsight--

454  
00:27:24,550 --> 00:27:25,180  
Yes.

455  
00:27:25,180 --> 00:27:27,380  
--rather than when you're there.

456  
00:27:27,380 --> 00:27:31,980

But it is something that all  
of us who were not there,

457  
00:27:31,980 --> 00:27:33,070  
and who are--

458  
00:27:33,070 --> 00:27:38,680  
particularly those of us who  
were born later wonder about.

459  
00:27:38,680 --> 00:27:43,270  
How much did you  
know of the suffering

460  
00:27:43,270 --> 00:27:48,220  
of, let's say, Nazi-isms  
targets, Nazi-isms victims?

461  
00:27:48,220 --> 00:27:53,380  
And did that-- it doesn't  
sound like that ever figured

462  
00:27:53,380 --> 00:27:55,310  
into the equation.

463  
00:27:55,310 --> 00:27:59,350  
For example, whether it was  
Social Democrats in Germany,

464  
00:27:59,350 --> 00:28:02,440  
who would have been  
arrested, Social Democrats

465  
00:28:02,440 --> 00:28:05,470  
who might have ended up in  
the concentration camps,

466  
00:28:05,470 --> 00:28:10,510  
whether it's the Jews, whether  
it's the population at large,

467  
00:28:10,510 --> 00:28:13,540  
all the forced laborers



the slave laborers,

468

00:28:13,540 --> 00:28:17,980

all these millions of  
people who are being

469

00:28:17,980 --> 00:28:22,450

ground into the ground,  
quite literally, by Hitler.

470

00:28:22,450 --> 00:28:26,390

Was that something that  
just you didn't know about,

471

00:28:26,390 --> 00:28:29,320

so it couldn't figure  
into the equation?

472

00:28:29,320 --> 00:28:35,890

But from what I'm hearing, that  
inhumanity wasn't part of--

473

00:28:35,890 --> 00:28:38,170

that expressed in  
humanity by Hitler

474

00:28:38,170 --> 00:28:40,420

wasn't part of  
one of the reasons

475

00:28:40,420 --> 00:28:42,610

why you turned away from him.

476

00:28:42,610 --> 00:28:44,230

And I'm wondering why.

477

00:28:44,230 --> 00:28:46,990

Because post-war, of  
course, we all did.

478

00:28:46,990 --> 00:28:48,640

Yeah.

479

00:28:48,640 --> 00:28:53,110

Well, at the time, of  
course, everybody--

480

00:28:53,110 --> 00:29:03,490

the-- everybody was being  
called up, or forced to join,

481

00:29:03,490 --> 00:29:09,410

either a work situation  
or for the war--

482

00:29:09,410 --> 00:29:11,620

the war itself.

483

00:29:11,620 --> 00:29:16,510

And that in itself  
was so universal.

484

00:29:16,510 --> 00:29:19,520

OK, [?Bertel?]  
had a [INAUDIBLE]..

485

00:29:19,520 --> 00:29:22,610

She had a Polish  
guy running or doing

486

00:29:22,610 --> 00:29:28,320

the farm, the day-to-day  
farm work for her.

487

00:29:28,320 --> 00:29:32,650

And then it was a French guy,  
who was very opinionated.

488

00:29:32,650 --> 00:29:39,640

And she used to have her long  
chats and arguments with him

489

00:29:39,640 --> 00:29:42,970

time and time again.

490

00:29:42,970 --> 00:29:48,600  
OK, as far as I'm concerned,  
OK, they lost their war.

491  
00:29:48,600 --> 00:29:52,430  
And now they're  
being used as labor.

492  
00:29:52,430 --> 00:29:58,720  
And then, of course, as far  
as the Jews were concerned,

493  
00:29:58,720 --> 00:30:03,580  
I couldn't believe that  
there was a killing going on.

494  
00:30:03,580 --> 00:30:08,450  
I think our German side  
was pretty ruthless,

495  
00:30:08,450 --> 00:30:11,260  
but I didn't think  
it could be anything.

496  
00:30:11,260 --> 00:30:14,880  
The Russians, more likely,  
yes, as far as-- as far

497  
00:30:14,880 --> 00:30:17,790  
as my attitude at the  
time was concerned.

498  
00:30:17,790 --> 00:30:22,600  
But not the Germans, would  
never sink to that level.

499  
00:30:22,600 --> 00:30:25,190  
I mean, that was  
the [INAUDIBLE]..

500  
00:30:25,190 --> 00:30:26,100  
OK.

501

00:30:26,100 --> 00:30:27,300  
You're giving me an answer.

502  
00:30:27,300 --> 00:30:29,400  
What you're saying  
is that your--

503  
00:30:29,400 --> 00:30:31,740  
I don't want to put words  
in your mouth, but again,

504  
00:30:31,740 --> 00:30:33,150  
this is how I hear it--

505  
00:30:33,150 --> 00:30:37,850  
is that your exposure to  
any kind of repression

506  
00:30:37,850 --> 00:30:43,170  
was limited to the people who  
worked on [? Bertel's ?] farm.

507  
00:30:43,170 --> 00:30:46,950  
And you didn't see, aside  
from that Jewish girl, who

508  
00:30:46,950 --> 00:30:50,700  
was in the factory, who  
gave you a bad look,

509  
00:30:50,700 --> 00:30:53,670  
you didn't see any of  
this, and so how could

510  
00:30:53,670 --> 00:30:55,380  
you believe it would happen.

511  
00:30:55,380 --> 00:30:57,450  
Well, exactly.

512  
00:30:57,450 --> 00:31:02,280  
But the killing side  
of it, for them to be--

513  
00:31:02,280 --> 00:31:07,620  
obviously, without having,  
shall we say, personal,

514  
00:31:07,620 --> 00:31:10,860  
intimate experience of it.

515  
00:31:10,860 --> 00:31:15,060  
The factory, the  
[? Kluger ?] factory was full

516  
00:31:15,060 --> 00:31:17,850  
of forced labor, of course.

517  
00:31:17,850 --> 00:31:22,210  
Because they replaced all the  
people who'd been called up

518  
00:31:22,210 --> 00:31:23,210  
for army service.

519  
00:31:23,210 --> 00:31:27,600

520  
00:31:27,600 --> 00:31:28,100  
Hello?

521  
00:31:28,100 --> 00:31:32,315  
OK, OK, no, no, no, I'm--

522  
00:31:32,315 --> 00:31:33,200  
I'm here.

523  
00:31:33,200 --> 00:31:36,450  
I'm just-- but you  
didn't see mistreatment--

524  
00:31:36,450 --> 00:31:38,810  
I [INAUDIBLE].

525

00:31:38,810 --> 00:31:43,580  
I, obviously, being a  
youngster, was trying--

526  
00:31:43,580 --> 00:31:47,220  
concentrating on what  
I could do about it.

527  
00:31:47,220 --> 00:31:51,530  
And with the SS, with  
[INAUDIBLE] coming

528  
00:31:51,530 --> 00:31:56,390  
on and so on, it  
sort of struck me--

529  
00:31:56,390 --> 00:32:00,020  
why don't I join  
them and find a way

530  
00:32:00,020 --> 00:32:01,720  
of doing something for peace.

531  
00:32:01,720 --> 00:32:04,290

532  
00:32:04,290 --> 00:32:05,250  
OK.

533  
00:32:05,250 --> 00:32:10,810  
So you join them  
on July 20th, 1944.

534  
00:32:10,810 --> 00:32:12,750  
No, I didn't.

535  
00:32:12,750 --> 00:32:14,800  
Oh, you were called up then.

536  
00:32:14,800 --> 00:32:19,230  
This was [INAUDIBLE]----  
we're talking now somewhere

537

00:32:19,230 --> 00:32:23,220  
in the summer of 1943.

538

00:32:23,220 --> 00:32:26,040  
Oh, so you joined in  
1943, but you were only

539

00:32:26,040 --> 00:32:28,045  
called up in July of '44.

540

00:32:28,045 --> 00:32:29,100  
No, I didn't.

541

00:32:29,100 --> 00:32:32,820  
Well, I simply volunteered.

542

00:32:32,820 --> 00:32:34,770  
I signed a piece  
of paper for them

543

00:32:34,770 --> 00:32:36,147  
that they would call me up.

544

00:32:36,147 --> 00:32:37,980  
And, of course, they  
said they would call me

545

00:32:37,980 --> 00:32:42,100  
up almost straight away,  
because Hitler's order didn't

546

00:32:42,100 --> 00:32:43,642  
count with them.

547

00:32:43,642 --> 00:32:44,600  
And, of course, it did.

548

00:32:44,600 --> 00:32:47,320

549

00:32:47,320 --> 00:32:49,000

OK, so now I understand.

550  
00:32:49,000 --> 00:32:52,400  
They come by in  
the summer of 1943.

551  
00:32:52,400 --> 00:32:56,042  
And they tried to enlist you.

552  
00:32:56,042 --> 00:33:01,420  
Yeah, not just me personally,  
but they wanted volunteers

553  
00:33:01,420 --> 00:33:04,990  
by hook or by  
crook, because that

554  
00:33:04,990 --> 00:33:11,030  
was a whole, sort of what the  
Waffen-SS was supposed to be.

555  
00:33:11,030 --> 00:33:12,310  
Of course.

556  
00:33:12,310 --> 00:33:13,570  
They'd run out of--

557  
00:33:13,570 --> 00:33:17,970  
obviously, out of any  
chance, any easy chance,

558  
00:33:17,970 --> 00:33:24,130  
or any honest chance of  
getting volunteers any more.

559  
00:33:24,130 --> 00:33:28,556  
Because the people had already  
been called over age 16.

560  
00:33:28,556 --> 00:33:29,490  
OK.

561



00:33:29,490 --> 00:33:32,340  
And then they were under the  
control of the army and not

562  
00:33:32,340 --> 00:33:34,510  
the Waffen-SS.

563  
00:33:34,510 --> 00:33:37,600  
And of course, the  
contrast, or, shall we say,

564  
00:33:37,600 --> 00:33:47,640  
the internal warfare between  
the Waffen-SS and the army

565  
00:33:47,640 --> 00:33:48,770  
was very real.

566  
00:33:48,770 --> 00:33:52,000

567  
00:33:52,000 --> 00:33:57,420  
OK, so-- so what I'm seeing  
is that they come by,

568  
00:33:57,420 --> 00:34:02,020  
and they're much more,  
shall we say, proactive

569  
00:34:02,020 --> 00:34:06,550  
in trying to recruit people, not  
just you, but others, because

570  
00:34:06,550 --> 00:34:08,199  
of their situation.

571  
00:34:08,199 --> 00:34:09,990  
And this is in  
the summer of '43.

572  
00:34:09,990 --> 00:34:11,020  
Yeah.

573

00:34:11,020 --> 00:34:13,540

And you say to  
them, well, I can't

574

00:34:13,540 --> 00:34:16,480

join because I'm under this  
rule, being the youngest,

575

00:34:16,480 --> 00:34:17,530

that I finish my studies.

576

00:34:17,530 --> 00:34:18,030

Yeah.

577

00:34:18,030 --> 00:34:20,830

And my studies are going  
to finish in January.

578

00:34:20,830 --> 00:34:23,520

And they say, oh, that  
doesn't apply to us.

579

00:34:23,520 --> 00:34:25,090

In July '44.

580

00:34:25,090 --> 00:34:27,770

In July '44.

581

00:34:27,770 --> 00:34:30,270

And they say, this  
doesn't apply to us.

582

00:34:30,270 --> 00:34:32,270

And as a matter  
of fact, it does.

583

00:34:32,270 --> 00:34:36,110

Even though later on,  
your studies are actually

584

00:34:36,110 --> 00:34:37,690

finished half a year earlier.

585  
00:34:37,690 --> 00:34:39,860  
Yeah.

586  
00:34:39,860 --> 00:34:42,469  
And they are not  
able to do anything

587  
00:34:42,469 --> 00:34:47,570  
to quicken the time that you  
would normally be called up.

588  
00:34:47,570 --> 00:34:48,555  
Is that right?

589  
00:34:48,555 --> 00:34:50,300  
That's right, yeah.

590  
00:34:50,300 --> 00:34:53,540  
OK, so, and being  
called up actually

591  
00:34:53,540 --> 00:34:57,800  
happens in July 20th, 1944.

592  
00:34:57,800 --> 00:34:58,730  
Correct, yeah.

593  
00:34:58,730 --> 00:34:59,420  
OK.

594  
00:34:59,420 --> 00:35:01,250  
And then what happens?

595  
00:35:01,250 --> 00:35:02,510  
Where do you go?

596  
00:35:02,510 --> 00:35:04,910  
Well, then, of  
course, I had to--

597

00:35:04,910 --> 00:35:09,926

I had just-- I had a  
week's time to get--

598

00:35:09,926 --> 00:35:15,180

I had to be in Riga,  
report in Riga in--

599

00:35:15,180 --> 00:35:16,780

about a week later.

600

00:35:16,780 --> 00:35:21,250

So I just tried to  
pack my things together

601

00:35:21,250 --> 00:35:23,940

at Hammer und Sichel.

602

00:35:23,940 --> 00:35:27,930

Take a train back to where  
[INAUDIBLE] was there

603

00:35:27,930 --> 00:35:32,250

in Felsberg, and dump it there.

604

00:35:32,250 --> 00:35:35,250

Stay there over the  
weekend and say goodbye.

605

00:35:35,250 --> 00:35:39,410

And then be on the train to--

606

00:35:39,410 --> 00:35:47,310

via Berlin, Memel, to Riga.

607

00:35:47,310 --> 00:35:52,230

And for that, and this  
learned afterwards, was this--

608

00:35:52,230 --> 00:35:56,850

was, in fact, the last  
train that got through

609

00:35:56,850 --> 00:36:00,300

before the Russians  
cut it all off.

610

00:36:00,300 --> 00:36:03,180

Yes, I mean, this was--

611

00:36:03,180 --> 00:36:05,790

did you take a train  
from Berlin to Memel?

612

00:36:05,790 --> 00:36:07,410

Or did you take a ferry?

613

00:36:07,410 --> 00:36:10,740

Because there is a  
way of doing that.

614

00:36:10,740 --> 00:36:12,380

How did you get there?

615

00:36:12,380 --> 00:36:13,940

No, it was by train--

616

00:36:13,940 --> 00:36:14,460

by train.

617

00:36:14,460 --> 00:36:15,380

I know I spent--

618

00:36:15,380 --> 00:36:19,270

619

00:36:19,270 --> 00:36:23,280

I got to Memel in the  
evening, and the train--

620

00:36:23,280 --> 00:36:25,540

or during the day.

621

00:36:25,540 --> 00:36:30,270

And the train, this train,  
was going from there

622  
00:36:30,270 --> 00:36:34,380  
to Riga the next day.

623  
00:36:34,380 --> 00:36:39,060  
I remember sleeping on a table  
in the what little restaurant

624  
00:36:39,060 --> 00:36:44,310  
they had there, at  
Memel, the station.

625  
00:36:44,310 --> 00:36:45,920  
And then I was--

626  
00:36:45,920 --> 00:36:48,560  
I noticed when we--

627  
00:36:48,560 --> 00:36:51,960  
when the train came  
in, there was an armed,

628  
00:36:51,960 --> 00:36:59,684  
with a rifle, armed soldier at  
every exit door of the train.

629  
00:36:59,684 --> 00:37:05,760  
But otherwise, we rambled  
through the whole night.

630  
00:37:05,760 --> 00:37:09,340  
Some time the next day  
we arrived in Riga.

631  
00:37:09,340 --> 00:37:13,080  
But the station was in a--

632  
00:37:13,080 --> 00:37:15,380  
had been destroyed by a bomb.

633

00:37:15,380 --> 00:37:21,050  
And we were told our unit  
was in [? Lielvarde. ?] No,

634  
00:37:21,050 --> 00:37:26,020  
is it [? Lielvarde? ?]  
Seaside place just outside,

635  
00:37:26,020 --> 00:37:29,640  
west of [? Lielvarde ?]

636  
00:37:29,640 --> 00:37:32,460  
[? Lielvarde. ?] Well, there's  
their Jelgava, which is quite--

637  
00:37:32,460 --> 00:37:36,600  
and Liepaja, which are  
on the coast near Riga.

638  
00:37:36,600 --> 00:37:39,370  
They're part of the  
Latvian seashore.

639  
00:37:39,370 --> 00:37:39,870  
Yeah.

640  
00:37:39,870 --> 00:37:43,330  
But there's something else  
I want to mention here.

641  
00:37:43,330 --> 00:37:44,910  
One of the reasons  
I asked how you

642  
00:37:44,910 --> 00:37:50,010  
got there is because July  
'44 was a very crucial time

643  
00:37:50,010 --> 00:37:51,730  
in that part of the world.

644  
00:37:51,730 --> 00:37:52,230  
[INAUDIBLE]

645  
00:37:52,230 --> 00:37:54,300  
Not only-- not only is--

646  
00:37:54,300 --> 00:37:56,280  
there's the  
assassination attempt

647  
00:37:56,280 --> 00:38:00,030  
of Hitler in Prussia, which you  
then would have passed through.

648  
00:38:00,030 --> 00:38:03,450  
I believe it was Allenstein  
or someplace close to that.

649  
00:38:03,450 --> 00:38:06,120  
And wasn't the place  
called [?Wolfensbrutel?],,

650  
00:38:06,120 --> 00:38:07,830  
like Wolf's Lair,  
or something there?

651  
00:38:07,830 --> 00:38:08,330  
Yeah.

652  
00:38:08,330 --> 00:38:09,360  
It was.

653  
00:38:09,360 --> 00:38:14,850  
So, of course, at that moment,  
in those days and weeks,

654  
00:38:14,850 --> 00:38:19,722  
is when Hitler is rounding  
up all possible conspirators

655  
00:38:19,722 --> 00:38:20,680  
for that assassination.

656  
00:38:20,680 --> 00:38:21,180



Yeah.

657

00:38:21,180 --> 00:38:23,160  
And Stauffenberg's arrested.

658

00:38:23,160 --> 00:38:25,500  
And others are arrested.

659

00:38:25,500 --> 00:38:28,260  
At the same time,  
there is a mass

660

00:38:28,260 --> 00:38:33,440  
of people trying to escape  
the oncoming Soviet army, not

661

00:38:33,440 --> 00:38:33,940  
just--

662

00:38:33,940 --> 00:38:34,482  
That's right.

663

00:38:34,482 --> 00:38:37,560  
--the German military,  
but civilians.

664

00:38:37,560 --> 00:38:38,070  
Yeah.

665

00:38:38,070 --> 00:38:42,540  
Did you see any of that when  
you were going by train?

666

00:38:42,540 --> 00:38:44,850  
Did you see any  
people on the roads?

667

00:38:44,850 --> 00:38:47,520  
Did you see them at  
the train stations?

668

00:38:47,520 --> 00:38:50,010

What do you remember seeing?

669

00:38:50,010 --> 00:38:54,870

Well, as far as the train  
to Riga is concerned,

670

00:38:54,870 --> 00:38:57,480

it was half empty basically.

671

00:38:57,480 --> 00:39:01,500

And it didn't stop  
at any station,

672

00:39:01,500 --> 00:39:03,900

as far as I can remember.

673

00:39:03,900 --> 00:39:07,610

It was a military kind of train.

674

00:39:07,610 --> 00:39:10,725

And it certainly  
wasn't a packed train.

675

00:39:10,725 --> 00:39:13,522

Well, it was going in the  
wrong direction, actually.

676

00:39:13,522 --> 00:39:14,230

Yeah, absolutely.

677

00:39:14,230 --> 00:39:15,205

Going east.

678

00:39:15,205 --> 00:39:16,540

Yeah.

679

00:39:16,540 --> 00:39:22,110

And so we-- whole--

680

00:39:22,110 --> 00:39:25,080

a group-- I was in a  
group of youngsters

681  
00:39:25,080 --> 00:39:27,060  
when we got out at Riga.

682  
00:39:27,060 --> 00:39:30,450  
And we were all supposed  
to report to whatever,

683  
00:39:30,450 --> 00:39:32,730  
to our unit.

684  
00:39:32,730 --> 00:39:35,100  
And they said, well,  
in Bulduri, you

685  
00:39:35,100 --> 00:39:37,350  
have to get out at that  
station and they'll

686  
00:39:37,350 --> 00:39:39,420  
tell you where they are.

687  
00:39:39,420 --> 00:39:40,880  
Well, at that time--

688  
00:39:40,880 --> 00:39:44,730  
we were all in civilian  
clothes, of course--

689  
00:39:44,730 --> 00:39:46,560  
we were there at the beach.

690  
00:39:46,560 --> 00:39:48,625  
And we were sleeping  
in beach huts.

691  
00:39:48,625 --> 00:39:51,300

692  
00:39:51,300 --> 00:39:53,580  
And we had our parades.

693

00:39:53,580 --> 00:39:56,070

And then occasionally  
were called up

694

00:39:56,070 --> 00:40:03,660

to lug boxes and things  
around and load them.

695

00:40:03,660 --> 00:40:09,060

And the story was that we were  
waiting for our train to--

696

00:40:09,060 --> 00:40:11,940

what was the port's name again?

697

00:40:11,940 --> 00:40:16,530

Well, there's-- in Riga,  
there's also Liepaja.

698

00:40:16,530 --> 00:40:18,960

There's Jurmala.

699

00:40:18,960 --> 00:40:23,150

These are all on  
the coast of Latvia.

700

00:40:23,150 --> 00:40:25,650

And further down  
south, there is Memel.

701

00:40:25,650 --> 00:40:28,230

But I would have thought Riga  
itself would have been a port.

702

00:40:28,230 --> 00:40:30,830

703

00:40:30,830 --> 00:40:31,330

Oh, no.

704

00:40:31,330 --> 00:40:35,680

705  
00:40:35,680 --> 00:40:39,010  
I can quickly look it up.

706  
00:40:39,010 --> 00:40:41,095  
Have you got the [INAUDIBLE]?

707  
00:40:41,095 --> 00:40:43,470  
[INAUDIBLE]

708  
00:40:43,470 --> 00:40:46,450  
It's just but my memory's just--

709  
00:40:46,450 --> 00:40:47,780  
That's OK.

710  
00:40:47,780 --> 00:40:49,910  
[INAUDIBLE]

711  
00:40:49,910 --> 00:40:51,940  
No, that one wasn't very good.

712  
00:40:51,940 --> 00:40:53,130  
That's the one you had.

713  
00:40:53,130 --> 00:40:55,473  
It's only Germany.

714  
00:40:55,473 --> 00:40:56,946  
What do you want?

715  
00:40:56,946 --> 00:41:01,370

716  
00:41:01,370 --> 00:41:03,140  
[INAUDIBLE]

717  
00:41:03,140 --> 00:41:04,730  
Hello, I just found it.

718

00:41:04,730 --> 00:41:06,320  
I just found it.

719  
00:41:06,320 --> 00:41:11,160  
Hello, if you could come back.

720  
00:41:11,160 --> 00:41:12,780  
Hello?

721  
00:41:12,780 --> 00:41:14,660  
Yeah, yeah.

722  
00:41:14,660 --> 00:41:15,800  
[INAUDIBLE]

723  
00:41:15,800 --> 00:41:17,030  
Yes, I'm back.

724  
00:41:17,030 --> 00:41:20,630  
Bulduri is a residential  
area of the city of Jurmala.

725  
00:41:20,630 --> 00:41:22,100  
So this was on Jurmala.

726  
00:41:22,100 --> 00:41:23,510  
That's the coast.

727  
00:41:23,510 --> 00:41:25,960  
That's where you  
would have been.

728  
00:41:25,960 --> 00:41:26,460  
Where

729  
00:41:26,460 --> 00:41:28,210  
No, that's where--  
that's where we stayed.

730  
00:41:28,210 --> 00:41:29,090  
But then we took--

731

00:41:29,090 --> 00:41:32,880

we helped load a train  
for-- well, the army

732

00:41:32,880 --> 00:41:36,590

and basically made for  
the military personnel,

733

00:41:36,590 --> 00:41:40,970

and it was a train  
journey of about five,

734

00:41:40,970 --> 00:41:44,960

six hours to get  
to this outer port,

735

00:41:44,960 --> 00:41:51,580

right at the western  
end of Latvia.

736

00:41:51,580 --> 00:41:52,430

Liepaja?

737

00:41:52,430 --> 00:41:52,930

What?

738

00:41:52,930 --> 00:41:56,300

Could that have been Liepaja?

739

00:41:56,300 --> 00:41:58,390

No, it's a different name.

740

00:41:58,390 --> 00:42:00,300

OK.

741

00:42:00,300 --> 00:42:03,490

But it's quiet-- it  
was a major port, maybe

742

00:42:03,490 --> 00:42:07,480

the major port for Latvia.

743  
00:42:07,480 --> 00:42:08,800  
OK.

744  
00:42:08,800 --> 00:42:10,300  
Well, there are a number--

745  
00:42:10,300 --> 00:42:16,300  
Because, even there we were  
then sitting without any kind

746  
00:42:16,300 --> 00:42:19,820  
of covers for another week.

747  
00:42:19,820 --> 00:42:24,740  
And then suddenly, there was  
one of those German holiday

748  
00:42:24,740 --> 00:42:27,310  
steamers that came  
up in the night.

749  
00:42:27,310 --> 00:42:31,160  
And we had to get quickly  
on it in the night for fear

750  
00:42:31,160 --> 00:42:37,450  
of Russian submarines  
torpedoing it.

751  
00:42:37,450 --> 00:42:42,890  
And so we then were--

752  
00:42:42,890 --> 00:42:45,680  
landed in Danzig.

753  
00:42:45,680 --> 00:42:46,180  
OK.

754  
00:42:46,180 --> 00:42:47,950  
[INAUDIBLE]

755



00:42:47,950 --> 00:42:51,700  
Let's see if any of these  
ports say anything to you.

756  
00:42:51,700 --> 00:42:58,770  
There's Engure, Liepaja,  
Mersrags, Pavilosta, Roja,

757  
00:42:58,770 --> 00:43:01,760  
Skulte, Ventspils.

758  
00:43:01,760 --> 00:43:04,150  
Ventspils, Ventspils.

759  
00:43:04,150 --> 00:43:05,420  
Ventspils, OK.

760  
00:43:05,420 --> 00:43:06,940  
Yeah, that's what it was.

761  
00:43:06,940 --> 00:43:08,050  
So it was the port.

762  
00:43:08,050 --> 00:43:10,960  
So first you're in Bulduri--

763  
00:43:10,960 --> 00:43:12,810  
Bulduru-- or however it's said.

764  
00:43:12,810 --> 00:43:15,850  
Then you go by  
train to Ventspils.

765  
00:43:15,850 --> 00:43:16,510  
Yes.

766  
00:43:16,510 --> 00:43:17,230  
And what is it--

767  
00:43:17,230 --> 00:43:22,420  
and you're loading up  
things on military trains.

768  
00:43:22,420 --> 00:43:23,770  
This is it?

769  
00:43:23,770 --> 00:43:25,960  
Well, we had to--

770  
00:43:25,960 --> 00:43:32,710  
loaded it on the train to  
be dumped in Ventspils to be

771  
00:43:32,710 --> 00:43:35,480  
taken back to Germany, Danzig.

772  
00:43:35,480 --> 00:43:43,980  
Like our [GERMAN]  
boats that were

773  
00:43:43,980 --> 00:43:49,030  
sent to rescue us, the people.

774  
00:43:49,030 --> 00:43:51,780  
So in other words, this  
was military equipment

775  
00:43:51,780 --> 00:43:53,290  
that you were loading?

776  
00:43:53,290 --> 00:43:55,290  
Well, whatever it was.

777  
00:43:55,290 --> 00:43:59,000  
Yes, it wasn't then--

778  
00:43:59,000 --> 00:44:02,220  
yes, it was military  
owned equipment.

779  
00:44:02,220 --> 00:44:04,830  
But what these boxes  
contained was--

780

00:44:04,830 --> 00:44:09,030

it was uniforms, and  
odds, and kitchen stuff,

781

00:44:09,030 --> 00:44:12,860

clearing out kind of stuff.

782

00:44:12,860 --> 00:44:18,790

So you were sent to Riga  
from the Sudetenland

783

00:44:18,790 --> 00:44:20,590

without any training.

784

00:44:20,590 --> 00:44:22,950

I don't hear that there  
was any training at all--

785

00:44:22,950 --> 00:44:23,450

No.

786

00:44:23,450 --> 00:44:24,280

--involved.

787

00:44:24,280 --> 00:44:26,840

We were supposed--

788

00:44:26,840 --> 00:44:30,700

The trouble was, of course,  
that Germany was so behind

789

00:44:30,700 --> 00:44:34,450

in admitting its defeats that--

790

00:44:34,450 --> 00:44:39,490

that bureaucracy was carrying  
on doing the most stupid things.

791

00:44:39,490 --> 00:44:42,610

792

00:44:42,610 --> 00:44:47,230  
It-- it happened to me  
later on when I was actually

793  
00:44:47,230 --> 00:44:52,020  
sent to war for the fighting.

794  
00:44:52,020 --> 00:44:56,890  
I was sent to a place that  
nobody has ever heard of.

795  
00:44:56,890 --> 00:44:59,810  
Nobody was sure whether--

796  
00:44:59,810 --> 00:45:04,590  
where it was-- somewhere in  
Poland by the name of it.

797  
00:45:04,590 --> 00:45:07,660  
I can't think of the name now.

798  
00:45:07,660 --> 00:45:09,850  
So that's how it was.

799  
00:45:09,850 --> 00:45:13,540  
But the trouble was, that  
Germany, the propaganda

800  
00:45:13,540 --> 00:45:18,460  
was stuck so much  
behind the real events

801  
00:45:18,460 --> 00:45:24,740  
that the bureaucracy made the  
most stupid things happen.

802  
00:45:24,740 --> 00:45:29,650  
And I think the final unit,  
in which I had my actual war

803  
00:45:29,650 --> 00:45:34,900  
experience, was just the next  
best unit at that station which

804  
00:45:34,900 --> 00:45:40,280  
was closest to  
the, shall we say,

805  
00:45:40,280 --> 00:45:43,810  
unofficial, but  
real, front line.

806  
00:45:43,810 --> 00:45:47,200  
And they just said,  
there's a unit.

807  
00:45:47,200 --> 00:45:51,500  
And it was a unit that was just  
coming back from a fighting,

808  
00:45:51,500 --> 00:45:54,870  
from a week in fighting.

809  
00:45:54,870 --> 00:45:57,850  
And I was just chucked  
in there as an extra.

810  
00:45:57,850 --> 00:46:00,700

811  
00:46:00,700 --> 00:46:04,270  
Chaos, the chaos in those days.

812  
00:46:04,270 --> 00:46:06,490  
It sounds very chaotic.

813  
00:46:06,490 --> 00:46:08,890  
It sounds like there  
is no sense to it.

814  
00:46:08,890 --> 00:46:10,600  
Yeah.

815  
00:46:10,600 --> 00:46:15,125  
That you go up to Riga

only just come back.

816  
00:46:15,125 --> 00:46:15,625  
As if--

817  
00:46:15,625 --> 00:46:16,125  
Yeah.

818  
00:46:16,125 --> 00:46:19,900  
--you had-- so you  
get to Ventspils.

819  
00:46:19,900 --> 00:46:22,507  
You're taken on to a boat.

820  
00:46:22,507 --> 00:46:23,590  
What was it that you said?

821  
00:46:23,590 --> 00:46:26,730  
It was a liner of some  
kind, of pleasure boat?

822  
00:46:26,730 --> 00:46:33,180  
Yeah, the work-- there was  
this [GERMAN] workers thing

823  
00:46:33,180 --> 00:46:39,220  
that Hitler had,  
people, laborers.

824  
00:46:39,220 --> 00:46:42,515  
And then they had their holiday  
boats that would take them

825  
00:46:42,515 --> 00:46:44,470  
to Madeira and so on.

826  
00:46:44,470 --> 00:46:49,060  
It's one of-- it was one those--  
one of those holiday boats

827  
00:46:49,060 --> 00:46:59,020

that had been obviously  
changed to troop movement.

828  
00:46:59,020 --> 00:47:02,200  
There are comedians  
who sometimes we'll

829  
00:47:02,200 --> 00:47:05,080  
tell you about something  
that is so bizarre,

830  
00:47:05,080 --> 00:47:07,220  
you say you can't  
make this stuff up.

831  
00:47:07,220 --> 00:47:07,720  
Yeah.

832  
00:47:07,720 --> 00:47:09,580  
Here in the middle  
of the war, here's

833  
00:47:09,580 --> 00:47:12,490  
an old sort of  
leisure boat that has

834  
00:47:12,490 --> 00:47:15,370  
been turned for military  
purposes that comes

835  
00:47:15,370 --> 00:47:17,630  
to pick you up in Ventspils.

836  
00:47:17,630 --> 00:47:19,830  
Yeah, exactly.

837  
00:47:19,830 --> 00:47:22,520  
But at least we were saved  
from the Russian hands.

838  
00:47:22,520 --> 00:47:26,560

839

00:47:26,560 --> 00:47:31,330

So then you're taken to Danzig,  
which is Gdansk in Polish.

840

00:47:31,330 --> 00:47:32,220

[INAUDIBLE]

841

00:47:32,220 --> 00:47:34,360

And it's right, part  
on the Baltic Sea.

842

00:47:34,360 --> 00:47:39,130

So you're very-- at that point  
the territory's still Germany,

843

00:47:39,130 --> 00:47:40,660

but not for long.

844

00:47:40,660 --> 00:47:43,370

And it always was  
contested area.

845

00:47:43,370 --> 00:47:45,670

So what do you go--  
what happens then?

846

00:47:45,670 --> 00:47:47,710

Do you stay in Danzig?

847

00:47:47,710 --> 00:47:51,270

Well, we were there  
I think for a day.

848

00:47:51,270 --> 00:47:53,970

And I had a good  
look around the city.

849

00:47:53,970 --> 00:47:59,290

But the people were  
hardly in the street.

850

00:47:59,290 --> 00:48:01,196



It was-- they--

851

00:48:01,196 --> 00:48:07,210  
there was-- people would just  
quickly slip out and then

852

00:48:07,210 --> 00:48:09,570  
run into their houses again.

853

00:48:09,570 --> 00:48:12,245  
It was a very desperate  
kind of place.

854

00:48:12,245 --> 00:48:15,370  
And then we went  
on a train journey

855

00:48:15,370 --> 00:48:20,320  
through northern  
Poland, if you like.

856

00:48:20,320 --> 00:48:26,910  
And the train, they  
had-- there was no coal.

857

00:48:26,910 --> 00:48:32,310  
And these trains had sort of  
a wood kind of arrangement.

858

00:48:32,310 --> 00:48:35,300  
So we had to get  
out of the train

859

00:48:35,300 --> 00:48:38,970  
whenever there was  
an uphill stretch,

860

00:48:38,970 --> 00:48:41,330  
not-- actually, we  
didn't have to push it.

861

00:48:41,330 --> 00:48:44,030  
But the train would--

862  
00:48:44,030 --> 00:48:47,860  
the train would only move  
kind of walking pace along.

863  
00:48:47,860 --> 00:48:51,860  
And then when it came  
to flatter or downhill,

864  
00:48:51,860 --> 00:48:53,660  
we could jump on again.

865  
00:48:53,660 --> 00:49:02,890  
And then we got eventually  
into East Germany--

866  
00:49:02,890 --> 00:49:05,700  
at that time-- of  
course, it's now Poland.

867  
00:49:05,700 --> 00:49:08,260

868  
00:49:08,260 --> 00:49:10,690  
And then, again--

869  
00:49:10,690 --> 00:49:15,070

870  
00:49:15,070 --> 00:49:17,470  
Are you forgetting the  
name of something again?

871  
00:49:17,470 --> 00:49:21,600

872  
00:49:21,600 --> 00:49:24,660  
It's OK, but we know that  
it's that part of the world.

873  
00:49:24,660 --> 00:49:34,908

874  
00:49:34,908 --> 00:49:36,400  
There's another  
story, of course.

875  
00:49:36,400 --> 00:49:40,130

876  
00:49:40,130 --> 00:49:42,500  
My dad had two great friends.

877  
00:49:42,500 --> 00:49:45,560  
One was [? Curt ?]  
[? Bandhoff, ?] who was with

878  
00:49:45,560 --> 00:49:47,630  
him in Siberia.

879  
00:49:47,630 --> 00:49:52,360  
He was a German guy.

880  
00:49:52,360 --> 00:49:55,440  
And he was-- and they  
were both practical guys.

881  
00:49:55,440 --> 00:49:58,990  
And they saw that their  
own workshop was built--

882  
00:49:58,990 --> 00:50:04,120  
acting on the theater stages  
and things like that and at

883  
00:50:04,120 --> 00:50:08,050  
performances, which the Russians  
liked to attend very much.

884  
00:50:08,050 --> 00:50:09,290  
I want to interrupt you.

885  
00:50:09,290 --> 00:50:11,320  
We lost one another

for a little bit.

886  
00:50:11,320 --> 00:50:12,940  
OK.

887  
00:50:12,940 --> 00:50:15,700  
And I want to repeat--

888  
00:50:15,700 --> 00:50:17,800  
I would like to  
ask you to repeat

889  
00:50:17,800 --> 00:50:19,870  
what it was that you  
said when you said

890  
00:50:19,870 --> 00:50:23,590  
you had gotten to some part  
of East Germany, which is now

891  
00:50:23,590 --> 00:50:24,400  
Poland.

892  
00:50:24,400 --> 00:50:25,660  
Yeah.

893  
00:50:25,660 --> 00:50:30,670  
Looking for where you actually  
were, was that the issue?

894  
00:50:30,670 --> 00:50:34,930  
Well, I was going to try  
and find where it was.

895  
00:50:34,930 --> 00:50:39,259

896  
00:50:39,259 --> 00:50:39,965  
I'll just--

897  
00:50:39,965 --> 00:50:46,100

898  
00:50:46,100 --> 00:50:48,860  
It's not that-- it's OK.

899  
00:50:48,860 --> 00:50:49,360  
OK.

900  
00:50:49,360 --> 00:50:51,320  
We already-- yeah.

901  
00:50:51,320 --> 00:50:55,070  
We already know that it's  
approximately in this,

902  
00:50:55,070 --> 00:50:57,935  
I would say Silesia  
is probably the area.

903  
00:50:57,935 --> 00:51:00,610  
Yeah, Silesia.

904  
00:51:00,610 --> 00:51:03,440  
Because funny enough,  
it became this--

905  
00:51:03,440 --> 00:51:08,120  
also my place when I  
finally got allocated.

906  
00:51:08,120 --> 00:51:13,280  
As I told you already, my  
order to the front line

907  
00:51:13,280 --> 00:51:21,480  
was directed to a town or city  
that didn't exist on any maps.

908  
00:51:21,480 --> 00:51:24,360  
You couldn't-- nobody could  
find them on any maps.

909  
00:51:24,360 --> 00:51:27,620

And, of course,  
you had to report--

910  
00:51:27,620 --> 00:51:29,720  
as the train arrived  
at the station,

911  
00:51:29,720 --> 00:51:33,860  
you had to report to  
the station commander.

912  
00:51:33,860 --> 00:51:38,540  
And he would give you a  
ticket for the next step.

913  
00:51:38,540 --> 00:51:42,410  
Obviously, he would always  
send you further east.

914  
00:51:42,410 --> 00:51:47,040  
Somehow, you would  
hit the front line.

915  
00:51:47,040 --> 00:51:51,610  
And then that's how it got--

916  
00:51:51,610 --> 00:51:52,790  
I have a question here.

917  
00:51:52,790 --> 00:51:53,340  
Yeah.

918  
00:51:53,340 --> 00:52:00,140  
So from Danzig, you first start  
going further west into what

919  
00:52:00,140 --> 00:52:02,600  
was then still part of Germany.

920  
00:52:02,600 --> 00:52:03,140  
Yes.

921

00:52:03,140 --> 00:52:08,540  
And that was, of course, again,  
just an intermediate stop.

922  
00:52:08,540 --> 00:52:14,690  
We had the town park,  
the town gardens,

923  
00:52:14,690 --> 00:52:17,030  
surrounded by barbed wire.

924  
00:52:17,030 --> 00:52:22,150  
And we were in  
tents in the unit.

925  
00:52:22,150 --> 00:52:26,600  
We were a unit of about, I  
don't know, 150 youngsters.

926  
00:52:26,600 --> 00:52:31,390  
Still in our civilian  
clothes, which my Sunday

927  
00:52:31,390 --> 00:52:35,570  
suit that I, for some  
stupid reason I put on,

928  
00:52:35,570 --> 00:52:39,230  
was in rags at that time.

929  
00:52:39,230 --> 00:52:44,220  
And then there we were  
for another six weeks

930  
00:52:44,220 --> 00:52:47,430  
that we got our uniforms.

931  
00:52:47,430 --> 00:52:49,190  
And then we were  
sent back, right back

932  
00:52:49,190 --> 00:52:59,810  
to Westphalia, where we had

to post for our army training.

933

00:52:59,810 --> 00:53:01,730

So what months was this?

934

00:53:01,730 --> 00:53:04,340

What months were--  
approximately?

935

00:53:04,340 --> 00:53:06,920

Approximately by the  
end of September.

936

00:53:06,920 --> 00:53:10,220

We were within 100  
kilometers from where

937

00:53:10,220 --> 00:53:16,720

my mother and people, I had  
left them two months before.

938

00:53:16,720 --> 00:53:19,520

And that reminded me very  
much of Uncle [? Hannes, ?]

939

00:53:19,520 --> 00:53:22,730

what he said about people  
being just moved around.

940

00:53:22,730 --> 00:53:25,270

941

00:53:25,270 --> 00:53:31,390

So in other words, your first  
introduction is from July--

942

00:53:31,390 --> 00:53:33,530

end of July to end of September.

943

00:53:33,530 --> 00:53:34,705

It's two months of chaos.

944



00:53:34,705 --> 00:53:35,280  
Yeah.

945  
00:53:35,280 --> 00:53:37,120  
It basically makes no sense.

946  
00:53:37,120 --> 00:53:39,620  
It doesn't have any purpose.

947  
00:53:39,620 --> 00:53:41,290  
And it cost a lot of money.

948  
00:53:41,290 --> 00:53:45,490  
And it was a complete--

949  
00:53:45,490 --> 00:53:48,310  
and that's how it went on.

950  
00:53:48,310 --> 00:53:50,260  
That's how it went on.

951  
00:53:50,260 --> 00:53:53,920  
It didn't get any better.

952  
00:53:53,920 --> 00:53:56,020  
All right, tell me  
what happened next.

953  
00:53:56,020 --> 00:53:59,960  
At least you're having some  
training in Westphalia--

954  
00:53:59,960 --> 00:54:02,560  
Westfalen, which is the  
western part of Germany,

955  
00:54:02,560 --> 00:54:05,710  
closer to the Netherlands,  
closer to France.

956  
00:54:05,710 --> 00:54:09,170  
How long did that last?

957

00:54:09,170 --> 00:54:14,090

Well, at the time, it wasn't  
directly under threat.

958

00:54:14,090 --> 00:54:19,610

But it had been a  
training, army training

959

00:54:19,610 --> 00:54:22,820

place for over 100 years.

960

00:54:22,820 --> 00:54:26,910

It was a famous  
kind of training,

961

00:54:26,910 --> 00:54:30,030

[?east?] kind of  
country in the--

962

00:54:30,030 --> 00:54:33,405

near Paderborn in Westphalia.

963

00:54:33,405 --> 00:54:36,740

964

00:54:36,740 --> 00:54:42,740

So we then had a--

965

00:54:42,740 --> 00:54:45,420

What do you remember  
from the basic training?

966

00:54:45,420 --> 00:54:47,480

What kind of training was it?

967

00:54:47,480 --> 00:54:51,830

Well, again, it was pretend.

968

00:54:51,830 --> 00:54:53,520

What can you do?

969

00:54:53,520 --> 00:54:58,390

We didn't have any ammunition  
to shoot or anything like that.

970

00:54:58,390 --> 00:55:00,700

But we had a bit  
of target practice

971

00:55:00,700 --> 00:55:04,430

with normal air  
guns type of thing.

972

00:55:04,430 --> 00:55:10,040

It was marching around,  
and jumping around,

973

00:55:10,040 --> 00:55:12,830

and keep doing--

974

00:55:12,830 --> 00:55:15,560

they had a major job.

975

00:55:15,560 --> 00:55:18,710

We were still pretending  
to be a tank unit.

976

00:55:18,710 --> 00:55:21,230

And there was one  
tank gun they'd

977

00:55:21,230 --> 00:55:26,720

mounted on some sort of  
stage with wheels on,

978

00:55:26,720 --> 00:55:30,680

which we could wheel to  
a shooting range, which

979

00:55:30,680 --> 00:55:34,060

took two or three hours.

980

00:55:34,060 --> 00:55:37,790

And then if you're  
lucky, you had one chance

981  
00:55:37,790 --> 00:55:45,680  
to fire that gun in turn, with  
everybody else queuing up.

982  
00:55:45,680 --> 00:55:47,560  
That happened I think twice.

983  
00:55:47,560 --> 00:55:52,100  
That's a day gone,  
each time a day gone.

984  
00:55:52,100 --> 00:55:57,500  
But the real-- the real thing  
was, we were always hungry,

985  
00:55:57,500 --> 00:55:59,000  
real hungry.

986  
00:55:59,000 --> 00:56:02,500  
There wasn't much food,  
only these thin soups

987  
00:56:02,500 --> 00:56:05,050  
with bits of maybe--

988  
00:56:05,050 --> 00:56:06,780  
they called it horse meat.

989  
00:56:06,780 --> 00:56:09,840  
But there was no nourishment.

990  
00:56:09,840 --> 00:56:13,730  
So we, particularly we  
soldiers, particularly

991  
00:56:13,730 --> 00:56:14,650  
liked these night--

992  
00:56:14,650 --> 00:56:17,600

993

00:56:17,600 --> 00:56:19,600  
even sometimes during the day--

994

00:56:19,600 --> 00:56:26,560  
that you would go to  
the edge of this place

995

00:56:26,560 --> 00:56:27,610  
where the fields were.

996

00:56:27,610 --> 00:56:31,560  
And we were digging  
up turnips, potatoes.

997

00:56:31,560 --> 00:56:34,250  
Cart them back to the camp.

998

00:56:34,250 --> 00:56:40,330  
Put the water-- the washing  
basin on top of the stove.

999

00:56:40,330 --> 00:56:44,670  
Light the fire and have some--

1000

00:56:44,670 --> 00:56:50,280  
And, of course, the  
sergeants and corporals

1001

00:56:50,280 --> 00:56:51,340  
sort of joined in.

1002

00:56:51,340 --> 00:56:55,460  
Because they too didn't  
have much to eat.

1003

00:56:55,460 --> 00:57:00,750  
And my-- my particular problem  
to start with was that I,

1004

00:57:00,750 --> 00:57:01,840

of course--

1005  
00:57:01,840 --> 00:57:04,440  
I was a school--

1006  
00:57:04,440 --> 00:57:08,280  
school graduate--  
school graduate.

1007  
00:57:08,280 --> 00:57:11,950  
And these sergeants  
immediately--

1008  
00:57:11,950 --> 00:57:18,160  
they would show this youngster  
where to get off and so on.

1009  
00:57:18,160 --> 00:57:23,020  
But time and again, they hadn't  
a clue to find their way back.

1010  
00:57:23,020 --> 00:57:26,230  
And I was always  
good at orientation.

1011  
00:57:26,230 --> 00:57:34,600  
And once they realized that I  
had that sense of orientation,

1012  
00:57:34,600 --> 00:57:35,600  
I was a free man.

1013  
00:57:35,600 --> 00:57:38,360

1014  
00:57:38,360 --> 00:57:42,470  
And I had to be tactful.

1015  
00:57:42,470 --> 00:57:46,310  
When everybody seemed to  
have backed up enough,

1016

00:57:46,310 --> 00:57:48,230  
it wasn't a question  
then of a command.

1017  
00:57:48,230 --> 00:57:52,330  
I started moving off in a  
direction, of a home direction.

1018  
00:57:52,330 --> 00:57:54,600  
And everybody would follow me.

1019  
00:57:54,600 --> 00:57:58,970  
The sergeant wouldn't  
hear me giving an order.

1020  
00:57:58,970 --> 00:58:00,828  
No, that [INAUDIBLE].

1021  
00:58:00,828 --> 00:58:04,020

1022  
00:58:04,020 --> 00:58:06,750  
So was this an  
advantage from being

1023  
00:58:06,750 --> 00:58:10,470  
the-- disadvantage from  
being from the upper classes

1024  
00:58:10,470 --> 00:58:12,050  
in this instance?

1025  
00:58:12,050 --> 00:58:13,030  
Yeah, definitely.

1026  
00:58:13,030 --> 00:58:13,560  
[INAUDIBLE]

1027  
00:58:13,560 --> 00:58:14,850  
Uh-huh.

1028  
00:58:14,850 --> 00:58:16,260

I was a useful addition.

1029  
00:58:16,260 --> 00:58:19,910

1030  
00:58:19,910 --> 00:58:21,530  
And you say this--

1031  
00:58:21,530 --> 00:58:25,800  
You can imagine, you spend  
all your time hunting for food

1032  
00:58:25,800 --> 00:58:27,350  
and so on--

1033  
00:58:27,350 --> 00:58:32,520  
OK, in between, a bit of army  
like training, running around.

1034  
00:58:32,520 --> 00:58:37,560  
But parades-- parades,  
yes, because parades

1035  
00:58:37,560 --> 00:58:41,780  
don't cost any material  
or anything like that.

1036  
00:58:41,780 --> 00:58:42,930  
Definitely [INAUDIBLE].

1037  
00:58:42,930 --> 00:58:44,600  
Where would the  
parade take place?

1038  
00:58:44,600 --> 00:58:47,360  
Around the fields  
or in the towns?

1039  
00:58:47,360 --> 00:58:51,590  
Well, in around where  
the barracks were,

1040



00:58:51,590 --> 00:58:56,240  
which was just an open  
bit of field or ground.

1041  
00:58:56,240 --> 00:59:00,860  
That parades, when I  
think of those times.

1042  
00:59:00,860 --> 00:59:04,430

1043  
00:59:04,430 --> 00:59:09,700  
Another thing, another advantage  
I found is I was a non-smoker.

1044  
00:59:09,700 --> 00:59:13,320  
Most, particularly,  
sergeants and corporals,

1045  
00:59:13,320 --> 00:59:15,480  
were heavy smokers.

1046  
00:59:15,480 --> 00:59:20,460  
And so you had  
something to help.

1047  
00:59:20,460 --> 00:59:23,850  
And the quartermaster  
sergeant, I

1048  
00:59:23,850 --> 00:59:26,620  
liked him and I  
think he liked me.

1049  
00:59:26,620 --> 00:59:30,675  
And I said to him,  
I don't want to get

1050  
00:59:30,675 --> 00:59:37,520  
in trouble with my gun  
at these rifle parades,

1051  
00:59:37,520 --> 00:59:40,050

have you got something  
that you could give me?

1052  
00:59:40,050 --> 00:59:41,700  
He said, yes, I've  
got a special one

1053  
00:59:41,700 --> 00:59:44,420  
for you, which  
meant from then on,

1054  
00:59:44,420 --> 00:59:47,300  
I had to give him all  
my cigarette rations.

1055  
00:59:47,300 --> 00:59:52,840  
It was a 1914 German army rifle.

1056  
00:59:52,840 --> 00:59:57,370  
And it'd been polished by  
generations and generations

1057  
00:59:57,370 --> 01:00:03,220  
of soldiers, and all I needed  
to do, to dust it only--

1058  
01:00:03,220 --> 01:00:06,022  
it gleamed.

1059  
01:00:06,022 --> 01:00:12,120  
And that rifle saw me through,  
right through the surrender

1060  
01:00:12,120 --> 01:00:14,230  
to the Americans.

1061  
01:00:14,230 --> 01:00:18,280  
But I was really  
sad to give it up.

1062  
01:00:18,280 --> 01:00:21,110  
I would have loved to keep it.

1063

01:00:21,110 --> 01:00:22,490

Well, this is interesting.

1064

01:00:22,490 --> 01:00:26,810

This means that by that point  
in the war, there are no--

1065

01:00:26,810 --> 01:00:28,010

there's no ammunition.

1066

01:00:28,010 --> 01:00:30,950

There's no armament--  
there's no arms

1067

01:00:30,950 --> 01:00:32,720

to give these new soldiers.

1068

01:00:32,720 --> 01:00:35,180

There's nothing that  
you're given to fight with.

1069

01:00:35,180 --> 01:00:39,170

If it's 1914-- if  
the year of that gun.

1070

01:00:39,170 --> 01:00:41,060

That's the conclusion  
I'm coming with.

1071

01:00:41,060 --> 01:00:42,310

Is that wrong?

1072

01:00:42,310 --> 01:00:47,690

[INAUDIBLE] as far as the-- it's  
a standard German army rifle.

1073

01:00:47,690 --> 01:00:52,020

It was still a standard  
German army rifle.

1074

01:00:52,020 --> 01:00:56,420

So as far as that

was concerned, it--

1075

01:00:56,420 --> 01:01:02,080

but it was the stupid  
safety regulations,

1076

01:01:02,080 --> 01:01:04,430

that while you  
were training, your

1077

01:01:04,430 --> 01:01:08,038

weren't allowed to have  
any live ammunition.

1078

01:01:08,038 --> 01:01:11,950

1079

01:01:11,950 --> 01:01:19,520

Yeah, sure, it does  
make some sense, but--

1080

01:01:19,520 --> 01:01:23,790

but again, it was--

1081

01:01:23,790 --> 01:01:30,140

when we were-- when I joined  
this unit for the actual--

1082

01:01:30,140 --> 01:01:37,470

for actual war, at the same  
place where we were on the way

1083

01:01:37,470 --> 01:01:44,504

back from Latvia--

1084

01:01:44,504 --> 01:01:48,540

it happened to be the  
same railway station--

1085

01:01:48,540 --> 01:01:52,430

he had said, the station  
commander said, look,

1086

01:01:52,430 --> 01:01:56,870

the unit is just about five kilometers down the road.

1087

01:01:56,870 --> 01:01:59,120

They'll go and fetch-- they'll fetch you.

1088

01:01:59,120 --> 01:02:01,030

They fetched me.

1089

01:02:01,030 --> 01:02:06,240

And then it was just about Easter, 1945 then.

1090

01:02:06,240 --> 01:02:14,900

And this unit had just came back from fighting

1091

01:02:14,900 --> 01:02:17,060

for a week of rest.

1092

01:02:17,060 --> 01:02:25,250

And the commander, Waffen-SS commander

1093

01:02:25,250 --> 01:02:27,850

had given strict orders that there must

1094

01:02:27,850 --> 01:02:31,000

be daily exercise and so on.

1095

01:02:31,000 --> 01:02:37,080

All these guys wanted is rest and take life easy.

1096

01:02:37,080 --> 01:02:43,060

But all the-- the officer and the sergeant

1097

01:02:43,060 --> 01:02:47,450

had all private  
quarters in the village

1098  
01:02:47,450 --> 01:02:51,270  
and disappeared at  
6 o'clock at night.

1099  
01:02:51,270 --> 01:02:56,520  
And we were in the school  
building, where was--

1100  
01:02:56,520 --> 01:02:58,890  
it wasn't big enough  
for all of us.

1101  
01:02:58,890 --> 01:03:01,540  
You could just about  
somehow muscle in

1102  
01:03:01,540 --> 01:03:05,170  
and sleep on the floor  
in these classrooms.

1103  
01:03:05,170 --> 01:03:07,270  
Hang on a second,  
hang on a second.

1104  
01:03:07,270 --> 01:03:09,610  
We've now jumped  
about half a year--

1105  
01:03:09,610 --> 01:03:10,110  
Yeah.

1106  
01:03:10,110 --> 01:03:10,610  
[INAUDIBLE]

1107  
01:03:10,610 --> 01:03:12,700  
From the train--

1108  
01:03:12,700 --> 01:03:13,660  
OK.

1109  
01:03:13,660 --> 01:03:19,810  
But all I wanted  
to say is that we--

1110  
01:03:19,810 --> 01:03:23,500  
a lot of cheating was going  
on, but we marched out

1111  
01:03:23,500 --> 01:03:26,290  
into the woods in the  
morning so that commander

1112  
01:03:26,290 --> 01:03:27,260  
could hear us sing.

1113  
01:03:27,260 --> 01:03:30,550

1114  
01:03:30,550 --> 01:03:34,150  
And there was a  
corporal [INAUDIBLE]..

1115  
01:03:34,150 --> 01:03:38,820  
And he said, look, it's Easter,  
and surely, we must be--

1116  
01:03:38,820 --> 01:03:43,120  
we ought to have some  
better food for Easter.

1117  
01:03:43,120 --> 01:03:47,210  
I said to him, you won't  
get it unless you get it.

1118  
01:03:47,210 --> 01:03:50,520  
And he said, well, he said--

1119  
01:03:50,520 --> 01:03:55,460  
I said there's of a lot of  
wild animals in these woods.

1120  
01:03:55,460 --> 01:04:00,130

Of course, as a new arrival  
from the home front,

1121  
01:04:00,130 --> 01:04:02,830  
I didn't have any  
live ammunition.

1122  
01:04:02,830 --> 01:04:08,130  
That would only be issued as  
you were going out to fight.

1123  
01:04:08,130 --> 01:04:10,510  
He said-- [INAUDIBLE]  
wait a minute.

1124  
01:04:10,510 --> 01:04:18,730  
Went in his pocket and gave  
me five live ammunition.

1125  
01:04:18,730 --> 01:04:21,174  
And then I shot a deer.

1126  
01:04:21,174 --> 01:04:23,960

1127  
01:04:23,960 --> 01:04:26,260  
And then we had an Easter--

1128  
01:04:26,260 --> 01:04:28,820  
an Easter thing.

1129  
01:04:28,820 --> 01:04:32,400  
But again, that's-- again,  
it's another story if you like.

1130  
01:04:32,400 --> 01:04:33,180  
Mm-hmm.

1131  
01:04:33,180 --> 01:04:34,910  
But that is the way--

1132  
01:04:34,910 --> 01:04:39,530



that is the way I found  
of doing something useful

1133  
01:04:39,530 --> 01:04:42,980  
while I was in the Waffen-SS.

1134  
01:04:42,980 --> 01:04:45,470  
So here's my question  
at this point.

1135  
01:04:45,470 --> 01:04:48,740  
When you describe  
going to Latvia,

1136  
01:04:48,740 --> 01:04:51,620  
and there is this chaos  
and sense of absurdity--

1137  
01:04:51,620 --> 01:04:52,460  
Yes.

1138  
01:04:52,460 --> 01:04:54,980  
--of why were you sent  
there, what you do,

1139  
01:04:54,980 --> 01:04:57,120  
how do you retreat from there.

1140  
01:04:57,120 --> 01:04:58,040  
Yes.

1141  
01:04:58,040 --> 01:05:01,430  
And then you end up  
in Danzig and so on.

1142  
01:05:01,430 --> 01:05:05,030  
By that point, do you  
meet with other people

1143  
01:05:05,030 --> 01:05:07,880  
who have the same  
skepticism that you do,

1144

01:05:07,880 --> 01:05:10,730

other kids in the  
Waffen-SS, other soldiers?

1145

01:05:10,730 --> 01:05:15,840

Or is this mum you don't share  
any skepticism with anybody?

1146

01:05:15,840 --> 01:05:20,730

Well, again a diversion.

1147

01:05:20,730 --> 01:05:29,960

While we were training,  
we finished our training

1148

01:05:29,960 --> 01:05:33,610

November 1944.

1149

01:05:33,610 --> 01:05:36,640

I think it was November.

1150

01:05:36,640 --> 01:05:40,900

Getting-- we're now in the  
start of our Christmas or maybe

1151

01:05:40,900 --> 01:05:41,470

New Year.

1152

01:05:41,470 --> 01:05:44,530

Anyway, there was a  
group of us, if you

1153

01:05:44,530 --> 01:05:49,090

like, youngsters, high school  
guys and that kind of thing.

1154

01:05:49,090 --> 01:05:52,750

We were going to do a  
Christmas newspaper.

1155

01:05:52,750 --> 01:05:55,940

I don't know whether you know

anything about these [GERMAN]

1156  
01:05:55,940 --> 01:05:57,940  
they called them.

1157  
01:05:57,940 --> 01:06:00,760  
Universities were doing  
them in particular,

1158  
01:06:00,760 --> 01:06:06,820  
where they list up all the  
teachers and all the students

1159  
01:06:06,820 --> 01:06:15,100  
and make some critical  
poems about them.

1160  
01:06:15,100 --> 01:06:19,660  
You're just treading the  
borderline and so on.

1161  
01:06:19,660 --> 01:06:23,890  
Well, I organized one of  
those with my sergeant major,

1162  
01:06:23,890 --> 01:06:26,340  
who had this lovely  
rifle for me,

1163  
01:06:26,340 --> 01:06:31,960  
and because he could organize  
some typewriter and so on,

1164  
01:06:31,960 --> 01:06:37,230  
and we could use his  
office as a kind of room.

1165  
01:06:37,230 --> 01:06:44,700  
And that was actually  
published and distributed

1166  
01:06:44,700 --> 01:06:48,720  
over the Christmas holidays.

1167  
01:06:48,720 --> 01:06:51,750  
And then there was no  
court martial or anything.

1168  
01:06:51,750 --> 01:06:58,320  
There was some fairly direct  
statements, threatening.

1169  
01:06:58,320 --> 01:07:02,740  
Yeah, I still got my copy of it.

1170  
01:07:02,740 --> 01:07:06,630  
I sent it to my Aunt  
[? Tilla, ?] and she kept it.

1171  
01:07:06,630 --> 01:07:08,570  
I would love to see that.

1172  
01:07:08,570 --> 01:07:13,340  
Do you remember any  
of those pointed kinds

1173  
01:07:13,340 --> 01:07:18,020  
of satirical things that  
you mentioned in there?

1174  
01:07:18,020 --> 01:07:21,800  
Well, at a future fashion,  
I'll bring it along.

1175  
01:07:21,800 --> 01:07:24,250  
You can see it and  
I can quote from it.

1176  
01:07:24,250 --> 01:07:26,830

1177  
01:07:26,830 --> 01:07:28,390  
OK, that's very interesting.

1178  
01:07:28,390 --> 01:07:29,080

Yeah.

1179

01:07:29,080 --> 01:07:34,570

So you're saying by December '44, the last Christmas--

1180

01:07:34,570 --> 01:07:35,890

Yeah.

1181

01:07:35,890 --> 01:07:40,090

--there is a general sense of--

1182

01:07:40,090 --> 01:07:45,400

there's enough skepticism that something like this

1183

01:07:45,400 --> 01:07:47,560

does not call--

1184

01:07:47,560 --> 01:07:52,780

does not evince any kind of retribution,

1185

01:07:52,780 --> 01:07:56,770

any kind of punishment for being satirical.

1186

01:07:56,770 --> 01:08:01,300

Whereas, if we compare just a number of years before,

1187

01:08:01,300 --> 01:08:04,420

two years before, if you say an anti-Hitler [INAUDIBLE]----

1188

01:08:04,420 --> 01:08:05,650

[INAUDIBLE]

1189

01:08:05,650 --> 01:08:08,270

--you could end up in a concentration camp.

1190

01:08:08,270 --> 01:08:12,097

We would be thrown into camp,  
in a prison, that's for sure.

1191

01:08:12,097 --> 01:08:16,770

1192

01:08:16,770 --> 01:08:18,359

But it was already--

1193

01:08:18,359 --> 01:08:21,569

the situation was already  
compromised with the food.

1194

01:08:21,569 --> 01:08:27,720

Because we were food hunting  
instead of army training.

1195

01:08:27,720 --> 01:08:31,120

1196

01:08:31,120 --> 01:08:34,810

Did you have any  
contact with your family

1197

01:08:34,810 --> 01:08:38,160

since the training  
was not so far away?

1198

01:08:38,160 --> 01:08:42,370

Yeah, you were at  
the military post.

1199

01:08:42,370 --> 01:08:49,990

That's how that copy of  
this newspaper for us

1200

01:08:49,990 --> 01:08:51,550

got to my aunt.

1201

01:08:51,550 --> 01:08:54,640

And she kept it.

1202

01:08:54,640 --> 01:08:57,609

Well, that leads me  
in another question.

1203

01:08:57,609 --> 01:08:59,410

By contact, I meant more--

1204

01:08:59,410 --> 01:09:02,979

didn't you say that your  
stepmother was somewhere

1205

01:09:02,979 --> 01:09:04,420

in the neighborhood?

1206

01:09:04,420 --> 01:09:08,260

That maybe your siblings  
were somewhere around?

1207

01:09:08,260 --> 01:09:10,779

Was that the case, or  
did I misunderstand?

1208

01:09:10,779 --> 01:09:12,689

No, no, they were all--

1209

01:09:12,689 --> 01:09:20,470

[? Tilla ?] was then already  
in the-- back and Felsberg,

1210

01:09:20,470 --> 01:09:24,220

which Felsberg was  
the village where

1211

01:09:24,220 --> 01:09:31,410

my stepmother's brother  
was the local doctor

1212

01:09:31,410 --> 01:09:33,439

before and after the war.

1213

01:09:33,439 --> 01:09:35,790

And during the war, of

course, he was called up.

1214  
01:09:35,790 --> 01:09:36,990  
He was in Norway.

1215  
01:09:36,990 --> 01:09:39,569  
And he was also on  
the Eastern Front.

1216  
01:09:39,569 --> 01:09:42,330  
And I don't know [INAUDIBLE].

1217  
01:09:42,330 --> 01:09:48,960  
After the war he was treated  
for a little while as not

1218  
01:09:48,960 --> 01:09:51,960  
a reliable kind of guy.

1219  
01:09:51,960 --> 01:09:55,290  
He was sent into a  
reeducation camp.

1220  
01:09:55,290 --> 01:09:58,020  
He wasn't allowed  
officially to practice.

1221  
01:09:58,020 --> 01:10:01,810  
But he practiced, nevertheless,  
and that kind of thing.

1222  
01:10:01,810 --> 01:10:03,060  
And then he was OK.

1223  
01:10:03,060 --> 01:10:07,044  
Was he a Nazi party  
member or something?

1224  
01:10:07,044 --> 01:10:09,550  
When you say a reeducation camp.

1225  
01:10:09,550 --> 01:10:18,610



Well, I never thought he  
was, but my, shall we say--

1226  
01:10:18,610 --> 01:10:24,210  
his cousin, who's written  
a lot about the time, who

1227  
01:10:24,210 --> 01:10:29,200  
was born in around 1930.

1228  
01:10:29,200 --> 01:10:31,200  
And he was a school boy.

1229  
01:10:31,200 --> 01:10:34,840  
And he was a lot of  
time with my parents

1230  
01:10:34,840 --> 01:10:40,300  
and my young siblings  
in Felsberg and also

1231  
01:10:40,300 --> 01:10:43,390  
in Wallbachsmuehle before that.

1232  
01:10:43,390 --> 01:10:49,250  
He became a leading  
Protestant parson.

1233  
01:10:49,250 --> 01:10:50,840  
He's a doctorate.

1234  
01:10:50,840 --> 01:10:57,820  
And he was basically in  
charge of the Lutheran people

1235  
01:10:57,820 --> 01:11:02,210  
in Bavaria, which is very  
much a Roman Catholic area.

1236  
01:11:02,210 --> 01:11:10,170  
And so, he-- he's  
written about this.

1237

01:11:10,170 --> 01:11:13,110

He investigated all this.

1238

01:11:13,110 --> 01:11:16,410

I would have never believed  
that Uncle [? Hannes ?] was--

1239

01:11:16,410 --> 01:11:18,570

anything but being a Nazi.

1240

01:11:18,570 --> 01:11:21,030

And, of course, nobody--

1241

01:11:21,030 --> 01:11:23,190

I was a prisoner  
of war in England

1242

01:11:23,190 --> 01:11:29,170

when he was sent to camps rather  
than allowed to resume his work

1243

01:11:29,170 --> 01:11:32,220

as the local doctor.

1244

01:11:32,220 --> 01:11:33,960

Nobody ever talked about it.

1245

01:11:33,960 --> 01:11:39,570

It was only-- he, when  
he wrote up his story--

1246

01:11:39,570 --> 01:11:42,110

his stories, he wrote it up.

1247

01:11:42,110 --> 01:11:45,260

And then private-- and  
published it privately

1248

01:11:45,260 --> 01:11:47,900

among family members.

1249

01:11:47,900 --> 01:11:53,130  
So if I understand, this  
is another young relative

1250  
01:11:53,130 --> 01:11:57,040  
who is the pastor of the  
Lutherans in Bavaria.

1251  
01:11:57,040 --> 01:11:59,040  
He's born in 1930.

1252  
01:11:59,040 --> 01:12:02,070  
And he investigates Uncle  
[? Hannes' ?] background.

1253  
01:12:02,070 --> 01:12:05,940  
Yes, absolutely, he did  
investigate all these people.

1254  
01:12:05,940 --> 01:12:09,960  
And he wrote honestly about it.

1255  
01:12:09,960 --> 01:12:13,160

1256  
01:12:13,160 --> 01:12:15,410  
And did he write then that  
Uncle [? Hannes ?] had been

1257  
01:12:15,410 --> 01:12:17,840  
a member of the Nazi party?

1258  
01:12:17,840 --> 01:12:19,190  
Is that what he wrote?

1259  
01:12:19,190 --> 01:12:22,700  
Or did he read just write he  
was sent to a reeducation camp

1260  
01:12:22,700 --> 01:12:24,170  
by the Americans?

1261

01:12:24,170 --> 01:12:26,280  
Yeah, that's right.

1262  
01:12:26,280 --> 01:12:26,960  
That's right.

1263  
01:12:26,960 --> 01:12:29,700

1264  
01:12:29,700 --> 01:12:36,304  
He goes into-- he spent a lot  
of time looking at it and then--

1265  
01:12:36,304 --> 01:12:39,230

1266  
01:12:39,230 --> 01:12:40,960  
in that sort of way.

1267  
01:12:40,960 --> 01:12:44,980  
And I'm very close to him.

1268  
01:12:44,980 --> 01:12:50,400  
When he was in his--

1269  
01:12:50,400 --> 01:12:55,660  
before he retired, I  
think around about 2000,

1270  
01:12:55,660 --> 01:12:58,290  
he was the head of--

1271  
01:12:58,290 --> 01:12:59,190  
what was it called?

1272  
01:12:59,190 --> 01:13:02,130

1273  
01:13:02,130 --> 01:13:05,290  
Looking after all  
Lutherans, German

1274

01:13:05,290 --> 01:13:09,015

Lutherans in the world  
that are not in Germany.

1275

01:13:09,015 --> 01:13:11,890

1276

01:13:11,890 --> 01:13:20,760

He got a high order of merit  
from the new German state,

1277

01:13:20,760 --> 01:13:25,770

as my sister too,  
Rosemary, as a professor,

1278

01:13:25,770 --> 01:13:30,470

as a leading professor  
of household economics.

1279

01:13:30,470 --> 01:13:30,970

OK.

1280

01:13:30,970 --> 01:13:38,390

Those two are the merits  
people from the new generation.

1281

01:13:38,390 --> 01:13:43,940

So this answer precipitated-  
or it followed my question.

1282

01:13:43,940 --> 01:13:46,870

My question  
precipitated the answer,

1283

01:13:46,870 --> 01:13:50,900

of did you have contact  
with your family

1284

01:13:50,900 --> 01:13:52,643

that was in the area?

1285

01:13:52,643 --> 01:13:54,060

And you're saying  
Aunt [? Tilla ?]

1286  
01:13:54,060 --> 01:13:57,780  
by that point had joined them  
back in Germany, in Felsberg.

1287  
01:13:57,780 --> 01:13:58,280  
Yeah.

1288  
01:13:58,280 --> 01:14:00,740  
And did you ever see them?

1289  
01:14:00,740 --> 01:14:03,890  
Or was this correspondence  
only by letter, this contact

1290  
01:14:03,890 --> 01:14:06,800  
was only by letter?

1291  
01:14:06,800 --> 01:14:08,450  
During the time  
you're training--

1292  
01:14:08,450 --> 01:14:10,830  
during the time you're  
training in Paderborn--

1293  
01:14:10,830 --> 01:14:12,380  
No, nothing.

1294  
01:14:12,380 --> 01:14:15,800  
Obviously, any post  
during the training

1295  
01:14:15,800 --> 01:14:19,160  
would be censored anyway  
by the German army.

1296  
01:14:19,160 --> 01:14:21,770

1297

01:14:21,770 --> 01:14:25,370

They were only very  
matter of fact kind

1298

01:14:25,370 --> 01:14:29,360

of stories written about.

1299

01:14:29,360 --> 01:14:31,970

And then, of course, after the--

1300

01:14:31,970 --> 01:14:38,310

1301

01:14:38,310 --> 01:14:43,320

when we were prisoners  
of war, at first, again,

1302

01:14:43,320 --> 01:14:44,650

letter writing wasn't--

1303

01:14:44,650 --> 01:14:46,020

didn't exist.

1304

01:14:46,020 --> 01:14:49,740

And gradually was introduced  
according to the Geneva

1305

01:14:49,740 --> 01:14:55,870

Convention type of thing, which  
was, again, fairly curtailed.

1306

01:14:55,870 --> 01:15:01,430

So it was only later when we  
were bomb disposal in Britain

1307

01:15:01,430 --> 01:15:06,300

and in London that you  
could write proper letters

1308

01:15:06,300 --> 01:15:10,400

and post them privately.

1309

01:15:10,400 --> 01:15:12,890

But at this point, when  
you're still training,

1310

01:15:12,890 --> 01:15:15,680

and you're in  
Paderborn, and you say

1311

01:15:15,680 --> 01:15:23,030

you were there for most of the  
fall, it sounds like, of 1944.

1312

01:15:23,030 --> 01:15:25,895

Your only contact with your  
family is through letters.

1313

01:15:25,895 --> 01:15:27,330

Yes.

1314

01:15:27,330 --> 01:15:30,860

And your-- is there  
anyone else you

1315

01:15:30,860 --> 01:15:33,050

write to besides  
Aunt [? Tilla? ?] Or

1316

01:15:33,050 --> 01:15:34,610

is she the only one?

1317

01:15:34,610 --> 01:15:42,740

Well, my parents and my  
younger siblings, my brother,

1318

01:15:42,740 --> 01:15:44,900

Peter, who was the same--

1319

01:15:44,900 --> 01:15:48,380

more or less the same  
age as Klaus, the priest.

1320

01:15:48,380 --> 01:15:51,640



1321  
01:15:51,640 --> 01:15:57,280  
But you-- I can't remember  
how we [?rationed?] this

1322  
01:15:57,280 --> 01:15:59,030  
[INAUDIBLE] letter writing.

1323  
01:15:59,030 --> 01:16:01,525  
And then, there's always a  
question, would they arrive?

1324  
01:16:01,525 --> 01:16:05,650

1325  
01:16:05,650 --> 01:16:12,040  
I mean, to get a letter from  
them was like a major holiday.

1326  
01:16:12,040 --> 01:16:15,670

1327  
01:16:15,670 --> 01:16:19,960  
So when do you leave Westfalen?

1328  
01:16:19,960 --> 01:16:21,670  
When do you leave Paderborn?

1329  
01:16:21,670 --> 01:16:24,160  
When do you leave  
that training area?

1330  
01:16:24,160 --> 01:16:29,403  
When are you then  
sent back east?

1331  
01:16:29,403 --> 01:16:32,000  
Well, just when we--

1332  
01:16:32,000 --> 01:16:38,210  
when we finished  
our training course,

1333

01:16:38,210 --> 01:16:46,400  
around about Christmas, 1944,  
there was a typhus epidemic.

1334

01:16:46,400 --> 01:16:54,270  
So we were put into quarantine  
for two months, I think--

1335

01:16:54,270 --> 01:16:56,840  
eight weeks quarantine.

1336

01:16:56,840 --> 01:16:59,270  
And at the end of  
the quarantine,

1337

01:16:59,270 --> 01:17:02,550  
the order was you have  
to do another training

1338

01:17:02,550 --> 01:17:07,010  
session of six weeks.

1339

01:17:07,010 --> 01:17:10,700  
Now, in retrospect, it's  
clear that these people

1340

01:17:10,700 --> 01:17:16,250  
didn't want to be sent to  
the front line, the training

1341

01:17:16,250 --> 01:17:17,060  
company.

1342

01:17:17,060 --> 01:17:18,710  
They wanted something to do.

1343

01:17:18,710 --> 01:17:21,650  
The easiest thing was  
to say these guys need

1344

01:17:21,650 --> 01:17:23,910

another training.

1345  
01:17:23,910 --> 01:17:28,340  
So it was again a  
session of trying

1346  
01:17:28,340 --> 01:17:32,480  
to get food from the local  
farmers in an illegal sort

1347  
01:17:32,480 --> 01:17:34,550  
of way and all the rest of it.

1348  
01:17:34,550 --> 01:17:39,950  
And, of course, by that time  
the air raids were so frequent.

1349  
01:17:39,950 --> 01:17:46,670  
So you were then supposed to  
be in ditches outside your huts

1350  
01:17:46,670 --> 01:17:49,520  
while the air raid--

1351  
01:17:49,520 --> 01:17:52,010  
the alarm was on.

1352  
01:17:52,010 --> 01:17:55,030  
And what these bombers--

1353  
01:17:55,030 --> 01:17:58,100  
British bombers at night--

1354  
01:17:58,100 --> 01:18:02,330  
they would-- in the  
evening they would

1355  
01:18:02,330 --> 01:18:09,240  
fly to their targets,  
Berlin, Dresden, or wherever.

1356  
01:18:09,240 --> 01:18:13,380

And then later come  
back the same way.

1357  
01:18:13,380 --> 01:18:18,670  
So you would literally spend  
all night in your ditch.

1358  
01:18:18,670 --> 01:18:24,680  
And then, of course,  
6 o'clock around, you

1359  
01:18:24,680 --> 01:18:26,700  
were sort of tottering around.

1360  
01:18:26,700 --> 01:18:32,710  
I mean, you can't--

1361  
01:18:32,710 --> 01:18:37,320  
so in a sense,  
everybody was released.

1362  
01:18:37,320 --> 01:18:41,650  
And suddenly, that  
thing finished.

1363  
01:18:41,650 --> 01:18:45,130  
And they put up--

1364  
01:18:45,130 --> 01:18:47,180  
I had-- I put--

1365  
01:18:47,180 --> 01:18:57,790  
I got myself a better sideline,  
where on the same area

1366  
01:18:57,790 --> 01:19:04,460  
was a Waffen-SS  
leader training place.

1367  
01:19:04,460 --> 01:19:08,510  
And leaders had a  
detachment as well.

1368

01:19:08,510 --> 01:19:12,141

So they needed  
batmen [?from us?].

1369

01:19:12,141 --> 01:19:14,730

1370

01:19:14,730 --> 01:19:15,750

I didn't hear that--

1371

01:19:15,750 --> 01:19:16,980

batmen?

1372

01:19:16,980 --> 01:19:21,900

Batmen, yeah, officers  
to have somebody

1373

01:19:21,900 --> 01:19:24,880

who cleans up for them,  
cleans their boots

1374

01:19:24,880 --> 01:19:27,300

and that kind of thing.

1375

01:19:27,300 --> 01:19:30,390

So I had two guys.

1376

01:19:30,390 --> 01:19:33,520

They had a separate little hut.

1377

01:19:33,520 --> 01:19:34,950

And I was with them.

1378

01:19:34,950 --> 01:19:37,700

And they were-- well, they were  
about three or four years older

1379

01:19:37,700 --> 01:19:41,460

than I. And we  
were a nice group.

1380

01:19:41,460 --> 01:19:44,520  
And then I joined  
them, learning all

1381  
01:19:44,520 --> 01:19:51,140  
this signaling and other things  
they were being taught in the--

1382  
01:19:51,140 --> 01:19:54,470  
doing their training.

1383  
01:19:54,470 --> 01:19:57,060  
And I had otherwise  
a quiet time.

1384  
01:19:57,060 --> 01:19:58,590  
None of these silly parades.

1385  
01:19:58,590 --> 01:20:00,930  
So I remember, I would--

1386  
01:20:00,930 --> 01:20:05,810  
after, when the night  
alarm, 10 o'clock, came,

1387  
01:20:05,810 --> 01:20:08,710  
I would slip back  
and sleep in my bed

1388  
01:20:08,710 --> 01:20:12,510  
or spend most of the  
night in the ditches

1389  
01:20:12,510 --> 01:20:16,070  
outside with the alarms going.

1390  
01:20:16,070 --> 01:20:21,600  
But so, to cut a  
long story short,

1391  
01:20:21,600 --> 01:20:24,050  
there had been  
notices on noticeboard

1392  
01:20:24,050 --> 01:20:26,520  
where you could  
volunteer which front

1393  
01:20:26,520 --> 01:20:30,290  
line you wanted to go to--

1394  
01:20:30,290 --> 01:20:34,560  
Italy and so on.

1395  
01:20:34,560 --> 01:20:37,660  
And, of course,  
there was for Russia.

1396  
01:20:37,660 --> 01:20:41,530  
And by the time I got  
back that evening,

1397  
01:20:41,530 --> 01:20:44,460  
everybody else had  
put their names down

1398  
01:20:44,460 --> 01:20:47,280  
except the Russian side  
was completely empty.

1399  
01:20:47,280 --> 01:20:52,820

1400  
01:20:52,820 --> 01:20:58,920  
So the leading commanders  
said, that's you.

1401  
01:20:58,920 --> 01:21:04,145

1402  
01:21:04,145 --> 01:21:07,310  
So that's how I came  
to the Russian front.

1403  
01:21:07,310 --> 01:21:10,480

OK, let's pause a minute so you can have a little sip there.

1404  
01:21:10,480 --> 01:21:13,260

1405  
01:21:13,260 --> 01:21:15,750  
And this is like end of March, isn't it?

1406  
01:21:15,750 --> 01:21:18,730  
Something like that, March '45.

1407  
01:21:18,730 --> 01:21:19,230  
Yeah.

1408  
01:21:19,230 --> 01:21:21,660  
All right.

1409  
01:21:21,660 --> 01:21:24,980  
And we know now the war ends within a month and a half.

1410  
01:21:24,980 --> 01:21:26,740  
But you didn't know that then.

1411  
01:21:26,740 --> 01:21:29,040  
You certainly didn't know it.

1412  
01:21:29,040 --> 01:21:34,215  
But we were-- when we--

1413  
01:21:34,215 --> 01:21:42,210  
when I joined this group, who had just come back

1414  
01:21:42,210 --> 01:21:47,550  
for a rest [? after a ?] thing, they had a system,

1415  
01:21:47,550 --> 01:21:52,470  
that as soon as-- at 6



o'clock, all these sergeants

1416  
01:21:52,470 --> 01:21:59,820  
and leadership people went home  
to their families in the town.

1417  
01:21:59,820 --> 01:22:04,910  
Then immediately, the radio  
went on in the schoolroom.

1418  
01:22:04,910 --> 01:22:06,020  
And what was it?

1419  
01:22:06,020 --> 01:22:09,090  
It was [INAUDIBLE],,  
the American--

1420  
01:22:09,090 --> 01:22:11,710

1421  
01:22:11,710 --> 01:22:15,880  
as loud as anything, with all  
the music of "Lili Marlene,"

1422  
01:22:15,880 --> 01:22:17,120  
and all the rest.

1423  
01:22:17,120 --> 01:22:20,005  
And, of course, with the  
American news, everything.

1424  
01:22:20,005 --> 01:22:23,410  
And that went on  
blaring the whole night.

1425  
01:22:23,410 --> 01:22:25,970  
You had to sleep through it.

1426  
01:22:25,970 --> 01:22:29,230  
And so are you telling me that  
it was American propaganda

1427

01:22:29,230 --> 01:22:32,045  
radio that they were  
listening to in Germany?

1428  
01:22:32,045 --> 01:22:32,830  
Yeah, sure.

1429  
01:22:32,830 --> 01:22:33,700  
Yeah.

1430  
01:22:33,700 --> 01:22:36,790  
Well, obviously,  
it was especially

1431  
01:22:36,790 --> 01:22:41,170  
broadcast to the German side.

1432  
01:22:41,170 --> 01:22:43,150  
That's very interesting.

1433  
01:22:43,150 --> 01:22:48,970  
So we knew-- we knew that  
whatever the German radio said,

1434  
01:22:48,970 --> 01:22:52,560  
to what extent it was wrong.

1435  
01:22:52,560 --> 01:22:56,770  
I think the Americans  
didn't have to exaggerate.

1436  
01:22:56,770 --> 01:22:59,540  
It was happening  
at such a speed.

1437  
01:22:59,540 --> 01:23:03,550  
So we knew that the  
war was finished.

1438  
01:23:03,550 --> 01:23:06,860  
And so this is while  
you're still in Paderborn?

1439

01:23:06,860 --> 01:23:08,340

Or is this already when--

1440

01:23:08,340 --> 01:23:10,030

No, that is still in Paderborn.

1441

01:23:10,030 --> 01:23:11,370

No, that was in--

1442

01:23:11,370 --> 01:23:17,570

it was the last station before  
the Oder River where we--

1443

01:23:17,570 --> 01:23:21,270

where I did my-- had  
my fighting experience.

1444

01:23:21,270 --> 01:23:22,940

So this is not Paderborn.

1445

01:23:22,940 --> 01:23:26,570

This is when you are  
sent eastwards again

1446

01:23:26,570 --> 01:23:28,100

and you are relieving a--

1447

01:23:28,100 --> 01:23:30,200

yeah.

1448

01:23:30,200 --> 01:23:35,480

Then my-- the people, apart  
from myself and a few others,

1449

01:23:35,480 --> 01:23:38,030

were front line soldiers.

1450

01:23:38,030 --> 01:23:41,460

And the front line soldiers,  
of course, the sergeants

1451

01:23:41,460 --> 01:23:49,150  
and the corporals, couldn't just  
scream at them and [INAUDIBLE]..

1452  
01:23:49,150 --> 01:23:51,290  
Front line soldiers  
had their own sort

1453  
01:23:51,290 --> 01:23:54,360  
of rights of existence.

1454  
01:23:54,360 --> 01:23:59,390  
And so as far as the sergeants  
and things concerned,

1455  
01:23:59,390 --> 01:24:02,450  
made sure they weren't close.

1456  
01:24:02,450 --> 01:24:04,550  
They probably knew  
what was going on.

1457  
01:24:04,550 --> 01:24:07,520  
But let them have it.

1458  
01:24:07,520 --> 01:24:09,230  
I mean, they'll be  
at the front line.

1459  
01:24:09,230 --> 01:24:10,790  
They may even dead soon.

1460  
01:24:10,790 --> 01:24:13,580

1461  
01:24:13,580 --> 01:24:16,680  
OK, so we're talking,  
geographically you're

1462  
01:24:16,680 --> 01:24:20,100  
in Silesia when you  
hear these broadcasts.

1463

01:24:20,100 --> 01:24:23,310  
No, not in Silesia, in Pommern.

1464

01:24:23,310 --> 01:24:24,010  
In Pommern.

1465

01:24:24,010 --> 01:24:25,460  
Pomerania.

1466

01:24:25,460 --> 01:24:26,290  
OK.

1467

01:24:26,290 --> 01:24:28,950  
OK, so you're close  
to the Oder River,

1468

01:24:28,950 --> 01:24:31,800  
but from the Western  
side of the Oder River,

1469

01:24:31,800 --> 01:24:33,690  
rather than the eastern side.

1470

01:24:33,690 --> 01:24:34,880  
That's right, yeah.

1471

01:24:34,880 --> 01:24:40,550  
OK, and this is late March, '45.

1472

01:24:40,550 --> 01:24:43,460  
That's right.

1473

01:24:43,460 --> 01:24:45,940  
Easter-- I can't remember  
if Easter was sort

1474

01:24:45,940 --> 01:24:49,510  
of early or middle of April.

1475

01:24:49,510 --> 01:24:51,480  
And that's when you

have the venison,

1476

01:24:51,480 --> 01:24:53,140  
the deer that you shoot.

1477

01:24:53,140 --> 01:24:53,900  
Yeah.

1478

01:24:53,900 --> 01:24:54,990  
OK.

1479

01:24:54,990 --> 01:24:58,570  
And had you seen any  
fighting by then?

1480

01:24:58,570 --> 01:24:59,070  
What?

1481

01:24:59,070 --> 01:25:01,350  
Had you seen any  
fighting by then?

1482

01:25:01,350 --> 01:25:03,210  
No, no, no, no.

1483

01:25:03,210 --> 01:25:05,440  
Oh, yeah, we'd  
been attacked by--

1484

01:25:05,440 --> 01:25:11,140  
on the train getting to that  
area by a British bomber.

1485

01:25:11,140 --> 01:25:15,730  
But that was sort of--

1486

01:25:15,730 --> 01:25:21,280  
a few people were killed, but  
as far as the train stopped

1487

01:25:21,280 --> 01:25:25,970  
and we all charged out into

the woods on either side.

1488

01:25:25,970 --> 01:25:28,520

But the bomber came back again.

1489

01:25:28,520 --> 01:25:31,440

And they had-- they

fired a rocket,

1490

01:25:31,440 --> 01:25:34,630

a kind of what they call

Christmas tree, which

1491

01:25:34,630 --> 01:25:36,500

lit up the whole area.

1492

01:25:36,500 --> 01:25:38,830

So that the bomber

could see where to--

1493

01:25:38,830 --> 01:25:41,830

but the gunfire

didn't [INAUDIBLE]..

1494

01:25:41,830 --> 01:25:44,380

Except it killed a few

people who were too slow

1495

01:25:44,380 --> 01:25:48,090

getting out of the train.

1496

01:25:48,090 --> 01:25:53,630

OK, after-- after

Easter, Easter happens,

1497

01:25:53,630 --> 01:25:55,760

you have at least

an Easter dinner.

1498

01:25:55,760 --> 01:25:56,260

Yeah.

1499

01:25:56,260 --> 01:25:58,010  
And then what?

1500  
01:25:58,010 --> 01:26:01,490  
We're talking now the  
second half of April, 1945.

1501  
01:26:01,490 --> 01:26:04,400  
Yeah, that's right.

1502  
01:26:04,400 --> 01:26:07,830  
I remember one night--

1503  
01:26:07,830 --> 01:26:11,840  
I slept through all  
this radio very well.

1504  
01:26:11,840 --> 01:26:15,700  
But one night, there  
was something different.

1505  
01:26:15,700 --> 01:26:19,870  
An announcement was being  
made on this American radio.

1506  
01:26:19,870 --> 01:26:23,020  
President Roosevelt had died.

1507  
01:26:23,020 --> 01:26:27,770  
That's only way I knew,  
in fact, what date it was.

1508  
01:26:27,770 --> 01:26:28,270  
Mm-hmm.

1509  
01:26:28,270 --> 01:26:34,770

1510  
01:26:34,770 --> 01:26:37,800  
And so we have to  
look up right now

1511



01:26:37,800 --> 01:26:39,930  
to see when President  
Roosevelt died.

1512  
01:26:39,930 --> 01:26:40,890  
Yeah.

1513  
01:26:40,890 --> 01:26:43,015  
And then we'll  
know specifically.

1514  
01:26:43,015 --> 01:26:45,660  
And at the weekend  
following, we were

1515  
01:26:45,660 --> 01:26:50,430  
marching to the front  
line at the River Oder.

1516  
01:26:50,430 --> 01:26:53,970

1517  
01:26:53,970 --> 01:26:59,160  
Was this near Frankfort,  
Oder, where you were marching?

1518  
01:26:59,160 --> 01:27:03,930  
Halfway between Frankfort  
and what was the other town?

1519  
01:27:03,930 --> 01:27:07,150

1520  
01:27:07,150 --> 01:27:07,730  
I don't know.

1521  
01:27:07,730 --> 01:27:08,540  
I don't know.

1522  
01:27:08,540 --> 01:27:12,140

1523

01:27:12,140 --> 01:27:12,980  
But I just--

1524  
01:27:12,980 --> 01:27:20,270  
It was north of Frankfort, about  
100 K's North of Frankfort.

1525  
01:27:20,270 --> 01:27:27,260  
OK, so I now have looked up that  
President Franklin Roosevelt

1526  
01:27:27,260 --> 01:27:31,155  
died on April 12th, 1945.

1527  
01:27:31,155 --> 01:27:32,240  
All right.

1528  
01:27:32,240 --> 01:27:34,300  
That's the date of his death.

1529  
01:27:34,300 --> 01:27:37,640  
And so the next  
weekend after that--

1530  
01:27:37,640 --> 01:27:41,210  
I think it was April  
the 15th that we marched

1531  
01:27:41,210 --> 01:27:44,930  
to the front line at the river.

1532  
01:27:44,930 --> 01:27:57,440

1533  
01:27:57,440 --> 01:27:58,270  
Hello?

1534  
01:27:58,270 --> 01:27:58,953  
Yes, I'm here.

1535  
01:27:58,953 --> 01:27:59,620  
Can you hear me?

1536  
01:27:59,620 --> 01:28:00,910  
Can you see me?

1537  
01:28:00,910 --> 01:28:02,050  
Yeah, very well.

1538  
01:28:02,050 --> 01:28:03,430  
[INAUDIBLE]

1539  
01:28:03,430 --> 01:28:06,038  
So there you are, you  
march to the front line.

1540  
01:28:06,038 --> 01:28:06,955  
And then what happens?

1541  
01:28:06,955 --> 01:28:10,380

1542  
01:28:10,380 --> 01:28:12,090  
Something very strange.

1543  
01:28:12,090 --> 01:28:15,220  
I mean, there was  
a lot of new guns

1544  
01:28:15,220 --> 01:28:25,020  
there, and all lying around,  
just before the Russian--

1545  
01:28:25,020 --> 01:28:28,500  
the Russian artillery  
was constantly

1546  
01:28:28,500 --> 01:28:34,200  
firing across the river,  
up to, I don't know,

1547  
01:28:34,200 --> 01:28:39,470  
500, 800 meters area.

1548

01:28:39,470 --> 01:28:44,010

And the main road  
that they took there,

1549

01:28:44,010 --> 01:28:51,780

so we had to put our luggage  
bags, backpack, on this truck,

1550

01:28:51,780 --> 01:28:55,290

which we couldn't have  
it with us in the trench.

1551

01:28:55,290 --> 01:29:00,090

And then there were all these  
lovely new handguns there.

1552

01:29:00,090 --> 01:29:04,950

And I thought, well, my  
old 1914 rifle, maybe I

1553

01:29:04,950 --> 01:29:10,140

should have one of these modern  
quick firing things instead.

1554

01:29:10,140 --> 01:29:15,570

And my Uncle [? Heinrich, ?]  
with the Austrian friend

1555

01:29:15,570 --> 01:29:18,840

of my dad, had been--

1556

01:29:18,840 --> 01:29:21,400

he was always a designer.

1557

01:29:21,400 --> 01:29:25,050

And he was a weapons  
designer for the German army.

1558

01:29:25,050 --> 01:29:30,250

1559

01:29:30,250 --> 01:29:32,020

What do you call it--

1560

01:29:32,020 --> 01:29:35,000

quick fire guns was a thing.

1561

01:29:35,000 --> 01:29:40,190

I remember him having all these plans with us in Gneixendorf.

1562

01:29:40,190 --> 01:29:43,370

And, of course, in the early--

1563

01:29:43,370 --> 01:29:48,630

in the early '30s, there was no demand for it.

1564

01:29:48,630 --> 01:29:50,800

But when Germany took over Austria,

1565

01:29:50,800 --> 01:29:58,440

he was immediately called up into that design thing.

1566

01:29:58,440 --> 01:30:00,510

And then he had married--

1567

01:30:00,510 --> 01:30:05,830

one of our big guests at Gneixendorf

1568

01:30:05,830 --> 01:30:10,380

was an English novelist, Berta Ruck.

1569

01:30:10,380 --> 01:30:12,570

She was in the--

1570

01:30:12,570 --> 01:30:15,600

in the war years, was she the one

1571

01:30:15,600 --> 01:30:20,490  
who produced two or  
three novels a year.

1572  
01:30:20,490 --> 01:30:23,880  
And she wrote altogether  
over 100 novels.

1573  
01:30:23,880 --> 01:30:26,490  
And she used to come  
to us in the summer

1574  
01:30:26,490 --> 01:30:30,330  
to Gneixendorf to  
dictate the next, or one

1575  
01:30:30,330 --> 01:30:32,190  
of her next novels.

1576  
01:30:32,190 --> 01:30:34,980  
So she would be there  
for three or four weeks.

1577  
01:30:34,980 --> 01:30:38,700  
She would bring her  
own secretary with her

1578  
01:30:38,700 --> 01:30:40,110  
from England.

1579  
01:30:40,110 --> 01:30:47,660  
And one of these secretaries  
was an American lady,

1580  
01:30:47,660 --> 01:30:53,880  
a graduate psychologist,  
graduate from America,

1581  
01:30:53,880 --> 01:30:59,580  
who then fell in love with Uncle  
[? Heinrich. ?] So by the time

1582  
01:30:59,580 --> 01:31:06,000

the war ended, he was married  
to this American lady.

1583  
01:31:06,000 --> 01:31:12,440  
And then the Americans  
were grabbing--

1584  
01:31:12,440 --> 01:31:17,960  
again to be quicker  
than the Russians, all

1585  
01:31:17,960 --> 01:31:26,450  
the German designers,  
and capable inventors,

1586  
01:31:26,450 --> 01:31:30,730  
and that kind of thing, and  
send them to the States.

1587  
01:31:30,730 --> 01:31:34,220  
So Uncle [? Heinrich ?] and  
Aunt Frances went back to--

1588  
01:31:34,220 --> 01:31:36,260  
went to the States.

1589  
01:31:36,260 --> 01:31:42,940  
And he then designed  
car seats for infants,

1590  
01:31:42,940 --> 01:31:50,210  
and incapacitated people,  
and that kind of thing

1591  
01:31:50,210 --> 01:31:53,860  
for the rest of his life.

1592  
01:31:53,860 --> 01:31:56,000  
But this is what  
comes to mind when

1593  
01:31:56,000 --> 01:31:58,340  
you are being sent

to the front lines,

1594  
01:31:58,340 --> 01:32:01,530  
and you see all these  
nice guns lying there.

1595  
01:32:01,530 --> 01:32:02,310  
Yeah.

1596  
01:32:02,310 --> 01:32:07,040  
But as I say, I grabbed  
one of those guns and sort

1597  
01:32:07,040 --> 01:32:08,365  
of fingered it.

1598  
01:32:08,365 --> 01:32:13,470  
And one of the old corporals  
came and knocked me

1599  
01:32:13,470 --> 01:32:13,970  
on the back.

1600  
01:32:13,970 --> 01:32:17,510  
And they said, do you  
know, these are beautiful,

1601  
01:32:17,510 --> 01:32:24,065  
but will they fire when  
they're dirty [INAUDIBLE]??

1602  
01:32:24,065 --> 01:32:28,290  
And I said, well, I  
better not take a chance.

1603  
01:32:28,290 --> 01:32:35,290  
Because the worst thing is, if  
you have a gun and can't shoot.

1604  
01:32:35,290 --> 01:32:38,100  
So I stuck with my old rifle.

1605



01:32:38,100 --> 01:32:39,740  
And I thought maybe  
Uncle Heinrich

1606  
01:32:39,740 --> 01:32:43,010  
himself made sure that  
he made such a position

1607  
01:32:43,010 --> 01:32:46,730  
gun that as soon as there's  
a bit of mud or dirt,

1608  
01:32:46,730 --> 01:32:48,860  
it wouldn't fire.

1609  
01:32:48,860 --> 01:32:54,360  
I mean, the SS people  
said by far the best

1610  
01:32:54,360 --> 01:32:56,910  
handgun was the Russian one.

1611  
01:32:56,910 --> 01:32:59,420  
Because you can drop it  
in a puddle, pick it up,

1612  
01:32:59,420 --> 01:33:02,835  
and it'll still shoot.

1613  
01:33:02,835 --> 01:33:05,210  
[INAUDIBLE]

1614  
01:33:05,210 --> 01:33:08,200  
Did you ever fire the rifle?

1615  
01:33:08,200 --> 01:33:09,170  
Yeah, I did.

1616  
01:33:09,170 --> 01:33:10,030  
I had to.

1617  
01:33:10,030 --> 01:33:13,570

1618  
01:33:13,570 --> 01:33:16,520  
Do you know if it hit anything?

1619  
01:33:16,520 --> 01:33:19,710  
Well, it's funny.

1620  
01:33:19,710 --> 01:33:25,170  
Everything, the whole war,  
by that time, on both sides,

1621  
01:33:25,170 --> 01:33:27,690  
had become a kind  
of routine war.

1622  
01:33:27,690 --> 01:33:33,600  
People did what was absolutely  
necessary, but not--

1623  
01:33:33,600 --> 01:33:37,720  
not with any enthusiasm  
or anything like that.

1624  
01:33:37,720 --> 01:33:41,270  
And so the Russians would--

1625  
01:33:41,270 --> 01:33:47,260  
the artillery would fire day  
and night with one exception.

1626  
01:33:47,260 --> 01:33:49,170  
2 or 3--

1627  
01:33:49,170 --> 01:33:52,650  
2:30 in the morning,  
they would stop.

1628  
01:33:52,650 --> 01:33:56,610  
And then the whole armada  
would come across the river.

1629

01:33:56,610 --> 01:33:59,400  
The Russian armada would  
come across the river.

1630  
01:33:59,400 --> 01:34:03,720  
And each night,  
obviously more and more.

1631  
01:34:03,720 --> 01:34:06,690  
And we would fight them back.

1632  
01:34:06,690 --> 01:34:09,330  
All that was sort  
of programmatic.

1633  
01:34:09,330 --> 01:34:12,900  
On the German side, at 6  
o'clock in the evening,

1634  
01:34:12,900 --> 01:34:19,140  
just when it got a little bit  
too dark for the Russian planes

1635  
01:34:19,140 --> 01:34:26,330  
to see what was going on,  
there was a German set

1636  
01:34:26,330 --> 01:34:31,302  
of guns who fired exactly 12--

1637  
01:34:31,302 --> 01:34:35,990  
12 [INAUDIBLE] towards  
the other side.

1638  
01:34:35,990 --> 01:34:37,980  
And that was the German backing.

1639  
01:34:37,980 --> 01:34:42,190

1640  
01:34:42,190 --> 01:34:45,506  
Does that mean that was it?

1641

01:34:45,506 --> 01:34:49,230

Yeah, that was the German  
artillery protecting us.

1642

01:34:49,230 --> 01:34:52,918

1643

01:34:52,918 --> 01:34:54,080

OK.

1644

01:34:54,080 --> 01:34:56,240

The other thing--  
the other thing

1645

01:34:56,240 --> 01:35:03,380

was when we were marching  
to the front line,

1646

01:35:03,380 --> 01:35:09,110

into the artillery  
section, just before we

1647

01:35:09,110 --> 01:35:14,970

got to where the artillery  
fire would start,

1648

01:35:14,970 --> 01:35:18,550

who was standing on the  
right hand side of us?

1649

01:35:18,550 --> 01:35:25,240

Our company commander in his  
nice, fine dress uniform.

1650

01:35:25,240 --> 01:35:28,780

1651

01:35:28,780 --> 01:35:31,740

None of our people--

1652

01:35:31,740 --> 01:35:35,040

none of the staff would

even look at his side.

1653

01:35:35,040 --> 01:35:39,000

We were just walking past  
him, taking no notice of him.

1654

01:35:39,000 --> 01:35:43,040

It was a weird kind of sight.

1655

01:35:43,040 --> 01:35:43,860

Why?

1656

01:35:43,860 --> 01:35:47,530

Why was he there in  
his dress uniform?

1657

01:35:47,530 --> 01:35:48,240

Oh--

1658

01:35:48,240 --> 01:35:49,980

Was he going to  
go down in glory?

1659

01:35:49,980 --> 01:35:51,420

Was this the idea?

1660

01:35:51,420 --> 01:35:54,150

No, I think he was  
checking-- checking

1661

01:35:54,150 --> 01:35:58,590

that we were actually going out,  
but he certainly wasn't coming.

1662

01:35:58,590 --> 01:36:01,100

1663

01:36:01,100 --> 01:36:03,570

But that's how the--

1664

01:36:03,570 --> 01:36:09,180

then I thought-- well, we were

marching along this pass--

1665  
01:36:09,180 --> 01:36:10,840  
track.

1666  
01:36:10,840 --> 01:36:18,340  
And right and left were meadows,  
which were sort of [INAUDIBLE],,

1667  
01:36:18,340 --> 01:36:19,450  
wet--

1668  
01:36:19,450 --> 01:36:21,290  
wet grass.

1669  
01:36:21,290 --> 01:36:26,880  
And our sergeants  
and we were marching

1670  
01:36:26,880 --> 01:36:28,610  
in normal marching order.

1671  
01:36:28,610 --> 01:36:30,940  
And I thought to  
myself, that's crazy.

1672  
01:36:30,940 --> 01:36:32,120  
we should spread out.

1673  
01:36:32,120 --> 01:36:35,460

1674  
01:36:35,460 --> 01:36:40,550  
But it was that kind of bloody  
mindedness that we were just

1675  
01:36:40,550 --> 01:36:42,390  
walking [INAUDIBLE].

1676  
01:36:42,390 --> 01:36:46,050  
As it happened, there  
was no direct hit.

1677  
01:36:46,050 --> 01:36:49,420  
And that was that.

1678  
01:36:49,420 --> 01:36:55,690  
But I just couldn't understand  
why take such chance.

1679  
01:36:55,690 --> 01:36:59,130  
But that was the kind  
of-- there wasn't--

1680  
01:36:59,130 --> 01:37:02,767  
I mean, everybody  
was just unprepared.

1681  
01:37:02,767 --> 01:37:04,350  
On the Russian side,  
probably equally.

1682  
01:37:04,350 --> 01:37:06,880

1683  
01:37:06,880 --> 01:37:10,020  
There was no spirit  
of anything left.

1684  
01:37:10,020 --> 01:37:12,228  
OK.

1685  
01:37:12,228 --> 01:37:13,270  
It's hard for us to say--

1686  
01:37:13,270 --> 01:37:13,610  
And what we found--

1687  
01:37:13,610 --> 01:37:14,530  
Yeah.

1688  
01:37:14,530 --> 01:37:15,700  
And what I found--

1689

01:37:15,700 --> 01:37:19,960

what we found of the other  
when we got to the river,

1690

01:37:19,960 --> 01:37:24,970

I thought we were relieving  
the defending [INAUDIBLE]..

1691

01:37:24,970 --> 01:37:26,230

There was no defense there.

1692

01:37:26,230 --> 01:37:28,255

We were defense arriving.

1693

01:37:28,255 --> 01:37:30,950

1694

01:37:30,950 --> 01:37:35,990

The Russians could have just  
come across and not bothered

1695

01:37:35,990 --> 01:37:37,505

with firing all their guns.

1696

01:37:37,505 --> 01:37:41,510

1697

01:37:41,510 --> 01:37:45,540

And so once you get to  
that river, what do you do?

1698

01:37:45,540 --> 01:37:54,090

Well, again, in a typical  
bloody minded way,

1699

01:37:54,090 --> 01:37:58,270

from the front they--  
look, they said,

1700

01:37:58,270 --> 01:38:00,880

that's got to be a manhole here.



1701

01:38:00,880 --> 01:38:05,740

So the guy, the first  
soldier stepped down

1702

01:38:05,740 --> 01:38:08,470

and started digging a man hole.

1703

01:38:08,470 --> 01:38:09,850

That's how we moved along.

1704

01:38:09,850 --> 01:38:14,750

And, of course, we being  
a rag pack at the end,

1705

01:38:14,750 --> 01:38:17,440

we were standing--

1706

01:38:17,440 --> 01:38:20,530

standing around for  
an hour before we got

1707

01:38:20,530 --> 01:38:24,840

to our location, which was--

1708

01:38:24,840 --> 01:38:31,270

the river side was fairly  
high up from the actual river

1709

01:38:31,270 --> 01:38:33,460

on that stretch.

1710

01:38:33,460 --> 01:38:39,260

But by the time we got to where  
we, the rag pack got through,

1711

01:38:39,260 --> 01:38:42,070

there was a--

1712

01:38:42,070 --> 01:38:45,760

there was a little  
island there, which

1713

01:38:45,760 --> 01:38:50,530  
was more or less river level or  
not much higher than the river

1714

01:38:50,530 --> 01:38:51,370  
level.

1715

01:38:51,370 --> 01:38:52,480  
And we had to get--

1716

01:38:52,480 --> 01:38:55,450  
cross a plank across to there.

1717

01:38:55,450 --> 01:39:00,190  
And we, the rag pack,  
were so the catch up area.

1718

01:39:00,190 --> 01:39:04,660  
Because when the attacks  
came, the Russians--

1719

01:39:04,660 --> 01:39:07,810  
of course, the river was  
coming from south to north,

1720

01:39:07,810 --> 01:39:15,760  
with their boats and various  
things, they would obviously--

1721

01:39:15,760 --> 01:39:22,680  
in crossing, they would come  
drift towards the north,

1722

01:39:22,680 --> 01:39:23,510  
towards our island.

1723

01:39:23,510 --> 01:39:26,380

1724

01:39:26,380 --> 01:39:30,040  
And, of course, these guys  
that they had at the top

1725  
01:39:30,040 --> 01:39:36,230  
there would shoot at  
first, because the Russians

1726  
01:39:36,230 --> 01:39:40,030  
[INAUDIBLE],, the Russians would  
never get as far as our island.

1727  
01:39:40,030 --> 01:39:45,770  
But in the end, they had a tank.

1728  
01:39:45,770 --> 01:39:48,610

1729  
01:39:48,610 --> 01:39:53,900  
And our corporal had  
got an anti-tank rocket,

1730  
01:39:53,900 --> 01:39:57,221  
which he fired and stopped it.

1731  
01:39:57,221 --> 01:39:59,740  
But he burned his back.

1732  
01:39:59,740 --> 01:40:01,250  
And the back blow [INAUDIBLE].

1733  
01:40:01,250 --> 01:40:05,110  
He'd never fired one of those  
panzer [INAUDIBLE] things.

1734  
01:40:05,110 --> 01:40:09,280  
So he got killed there.

1735  
01:40:09,280 --> 01:40:15,070  
And then we were relieved  
[INAUDIBLE] within a few hours

1736  
01:40:15,070 --> 01:40:22,950  
by what they call  
kids and granddads,

1737  
01:40:22,950 --> 01:40:26,430  
with all these  
beautiful new weapons.

1738  
01:40:26,430 --> 01:40:29,470  
They were wonderfully equipped.

1739  
01:40:29,470 --> 01:40:31,870  
I said, for Heaven's sake,  
make sure you keep them clean.

1740  
01:40:31,870 --> 01:40:35,280

1741  
01:40:35,280 --> 01:40:40,080  
So you were there for all of  
two or three hours in that--

1742  
01:40:40,080 --> 01:40:41,960  
on that island?

1743  
01:40:41,960 --> 01:40:42,460  
Is that--

1744  
01:40:42,460 --> 01:40:47,640  
[INAUDIBLE] For about a week.

1745  
01:40:47,640 --> 01:40:50,520  
You were there  
about a week, I see.

1746  
01:40:50,520 --> 01:40:51,100  
I see.

1747  
01:40:51,100 --> 01:40:53,280  
And then after--  
so it's after that

1748  
01:40:53,280 --> 01:40:56,888  
shooting that you were relieved  
after two or three hours.

1749  
01:40:56,888 --> 01:40:57,555  
Is that correct?

1750  
01:40:57,555 --> 01:41:03,610

1751  
01:41:03,610 --> 01:41:08,920  
Yes, yes, that's right, it did  
happen to be the same night.

1752  
01:41:08,920 --> 01:41:10,620  
OK.

1753  
01:41:10,620 --> 01:41:11,850  
But that's another story.

1754  
01:41:11,850 --> 01:41:15,420

1755  
01:41:15,420 --> 01:41:17,220  
And what kind of story is that?

1756  
01:41:17,220 --> 01:41:19,750

1757  
01:41:19,750 --> 01:41:26,310  
Well, the situation was,  
here was my corporal.

1758  
01:41:26,310 --> 01:41:31,230  
And I was next to him, the  
nearest to him, in my foxhole.

1759  
01:41:31,230 --> 01:41:36,280  
And he-- it was all--

1760  
01:41:36,280 --> 01:41:39,150  
I mean, it was a--

1761  
01:41:39,150 --> 01:41:42,840

a battle is a terrible scramble.

1762

01:41:42,840 --> 01:41:45,600

It was-- the tank was coming.

1763

01:41:45,600 --> 01:41:49,430

And he said, don't

fire until I fire.

1764

01:41:49,430 --> 01:41:52,920

So we were kept

completely still.

1765

01:41:52,920 --> 01:41:59,100

And when the tank was about to reach the island, he fired it.

1766

01:41:59,100 --> 01:42:03,820

And the tank stopped and

sank, which was amazing.

1767

01:42:03,820 --> 01:42:05,490

And we didn't hear any more.

1768

01:42:05,490 --> 01:42:08,910

But there was a mass

of Russian soldiers

1769

01:42:08,910 --> 01:42:12,720

now coming onto

the land, onto us.

1770

01:42:12,720 --> 01:42:15,133

And we were all

just firing where--

1771

01:42:15,133 --> 01:42:17,800

where anything, because this was

all bush [?and things?] sitting

1772

01:42:17,800 --> 01:42:18,350

there.

1773

01:42:18,350 --> 01:42:20,520

But we just fired and fired.

1774

01:42:20,520 --> 01:42:23,250

Where everything,  
any moved, we fired.

1775

01:42:23,250 --> 01:42:26,760

And then suddenly,  
everything stopped.

1776

01:42:26,760 --> 01:42:28,440

It was quiet.

1777

01:42:28,440 --> 01:42:36,400

And there was a  
soldier next to me.

1778

01:42:36,400 --> 01:42:39,930

1779

01:42:39,930 --> 01:42:43,510

Whether I killed him or  
not, I just don't know.

1780

01:42:43,510 --> 01:42:45,760

But he was dead.

1781

01:42:45,760 --> 01:42:48,990

And he had a sack thing.

1782

01:42:48,990 --> 01:42:55,630

And as I tried to fathom  
out what to do about him--

1783

01:42:55,630 --> 01:42:58,420

did he have any  
food on him maybe,

1784

01:42:58,420 --> 01:43:01,275

because we hadn't had  
anything to eat for nearly--

1785  
01:43:01,275 --> 01:43:02,200  
for four days.

1786  
01:43:02,200 --> 01:43:04,780

1787  
01:43:04,780 --> 01:43:12,500  
And suddenly, the most terrible  
screams from my corporal.

1788  
01:43:12,500 --> 01:43:14,870  
And I rushed across.

1789  
01:43:14,870 --> 01:43:17,760  
There he was stuck  
in his foxhole.

1790  
01:43:17,760 --> 01:43:21,470  
And his back was  
completely bare,

1791  
01:43:21,470 --> 01:43:27,850  
right to the bone, bleeding,  
because obviously, the back--

1792  
01:43:27,850 --> 01:43:30,310  
the back blast of  
that rocket, which

1793  
01:43:30,310 --> 01:43:33,840  
he had no training in firing.

1794  
01:43:33,840 --> 01:43:36,680  
And he said, kill me, kill me.

1795  
01:43:36,680 --> 01:43:37,500  
I took his hand.

1796  
01:43:37,500 --> 01:43:39,790  
And I said, I can't kill you.



1797

01:43:39,790 --> 01:43:44,060

Then he-- he just  
rolled over to the side.

1798

01:43:44,060 --> 01:43:47,920

And that-- felt his--

1799

01:43:47,920 --> 01:43:51,557

his wrist.

1800

01:43:51,557 --> 01:43:53,942

And he's gone.

1801

01:43:53,942 --> 01:43:56,810

1802

01:43:56,810 --> 01:43:59,980

But then the sergeants  
from the other side--

1803

01:43:59,980 --> 01:44:05,610

because when the call came  
that we would all be leaving,

1804

01:44:05,610 --> 01:44:10,050

they said, if you don't bring  
him with you when you come,

1805

01:44:10,050 --> 01:44:12,451

you'll be court martialed.

1806

01:44:12,451 --> 01:44:16,430

And I said to the  
lads, if we did

1807

01:44:16,430 --> 01:44:19,700

that, we will be left  
behind because they

1808

01:44:19,700 --> 01:44:21,650

won't wait a second for us.

1809

01:44:21,650 --> 01:44:25,376

They'll run off and  
just leave us here.

1810

01:44:25,376 --> 01:44:30,280

And I said to them,  
when the replacement

1811

01:44:30,280 --> 01:44:33,520

comes, each of us,  
just run as fast as we

1812

01:44:33,520 --> 01:44:39,070

can to the street to  
catch up with them.

1813

01:44:39,070 --> 01:44:42,970

And as I say, I was one  
of the fastest to run.

1814

01:44:42,970 --> 01:44:44,080

I got there.

1815

01:44:44,080 --> 01:44:50,710

And the food, the field kitchen,  
was just about to leave.

1816

01:44:50,710 --> 01:44:52,990

The guys had had their food.

1817

01:44:52,990 --> 01:44:57,130

And they're-- obviously the  
field kitchen didn't want

1818

01:44:57,130 --> 01:45:00,620

to hang around in  
a dangerous area.

1819

01:45:00,620 --> 01:45:04,220

But when we started to arrive,  
they had to stop and wait.

1820

01:45:04,220 --> 01:45:10,070

1821

01:45:10,070 --> 01:45:13,590

Wow, when it finally  
came, it was bloody.

1822

01:45:13,590 --> 01:45:17,800

Yeah, yeah, [INAUDIBLE].

1823

01:45:17,800 --> 01:45:20,620

I didn't quite catch, though,  
the soldier that was dead,

1824

01:45:20,620 --> 01:45:22,985

was it a Russian soldier  
or a German soldier

1825

01:45:22,985 --> 01:45:23,860

that was next to you?

1826

01:45:23,860 --> 01:45:25,090

It was a Russian soldier.

1827

01:45:25,090 --> 01:45:26,220

And he had a--

1828

01:45:26,220 --> 01:45:29,020

he had a crust of bread in his--

1829

01:45:29,020 --> 01:45:36,640

in his pack, which I  
certainly ate with delight.

1830

01:45:36,640 --> 01:45:39,990

1831

01:45:39,990 --> 01:45:41,942

But I didn't touch  
him otherwise.

1832

01:45:41,942 --> 01:45:45,100

1833

01:45:45,100 --> 01:45:51,742

So you retreat across the  
plank, back onto the other side.

1834

01:45:51,742 --> 01:45:54,670

[INAUDIBLE] And, of course, all  
the uncles had already gone,

1835

01:45:54,670 --> 01:45:55,880

except for us.

1836

01:45:55,880 --> 01:45:59,880

And we ran as fast, each  
as could through the--

1837

01:45:59,880 --> 01:46:02,260

the guns that started--

1838

01:46:02,260 --> 01:46:07,520

the Russian guns had started  
firing again, as they would.

1839

01:46:07,520 --> 01:46:13,390

And then, as I say, we got  
our soup at the roadside.

1840

01:46:13,390 --> 01:46:16,930

And then behind the  
roadside, about 100 meters

1841

01:46:16,930 --> 01:46:21,100

into the woods  
there, the Germans

1842

01:46:21,100 --> 01:46:29,730

had made some positions, defense  
positions, to cover, I suppose,

1843

01:46:29,730 --> 01:46:36,930

in case the Russians got  
[INAUDIBLE] of this pathway.

1844  
01:46:36,930 --> 01:46:41,670  
And for the first time in a  
week, we could actually sleep.

1845  
01:46:41,670 --> 01:46:44,070  
They had straw on  
the ground there.

1846  
01:46:44,070 --> 01:46:45,480  
There was three or four of them.

1847  
01:46:45,480 --> 01:46:49,320  
And we spread out into  
the different things.

1848  
01:46:49,320 --> 01:46:55,500  
And we slept there for  
the first time, properly.

1849  
01:46:55,500 --> 01:47:00,060  
Then I woke up at dawn, 5:00.

1850  
01:47:00,060 --> 01:47:03,051  
I looked out of  
the shooting thing.

1851  
01:47:03,051 --> 01:47:08,970  
And I had the view, by  
chance, onto the street.

1852  
01:47:08,970 --> 01:47:14,520  
There was a Russian group  
just marching along there.

1853  
01:47:14,520 --> 01:47:16,460  
So I thought, right.

1854  
01:47:16,460 --> 01:47:21,690  
As soon as the Russians had  
disappeared along the road,

1855

01:47:21,690 --> 01:47:26,880  
I jumped out and shouted  
into each of these bunkers--

1856  
01:47:26,880 --> 01:47:30,030  
the Russians are here,  
we must collect at the--

1857  
01:47:30,030 --> 01:47:33,150  
at the gun position.

1858  
01:47:33,150 --> 01:47:36,780  
And charged-- I had a  
rough idea of where it was.

1859  
01:47:36,780 --> 01:47:40,200  
And I charged off  
without looking back.

1860  
01:47:40,200 --> 01:47:41,700  
Everybody followed.

1861  
01:47:41,700 --> 01:47:46,380  
Only sergeants  
[INAUDIBLE] like that.

1862  
01:47:46,380 --> 01:47:50,110  
That's what they wanted to  
hear, somebody giving a command.

1863  
01:47:50,110 --> 01:47:52,050  
Never mind who it was.

1864  
01:47:52,050 --> 01:47:54,710  
Anyway, of course, when  
we got to the gun--

1865  
01:47:54,710 --> 01:47:58,740  
to do the big gun position  
who fired the one battery

1866  
01:47:58,740 --> 01:48:02,730  
shot every evening, they had

gone already, completely.

1867  
01:48:02,730 --> 01:48:05,790  
They were-- so by  
then, of course,

1868  
01:48:05,790 --> 01:48:09,522  
the sergeants took over.

1869  
01:48:09,522 --> 01:48:13,770  
The [INAUDIBLE],, everybody  
counted, anybody missing,

1870  
01:48:13,770 --> 01:48:15,510  
all kind of thing.

1871  
01:48:15,510 --> 01:48:17,790  
And then they turned to me.

1872  
01:48:17,790 --> 01:48:20,370  
I was obviously the suspect.

1873  
01:48:20,370 --> 01:48:26,340  
They said, I think we send  
you to find our commander now.

1874  
01:48:26,340 --> 01:48:29,770  
He's probably in one of  
those villages on the other--

1875  
01:48:29,770 --> 01:48:33,560  
on the far side.

1876  
01:48:33,560 --> 01:48:38,260  
So I was quite happy.

1877  
01:48:38,260 --> 01:48:40,310  
I had a wound in  
the back as well

1878  
01:48:40,310 --> 01:48:47,490  
from one of the splinters from

a gun, from one of the Russians.

1879

01:48:47,490 --> 01:48:51,640

Anyway, so I shot off.

1880

01:48:51,640 --> 01:48:55,080

And by that time, of course, it was early--

1881

01:48:55,080 --> 01:48:59,500

light, 6 o'clock or so in the morning.

1882

01:48:59,500 --> 01:49:05,910

And I went straight to where I could see

1883

01:49:05,910 --> 01:49:08,690

some roofs behind the trees.

1884

01:49:08,690 --> 01:49:15,550

And then crossed the fields, no footpaths or anything.

1885

01:49:15,550 --> 01:49:19,775

And just before I got to the far side,

1886

01:49:19,775 --> 01:49:23,030

one of these Russian planes-- they called them sewing

1887

01:49:23,030 --> 01:49:25,340

machines, they made that kind of noise,

1888

01:49:25,340 --> 01:49:27,750

of the old fashioned sewing machine--

1889

01:49:27,750 --> 01:49:31,060

but like the German Fieseler planes,



1890  
01:49:31,060 --> 01:49:35,970  
they could slow down  
in a-- extremely,

1891  
01:49:35,970 --> 01:49:38,350  
to quite a slow flat.

1892  
01:49:38,350 --> 01:49:40,460  
And of course, this  
thing starts slowing down

1893  
01:49:40,460 --> 01:49:42,820  
and starts firing at me.

1894  
01:49:42,820 --> 01:49:46,580  
And, of course, the one  
thing I knew is upright

1895  
01:49:46,580 --> 01:49:49,184  
is better than [INAUDIBLE].

1896  
01:49:49,184 --> 01:49:53,030  
So I marched on them with  
them firing around me.

1897  
01:49:53,030 --> 01:49:54,870  
And they came back  
a second time.

1898  
01:49:54,870 --> 01:49:56,645  
And I just kept on marching.

1899  
01:49:56,645 --> 01:50:01,110  
And then I found command--

1900  
01:50:01,110 --> 01:50:09,430  
commander with the sergeant  
major and a medical sergeant

1901  
01:50:09,430 --> 01:50:10,660  
in the pub in the village.

1902  
01:50:10,660 --> 01:50:17,850

1903  
01:50:17,850 --> 01:50:19,750  
And I immediately--

1904  
01:50:19,750 --> 01:50:20,760  
I reported.

1905  
01:50:20,760 --> 01:50:24,120  
And he went back to the--

1906  
01:50:24,120 --> 01:50:24,940  
our commander.

1907  
01:50:24,940 --> 01:50:28,600  
Our Commander never actually  
spoke to us directly, only

1908  
01:50:28,600 --> 01:50:30,340  
through the sergeant major.

1909  
01:50:30,340 --> 01:50:33,140  
The sergeant major was  
always the go-between.

1910  
01:50:33,140 --> 01:50:36,290  
And while the sergeant major  
had gone to the go-between,

1911  
01:50:36,290 --> 01:50:37,840  
I went to the medical sergeant.

1912  
01:50:37,840 --> 01:50:41,920  
And I said look, help me, I've  
got this thing in the back.

1913  
01:50:41,920 --> 01:50:47,280  
And my feet are full  
of blood, because--

1914

01:50:47,280 --> 01:50:50,080

[INAUDIBLE]

1915

01:50:50,080 --> 01:50:53,470

So the sergeant really  
took charge of me.

1916

01:50:53,470 --> 01:50:55,530

And when the  
sergeant major said,

1917

01:50:55,530 --> 01:50:58,690

now, you must go back and tell  
the people where to go to,

1918

01:50:58,690 --> 01:51:01,420

then the medical  
sergeant said no way.

1919

01:51:01,420 --> 01:51:03,190

The guy is sick.

1920

01:51:03,190 --> 01:51:06,820

And from then on,  
I was the sick guy.

1921

01:51:06,820 --> 01:51:11,410

1922

01:51:11,410 --> 01:51:13,960

So what happens after that?

1923

01:51:13,960 --> 01:51:17,020

Where do-- what  
happens to your group?

1924

01:51:17,020 --> 01:51:20,590

Do you continue-- do you  
continue staying there?

1925

01:51:20,590 --> 01:51:21,820

Do you retreat?

1926  
01:51:21,820 --> 01:51:23,070  
What happens?

1927  
01:51:23,070 --> 01:51:29,500  
No, we found our way to the--

1928  
01:51:29,500 --> 01:51:35,110  
well, they had, in fact, the  
vehicle, the truck with all the

1929  
01:51:35,110 --> 01:51:37,190  
luggage on it.

1930  
01:51:37,190 --> 01:51:41,950  
And there was another group--

1931  
01:51:41,950 --> 01:51:46,960  
well, no-- there was obviously  
the group that I'd left.

1932  
01:51:46,960 --> 01:51:48,760  
They didn't stay  
where they were.

1933  
01:51:48,760 --> 01:51:49,560  
They moved.

1934  
01:51:49,560 --> 01:51:52,930  
And we met in--

1935  
01:51:52,930 --> 01:51:54,630  
near the town.

1936  
01:51:54,630 --> 01:51:58,410  
That's the one  
where I had arrived

1937  
01:51:58,410 --> 01:52:01,420  
two weeks, or a week before.

1938

01:52:01,420 --> 01:52:05,590  
And we joined forces.

1939  
01:52:05,590 --> 01:52:12,670  
And from then on, it was  
without any orders being given.

1940  
01:52:12,670 --> 01:52:17,560  
Certainly, our commander  
never gave any order anymore

1941  
01:52:17,560 --> 01:52:20,900  
because he didn't  
want to be the--

1942  
01:52:20,900 --> 01:52:21,830  
the what you call it?

1943  
01:52:21,830 --> 01:52:24,650

1944  
01:52:24,650 --> 01:52:27,530  
A traitor.

1945  
01:52:27,530 --> 01:52:31,160  
Now, officially we  
were still a war unit.

1946  
01:52:31,160 --> 01:52:34,590  
Unofficially, we were moving.

1947  
01:52:34,590 --> 01:52:40,030  
But the whole spirit of the  
company was completely changed.

1948  
01:52:40,030 --> 01:52:46,110  
We were a gang now, making  
sure that we had food,

1949  
01:52:46,110 --> 01:52:47,450  
that we had things.

1950

01:52:47,450 --> 01:52:49,710

And all the-- or  
some of these guys,

1951

01:52:49,710 --> 01:52:54,340

who before just couldn't  
look right or left, now,

1952

01:52:54,340 --> 01:52:57,450

during the day, you couldn't  
move because of the--

1953

01:52:57,450 --> 01:53:02,240

mostly Americans, and  
the Russian planes.

1954

01:53:02,240 --> 01:53:06,880

But during the night, obviously,  
we moved as much as we could.

1955

01:53:06,880 --> 01:53:10,950

But during the day, we were  
usually near a kind of village.

1956

01:53:10,950 --> 01:53:15,960

And then everybody was  
looking for good food.

1957

01:53:15,960 --> 01:53:23,850

And we came across fairly  
soon about Volkswagen Jeeps,

1958

01:53:23,850 --> 01:53:27,830

brand new Jeeps from  
the Volkswagen factory,

1959

01:53:27,830 --> 01:53:31,960

which wasn't all that far  
away from where we were.

1960

01:53:31,960 --> 01:53:36,450

And the guys had the  
idea that if they went--

1961

01:53:36,450 --> 01:53:39,750

there were distilleries  
in most of these villages,

1962

01:53:39,750 --> 01:53:41,460

or small towns--

1963

01:53:41,460 --> 01:53:43,740

pure alcohol.

1964

01:53:43,740 --> 01:53:47,280

Would the vehicles  
actually run on pure uncle

1965

01:53:47,280 --> 01:53:49,860

rather than on normal petrol?

1966

01:53:49,860 --> 01:53:51,270

And they did.

1967

01:53:51,270 --> 01:53:56,510

Again, a bit like the  
train from Danzig.

1968

01:53:56,510 --> 01:53:59,860

But at least they  
carried the luggage.

1969

01:53:59,860 --> 01:54:05,590

And on the straight,  
they would--

1970

01:54:05,590 --> 01:54:11,500

we had our own vehicle where  
we could take a rest on it.

1971

01:54:11,500 --> 01:54:16,030

And so in other words,  
this was a retreat.

1972

01:54:16,030 --> 01:54:17,135

This was--

1973  
01:54:17,135 --> 01:54:19,690  
It was an open retreat.

1974  
01:54:19,690 --> 01:54:22,970  
I mean, we were  
then, so to speak,

1975  
01:54:22,970 --> 01:54:30,070  
between the Russians and the  
fleeing mass of German soldiers

1976  
01:54:30,070 --> 01:54:31,420  
and civilians.

1977  
01:54:31,420 --> 01:54:36,220  
We didn't-- we didn't go  
on any of the main roads.

1978  
01:54:36,220 --> 01:54:38,260  
The main roads  
were truck blocked.

1979  
01:54:38,260 --> 01:54:41,170  
And both the American  
and the English planes--

1980  
01:54:41,170 --> 01:54:45,500  
the Russian planes  
would come and shoot--

1981  
01:54:45,500 --> 01:54:48,190  
and shoot at them and so on--

1982  
01:54:48,190 --> 01:54:49,590  
civilian people.

1983  
01:54:49,590 --> 01:54:54,782  
[INAUDIBLE] We were just doing  
it on field tracks far away.

1984  
01:54:54,782 --> 01:54:58,310



So that's how we got  
to the American line.

1985  
01:54:58,310 --> 01:54:59,960  
So does that matter--

1986  
01:54:59,960 --> 01:55:03,890  
So the image that I'm getting  
is that the main roads

1987  
01:55:03,890 --> 01:55:08,180  
have both refugees  
fleeing, civilians fleeing,

1988  
01:55:08,180 --> 01:55:11,990  
and German soldiers  
retreating, all en masse.

1989  
01:55:11,990 --> 01:55:18,630  
All en masse, everybody  
trying to get there first.

1990  
01:55:18,630 --> 01:55:26,730  
And we, along our field tracks,  
were obviously doing better.

1991  
01:55:26,730 --> 01:55:29,810  
So were you-- if we go  
geographically now, you

1992  
01:55:29,810 --> 01:55:34,320  
are coming from Silesia, from  
the Western side of the Oder.

1993  
01:55:34,320 --> 01:55:34,950  
Yeah.

1994  
01:55:34,950 --> 01:55:38,980  
And are you towards the  
south or closer to the north?

1995  
01:55:38,980 --> 01:55:40,800  
No, Pomerania-- Pomerania.

1996  
01:55:40,800 --> 01:55:44,460  
The lake-- all these  
lake districts,

1997  
01:55:44,460 --> 01:55:48,490  
and all these linked  
different lakes there--

1998  
01:55:48,490 --> 01:55:50,610  
northern, northern Pomerania.

1999  
01:55:50,610 --> 01:55:53,820

2000  
01:55:53,820 --> 01:55:57,900  
So that which does suggest  
that, if you're going north,

2001  
01:55:57,900 --> 01:55:59,780  
is that where the  
British army was?

2002  
01:55:59,780 --> 01:56:01,140  
We were going west.

2003  
01:56:01,140 --> 01:56:02,670  
You're going west.

2004  
01:56:02,670 --> 01:56:09,630  
We kept along-- clearly  
north of Berlin, if you like.

2005  
01:56:09,630 --> 01:56:12,920  
And we sort of--

2006  
01:56:12,920 --> 01:56:16,860  
in the broad direction we would  
move towards Hamburg, where

2007  
01:56:16,860 --> 01:56:19,050  
the Elbe makes a sort of--

2008

01:56:19,050 --> 01:56:22,380

it comes from south  
to north, and then

2009

01:56:22,380 --> 01:56:26,300

some miles before  
Hamburg, it turns

2010

01:56:26,300 --> 01:56:28,720

more in the westerly direction.

2011

01:56:28,720 --> 01:56:33,600

And it's at that lake there  
that that's where we finally

2012

01:56:33,600 --> 01:56:35,540

hit the Americans.

2013

01:56:35,540 --> 01:56:39,720

They had built a  
pontoon bridge there.

2014

01:56:39,720 --> 01:56:43,970

They had built a pontoon  
bridge near the-- near Hamburg?

2015

01:56:43,970 --> 01:56:49,400

Well, it was about  
100 kilometers south--

2016

01:56:49,400 --> 01:56:51,150

southeast of Hamburg.

2017

01:56:51,150 --> 01:56:52,160

OK.

2018

01:56:52,160 --> 01:56:55,370

And so you do you meet up  
with the American army at that

2019

01:56:55,370 --> 01:56:56,450

point?

2020

01:56:56,450 --> 01:56:58,460

Yeah, sure.

2021

01:56:58,460 --> 01:57:03,530

We came down towards the river.

2022

01:57:03,530 --> 01:57:05,870

There was an American soldier.

2023

01:57:05,870 --> 01:57:12,750

And he said, rifles on that side, vehicles on that side.

2024

01:57:12,750 --> 01:57:15,420

Watches to me?

2025

01:57:15,420 --> 01:57:16,360

And that's how it was.

2026

01:57:16,360 --> 01:57:18,920

2027

01:57:18,920 --> 01:57:19,700

So I--

2028

01:57:19,700 --> 01:57:23,990

Rifles on that side, vehicles on that side, watches to me?

2029

01:57:23,990 --> 01:57:25,970

Yeah, and revolvers.

2030

01:57:25,970 --> 01:57:29,530

That's what he was personally collecting.

2031

01:57:29,530 --> 01:57:32,940

And then they said, just wait, we will--

2032

01:57:32,940 --> 01:57:34,870

and you'll be told  
what to do next.

2033

01:57:34,870 --> 01:57:38,390

2034

01:57:38,390 --> 01:57:40,660

So no formal--

2035

01:57:40,660 --> 01:57:42,310

I am surrendering--

2036

01:57:42,310 --> 01:57:44,920

OK, you want to surrender,  
nothing like that?

2037

01:57:44,920 --> 01:57:46,290

Nothing at all.

2038

01:57:46,290 --> 01:57:53,890

And it emerged that only trucks  
were allowed to come through

2039

01:57:53,890 --> 01:57:55,580

towards the bridge.

2040

01:57:55,580 --> 01:57:58,420

They had to park there.

2041

01:57:58,420 --> 01:58:04,690

And the bridge would only  
be open the next morning.

2042

01:58:04,690 --> 01:58:10,850

And in the meantime, trying  
to find a truck or a driver

2043

01:58:10,850 --> 01:58:11,990

going in your direct--

2044

01:58:11,990 --> 01:58:15,400  
your home direction,  
and see that you--

2045  
01:58:15,400 --> 01:58:20,060  
they'll take you home, that  
was the general instruction.

2046  
01:58:20,060 --> 01:58:25,520  
And I found myself with  
another couple of youngsters.

2047  
01:58:25,520 --> 01:58:31,210  
We were sort of looking around,  
along the river stretch.

2048  
01:58:31,210 --> 01:58:34,010  
There were basically farm--

2049  
01:58:34,010 --> 01:58:36,950  
grass fields for farming.

2050  
01:58:36,950 --> 01:58:40,480  
Barbed wire, but  
not-- civilian--

2051  
01:58:40,480 --> 01:58:42,130  
only civilian kind.

2052  
01:58:42,130 --> 01:58:43,880  
And in the distance--

2053  
01:58:43,880 --> 01:58:48,770  
the distance we could  
see some sort of pattern

2054  
01:58:48,770 --> 01:58:50,800  
in one of these grass fields.

2055  
01:58:50,800 --> 01:58:54,760  
That I said, I wonder  
what they've got there.

2056

01:58:54,760 --> 01:58:58,990

So, we, the three  
of us, went along.

2057

01:58:58,990 --> 01:59:03,550

We clambered through the  
fence and the fences.

2058

01:59:03,550 --> 01:59:07,810

When we got there, there  
were big bales of hay there.

2059

01:59:07,810 --> 01:59:14,390

So we each took one of those big  
bails of hay and walked back.

2060

01:59:14,390 --> 01:59:18,160

Put it back very close  
to the trucks obviously.

2061

01:59:18,160 --> 01:59:20,470

Otherwise, it's all  
wet grass there.

2062

01:59:20,470 --> 01:59:23,530

And we sat on top of our bags--

2063

01:59:23,530 --> 01:59:27,910

the bales in great comfort.

2064

01:59:27,910 --> 01:59:31,940

And after about half an  
hour or so, who comes along?

2065

01:59:31,940 --> 01:59:36,390

Our company commander  
and a colleague of his.

2066

01:59:36,390 --> 01:59:40,090

And they said, we would  
like to have some hay.

2067

01:59:40,090 --> 01:59:43,990  
So we said, well, what  
do you have for us.

2068  
01:59:43,990 --> 01:59:47,410  
They had all kinds  
of bars of chocolate.

2069  
01:59:47,410 --> 01:59:53,680  
So every bale of hay, or for  
every arm of hay we gave them,

2070  
01:59:53,680 --> 01:59:55,790  
we got a bar of chocolate.

2071  
01:59:55,790 --> 01:59:56,800  
So we fared quite good.

2072  
01:59:56,800 --> 02:00:00,570

2073  
02:00:00,570 --> 02:00:02,290  
And that's your--

2074  
02:00:02,290 --> 02:00:05,980  
How life changes.

2075  
02:00:05,980 --> 02:00:09,220  
And this is once you're  
already taken prisoner?

2076  
02:00:09,220 --> 02:00:10,300  
Well--

2077  
02:00:10,300 --> 02:00:11,230  
Sort of.

2078  
02:00:11,230 --> 02:00:12,190  
--not formally.

2079  
02:00:12,190 --> 02:00:15,700  
Obviously, we wanted to



be with the Americans

2080  
02:00:15,700 --> 02:00:18,220  
because we certainly  
didn't want to be

2081  
02:00:18,220 --> 02:00:21,004  
mistaken for Russian prisoners.

2082  
02:00:21,004 --> 02:00:23,850

2083  
02:00:23,850 --> 02:00:25,500  
We felt the  
Americans were human.

2084  
02:00:25,500 --> 02:00:29,560

2085  
02:00:29,560 --> 02:00:33,740  
And based on your experience  
afterwards, were they?

2086  
02:00:33,740 --> 02:00:38,390  
Well, they were pretty rough.

2087  
02:00:38,390 --> 02:00:42,200  
When we became British  
prisoners of war,

2088  
02:00:42,200 --> 02:00:45,690  
we were treated like soldiers--

2089  
02:00:45,690 --> 02:00:49,240  
OK, enemy soldiers,  
but like soldiers.

2090  
02:00:49,240 --> 02:00:52,178  
But the Americans treated  
us more like criminals.

2091  
02:00:52,178 --> 02:00:55,850

2092  
02:00:55,850 --> 02:00:57,395  
How did that manifest itself?

2093  
02:00:57,395 --> 02:01:00,320

2094  
02:01:00,320 --> 02:01:03,740  
Well, they would  
just sort of herd

2095  
02:01:03,740 --> 02:01:08,990  
around without  
speaking or anything.

2096  
02:01:08,990 --> 02:01:10,190  
It was, you know--

2097  
02:01:10,190 --> 02:01:15,750

2098  
02:01:15,750 --> 02:01:18,390  
rough and ready.

2099  
02:01:18,390 --> 02:01:20,310  
Did you stay in  
the same location?

2100  
02:01:20,310 --> 02:01:22,140  
Where you moved anywhere?

2101  
02:01:22,140 --> 02:01:25,920  
No, the next morning  
I found a truck

2102  
02:01:25,920 --> 02:01:30,090  
to Eisenach, which was  
the nearest destination

2103  
02:01:30,090 --> 02:01:36,770  
to Felsberg, where family was.

2104  
02:01:36,770 --> 02:01:41,510  
And we got-- we were in  
good company on that truck,

2105  
02:01:41,510 --> 02:01:43,860  
about 15-20 people.

2106  
02:01:43,860 --> 02:01:47,100

2107  
02:01:47,100 --> 02:01:50,220  
But, of course, the  
streets were totally empty,

2108  
02:01:50,220 --> 02:01:54,630  
except for American  
army traffic.

2109  
02:01:54,630 --> 02:01:59,880  
And, of course,  
in the afternoon,

2110  
02:01:59,880 --> 02:02:06,690  
on the way to Hanover,  
we had no petrol anymore.

2111  
02:02:06,690 --> 02:02:09,660  
Does this mean that you--

2112  
02:02:09,660 --> 02:02:12,600  
does this mean that you  
weren't really taken prisoner?

2113  
02:02:12,600 --> 02:02:14,460  
That is, you gave up your--

2114  
02:02:14,460 --> 02:02:17,110  
Not formally, no.

2115  
02:02:17,110 --> 02:02:17,610  
OK.

2116  
02:02:17,610 --> 02:02:19,290  
We were just passed along.

2117  
02:02:19,290 --> 02:02:22,020

2118  
02:02:22,020 --> 02:02:26,400  
And when we got  
stuck without petrol,

2119  
02:02:26,400 --> 02:02:28,935  
an American truck stopped.

2120  
02:02:28,935 --> 02:02:31,680  
And they said, well, you have  
to get off the road anyway

2121  
02:02:31,680 --> 02:02:36,220  
because it was [INAUDIBLE],,  
it was getting dark.

2122  
02:02:36,220 --> 02:02:39,070  
He said, we'll requisition  
some place for you.

2123  
02:02:39,070 --> 02:02:42,150  
And we'll bring you the  
petrol in the morning.

2124  
02:02:42,150 --> 02:02:47,010  
And so they took us to one--  
to a big farm of the nearest

2125  
02:02:47,010 --> 02:02:49,800  
village and requisitioned it.

2126  
02:02:49,800 --> 02:02:51,560  
And that's where  
we spent the night.

2127  
02:02:51,560 --> 02:02:54,930

And the next morning, they  
came with their own truck.

2128  
02:02:54,930 --> 02:02:57,360  
And said, forget  
about your truck.

2129  
02:02:57,360 --> 02:02:59,550  
We take you in our truck.

2130  
02:02:59,550 --> 02:03:05,190  
And then we ended up on a  
football field in Hanover,

2131  
02:03:05,190 --> 02:03:11,070  
on the fringe of Hanover, with  
barbed wire around, and guards.

2132  
02:03:11,070 --> 02:03:15,790  
And they said, well, you have  
to wait here for release papers.

2133  
02:03:15,790 --> 02:03:19,300

2134  
02:03:19,300 --> 02:03:26,050  
So all these little groups then  
had their own little circle

2135  
02:03:26,050 --> 02:03:28,360  
of camping.

2136  
02:03:28,360 --> 02:03:32,810  
Eventually, some sort of  
food was being issued.

2137  
02:03:32,810 --> 02:03:40,010  
And all this sort of led up to  
my birthday, the 14th of May.

2138  
02:03:40,010 --> 02:03:45,980  
And there was a hairdresser.

2139

02:03:45,980 --> 02:03:47,840

He was-- who was--

2140

02:03:47,840 --> 02:03:52,180

2141

02:03:52,180 --> 02:03:53,760

who was very kind to me.

2142

02:03:53,760 --> 02:03:55,540

I think it was--

2143

02:03:55,540 --> 02:03:56,770

what you call them--

2144

02:03:56,770 --> 02:04:00,040

homosexual inclined.

2145

02:04:00,040 --> 02:04:03,100

But he said we're making  
a birthday party for you.

2146

02:04:03,100 --> 02:04:07,510

Sure enough, he extracted  
from everyone something

2147

02:04:07,510 --> 02:04:12,100

edible for a birthday  
place for me.

2148

02:04:12,100 --> 02:04:18,490

And just as all this was  
taking place, there was a--

2149

02:04:18,490 --> 02:04:21,580

the news came, or  
an announcement

2150

02:04:21,580 --> 02:04:25,540

was made, that all  
members of the--

2151  
02:04:25,540 --> 02:04:32,400

2152  
02:04:32,400 --> 02:04:35,340  
sorry-- what is that?

2153  
02:04:35,340 --> 02:04:36,880  
I don't hear a thing.

2154  
02:04:36,880 --> 02:04:38,370  
Did you hear something?

2155  
02:04:38,370 --> 02:04:39,150  
No.

2156  
02:04:39,150 --> 02:04:45,210  
OK, something just appeared  
on my side, if not on yours.

2157  
02:04:45,210 --> 02:04:47,460  
So the Waffen-SS must--

2158  
02:04:47,460 --> 02:04:48,800  
you must report.

2159  
02:04:48,800 --> 02:04:52,620  
You've become a war criminal.

2160  
02:04:52,620 --> 02:05:00,390  
And so the next day, we were  
on a truck, [INAUDIBLE]..

2161  
02:05:00,390 --> 02:05:02,010  
And as we all--

2162  
02:05:02,010 --> 02:05:05,730  
I mean Waffen-SS, you couldn't  
really easily deny because you

2163  
02:05:05,730 --> 02:05:06,720  
wore--

2164  
02:05:06,720 --> 02:05:09,280  
had your blood  
troop on your arm.

2165  
02:05:09,280 --> 02:05:12,420

2166  
02:05:12,420 --> 02:05:17,960  
And so we ended up guess where?

2167  
02:05:17,960 --> 02:05:20,570  
Where I had my first army  
training, in Paderborn.

2168  
02:05:20,570 --> 02:05:24,940

2169  
02:05:24,940 --> 02:05:29,450  
But they built-- the Americans  
had built a new camp there,

2170  
02:05:29,450 --> 02:05:33,220  
very huge barbed wire around it.

2171  
02:05:33,220 --> 02:05:35,460  
But new.

2172  
02:05:35,460 --> 02:05:42,560  
For the first time for months,  
I had a clean floor to sleep on.

2173  
02:05:42,560 --> 02:05:45,560  
I mean, I was in rags anyway.

2174  
02:05:45,560 --> 02:05:51,900  
So this is less than a year  
since you-- this is half a year

2175  
02:05:51,900 --> 02:05:54,070  
since you had been in Paderborn.



2176  
02:05:54,070 --> 02:05:56,900  
Yeah, it was only  
two months after I'd

2177  
02:05:56,900 --> 02:06:01,720  
left to go to the front line.

2178  
02:06:01,720 --> 02:06:02,700  
Yes.

2179  
02:06:02,700 --> 02:06:03,250  
Yeah.

2180  
02:06:03,250 --> 02:06:06,040  
Two months-- not half  
a year, but two months.

2181  
02:06:06,040 --> 02:06:08,130  
Two months.

2182  
02:06:08,130 --> 02:06:09,945  
And so much happened  
in those two months.

2183  
02:06:09,945 --> 02:06:10,445  
Yeah.

2184  
02:06:10,445 --> 02:06:13,370

2185  
02:06:13,370 --> 02:06:20,882  
And, of course, you were  
allocated alphabetically

2186  
02:06:20,882 --> 02:06:25,320  
to one of those nuts.

2187  
02:06:25,320 --> 02:06:28,760  
New as they were they were  
crammed full of people.

2188

02:06:28,760 --> 02:06:32,990  
To find room to  
sleep was a problem.

2189  
02:06:32,990 --> 02:06:38,390  
And most of the  
people in my hut were

2190  
02:06:38,390 --> 02:06:44,180  
officials of some sort,  
not necessarily soldiers,

2191  
02:06:44,180 --> 02:06:47,730  
but mayors of places.

2192  
02:06:47,730 --> 02:06:51,650  
But a better class  
kind of people,

2193  
02:06:51,650 --> 02:06:54,200  
who were terribly,  
terribly worried.

2194  
02:06:54,200 --> 02:06:57,170  
I mean they were  
a desperate bunch.

2195  
02:06:57,170 --> 02:06:59,900  
All day long you had to walk--

2196  
02:06:59,900 --> 02:07:04,840  
everybody had to walk around  
the inside of the barbed wire

2197  
02:07:04,840 --> 02:07:06,150  
circle.

2198  
02:07:06,150 --> 02:07:13,230  
And it was sort of really  
horrible atmosphere.

2199  
02:07:13,230 --> 02:07:18,890  
But I sort of started

looking around.

2200  
02:07:18,890 --> 02:07:28,810  
And all these people started  
walking, bent down, along--

2201  
02:07:28,810 --> 02:07:35,200  
it was a sandy sort of way,  
so as not easy to walk.

2202  
02:07:35,200 --> 02:07:39,130  
And there was just one  
guy who had his head

2203  
02:07:39,130 --> 02:07:47,040  
up, a young-ish guy, and I.

2204  
02:07:47,040 --> 02:07:52,580  
So we made sure we met up.

2205  
02:07:52,580 --> 02:07:56,460  
And he was a  
university graduate.

2206  
02:07:56,460 --> 02:08:04,770  
And he'd been inside  
of a factory, of an--

2207  
02:08:04,770 --> 02:08:08,030

2208  
02:08:08,030 --> 02:08:09,920  
[INAUDIBLE] what  
do you call it--

2209  
02:08:09,920 --> 02:08:13,252

2210  
02:08:13,252 --> 02:08:15,260  
IG-- IG Farben factory.

2211  
02:08:15,260 --> 02:08:15,940

Oh, my.

2212  
02:08:15,940 --> 02:08:23,750  
[INAUDIBLE] But he  
had started to--

2213  
02:08:23,750 --> 02:08:27,800  
he got some scraps of  
material to write on.

2214  
02:08:27,800 --> 02:08:38,320  
And we were taking to pieces  
one of the Greek stories about--

2215  
02:08:38,320 --> 02:08:43,290  
and we had a  
wonderful time just--

2216  
02:08:43,290 --> 02:08:49,190  
You know something,  
I am only hearing--

2217  
02:08:49,190 --> 02:08:49,690  
[INAUDIBLE]

2218  
02:08:49,690 --> 02:08:51,570  
I'm only hearing--  
yeah, I'm only

2219  
02:08:51,570 --> 02:08:57,955  
hearing parts of what  
we're speaking about now.

2220  
02:08:57,955 --> 02:09:00,805  
[INAUDIBLE] homosexual  
too, actually.

2221  
02:09:00,805 --> 02:09:01,680  
[INAUDIBLE] properly?

2222  
02:09:01,680 --> 02:09:03,090  
I am not only--

2223  
02:09:03,090 --> 02:09:03,880  
I'm not-- hello?

2224  
02:09:03,880 --> 02:09:04,380  
Hello?

2225  
02:09:04,380 --> 02:09:07,530  
I can't hear very  
well right now.

2226  
02:09:07,530 --> 02:09:13,830  
I would suggest that  
we're getting a silt--

2227  
02:09:13,830 --> 02:09:20,290  
a much more-- not a very  
strong signal, a weak signal.

2228  
02:09:20,290 --> 02:09:23,730  
And since we've passed  
our time anyway,

2229  
02:09:23,730 --> 02:09:26,140  
and this seems to  
be a good point,

2230  
02:09:26,140 --> 02:09:27,780  
why don't we wrap up for today.

2231  
02:09:27,780 --> 02:09:28,350  
Yeah.

2232  
02:09:28,350 --> 02:09:31,500  
And start off in this--

2233  
02:09:31,500 --> 02:09:35,580  
at this point tomorrow  
when you are in the--

2234  
02:09:35,580 --> 02:09:39,550  
in Paderborn again, and you're  
describing the atmosphere.

2235  
02:09:39,550 --> 02:09:43,410  
And this one fellow,  
who held his head high,

2236  
02:09:43,410 --> 02:09:47,880  
and how you got to know him,  
and what you talked about.

2237  
02:09:47,880 --> 02:09:48,910  
Yeah.

2238  
02:09:48,910 --> 02:09:50,960  
Yeah, let's stop for today.

2239  
02:09:50,960 --> 02:09:51,460  
Yeah.

2240  
02:09:51,460 --> 02:09:52,650  
OK.

2241  
02:09:52,650 --> 02:09:53,450  
All right, then.

2242  
02:09:53,450 --> 02:09:54,450  
Yeah.

2243  
02:09:54,450 --> 02:09:55,410  
Until tomorrow.

2244  
02:09:55,410 --> 02:09:56,730  
OK.

2245  
02:09:56,730 --> 02:09:57,780  
Yeah, until tomorrow.

2246  
02:09:57,780 --> 02:09:58,280  
All right.

2247  
02:09:58,280 --> 02:09:59,130  
Thanks very much.

2248

02:09:59,130 --> 02:10:01,130

All right then, bye-bye now.

2249

02:10:01,130 --> 02:10:01,630

Bye-bye.

2250

02:10:01,630 --> 02:10:03,140

Bye-bye.

2251

02:10:03,140 --> 02:10:04,690

Bye.

2252

02:10:04,690 --> 02:10:14,000