

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:15,060

2
00:00:15,060 --> 00:00:21,000
This is a continuation of the
USHMM Holocaust Memorial Museum

3
00:00:21,000 --> 00:00:24,840
interview with Mr.
Helmut von Schweitzer.

4
00:00:24,840 --> 00:00:30,460
And today is June 30, 2020.

5
00:00:30,460 --> 00:00:34,080
So when we finished
up yesterday,

6
00:00:34,080 --> 00:00:39,570
I believe it was just about
the point where you were taken

7
00:00:39,570 --> 00:00:44,430
prisoner by the US
armed forces and were

8
00:00:44,430 --> 00:00:47,670
held in Paderborn,
the same place

9
00:00:47,670 --> 00:00:51,960
that you had just left
from two months earlier.

10
00:00:51,960 --> 00:00:57,120
And you described a little bit
about what the atmosphere was,

11
00:00:57,120 --> 00:01:02,580
about the prisoners walking
around on the grounds,

12
00:01:02,580 --> 00:01:07,200
that most of them were kind
of elite types of people

13
00:01:07,200 --> 00:01:10,170
who had higher positions.

14
00:01:10,170 --> 00:01:13,320
And I remember you mentioning
this one gentleman who

15
00:01:13,320 --> 00:01:18,450
held his head high while
all the others were kind

16
00:01:18,450 --> 00:01:22,250
of bowing their heads low
as they walked around,

17
00:01:22,250 --> 00:01:25,830
and that you somehow
befriended this person

18
00:01:25,830 --> 00:01:26,940
or came to know him.

19
00:01:26,940 --> 00:01:27,540
Yes.

20
00:01:27,540 --> 00:01:30,420
Let's start from there.

21
00:01:30,420 --> 00:01:33,680
So tell me a little
bit about who he was

22
00:01:33,680 --> 00:01:39,140
and what your interaction
with him was like.

23
00:01:39,140 --> 00:01:44,370
Well, I mean, when I

started to talk to him,

24

00:01:44,370 --> 00:01:48,050

he was very busy with a problem.

25

00:01:48,050 --> 00:01:58,880

He was revising one of the
great Greek epics about Troy.

26

00:01:58,880 --> 00:02:05,810

And it was the Greek drama
around Troy and that kind of--

27

00:02:05,810 --> 00:02:08,150

Excuse me for a second.

28

00:02:08,150 --> 00:02:11,990

There was some other
noise that was coming

29

00:02:11,990 --> 00:02:14,210

that I hear on the microphones.

30

00:02:14,210 --> 00:02:16,410

Is someone talking on the phone?

31

00:02:16,410 --> 00:02:20,000

No, there's nobody
here directly, no.

32

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:22,040

I'm the only one in the room.

33

00:02:22,040 --> 00:02:22,540

OK.

34

00:02:22,540 --> 00:02:25,180

Then maybe it's an echo
through our microphones.

35

00:02:25,180 --> 00:02:26,140

I'm sorry.

36
00:02:26,140 --> 00:02:27,670
Let's continue.

37
00:02:27,670 --> 00:02:29,940
Shall I speak more
quietly, then?

38
00:02:29,940 --> 00:02:31,180
No, no, no.

39
00:02:31,180 --> 00:02:32,470
You're perfectly fine.

40
00:02:32,470 --> 00:02:33,950
You're perfectly fine.

41
00:02:33,950 --> 00:02:37,462
So he was revising
something from Troy.

42
00:02:37,462 --> 00:02:39,910
One of the--

43
00:02:39,910 --> 00:02:40,840
You all right?

44
00:02:40,840 --> 00:02:43,080
We're talking.

45
00:02:43,080 --> 00:02:48,220
No, [INAUDIBLE] checking
whether we're talking all right.

46
00:02:48,220 --> 00:02:49,080
Yes.

47
00:02:49,080 --> 00:02:49,580
OK.

48
00:02:49,580 --> 00:02:53,670

49
00:02:53,670 --> 00:02:55,260
Yeah.

50
00:02:55,260 --> 00:03:03,750
And the-- I'm
sorry, all the names

51
00:03:03,750 --> 00:03:05,680
are not quite handy to me.

52
00:03:05,680 --> 00:03:09,930
But I don't think
it matters too much.

53
00:03:09,930 --> 00:03:13,880
We were busy doing
something together--

54
00:03:13,880 --> 00:03:19,830
reading, writing, and working
all kinds of additional changes

55
00:03:19,830 --> 00:03:23,010
to the original drama.

56
00:03:23,010 --> 00:03:27,150
And noting them and then
revising them and then

57
00:03:27,150 --> 00:03:29,520
again discussing them.

58
00:03:29,520 --> 00:03:31,260
But the whole point
of it, really,

59
00:03:31,260 --> 00:03:35,250
was that we sort
of virtually forgot

60

00:03:35,250 --> 00:03:40,830
about the surrounding we were
in and the awful situation

61
00:03:40,830 --> 00:03:45,670
and being hungry and all
the unpleasant things.

62
00:03:45,670 --> 00:03:52,170
And that went on for about
a week, 10 days maybe.

63
00:03:52,170 --> 00:03:54,990
I'm not quite sure.

64
00:03:54,990 --> 00:04:01,440
And then one night, maybe
sort of just before midnight,

65
00:04:01,440 --> 00:04:05,730
I was already on
my place in my--

66
00:04:05,730 --> 00:04:08,310
on the floor in the straw--

67
00:04:08,310 --> 00:04:10,860
well, that little bit of
straw that there was--

68
00:04:10,860 --> 00:04:17,700
and some Americans came
in and fetched me out,

69
00:04:17,700 --> 00:04:25,250
took me to the office outside
the camp, the barbed wire camp.

70
00:04:25,250 --> 00:04:31,320
And there was a young
American soldier officer

71
00:04:31,320 --> 00:04:33,990

sitting there to interview me.

72

00:04:33,990 --> 00:04:35,640

And he said, well--

73

00:04:35,640 --> 00:04:40,090

in perfectly fluent German--

74

00:04:40,090 --> 00:04:44,240

he said, well, tell
me your life story.

75

00:04:44,240 --> 00:04:47,930

So I started to tell
him my life story.

76

00:04:47,930 --> 00:04:50,410

And then he would suddenly
interject and said,

77

00:04:50,410 --> 00:04:52,610

hey, what do you
think of Hitler?

78

00:04:52,610 --> 00:04:56,410

I said, greatest war criminal.

79

00:04:56,410 --> 00:04:58,300

And I said, carry on.

80

00:04:58,300 --> 00:05:01,720

So we'd carry on
with my life story.

81

00:05:01,720 --> 00:05:04,590

And he would say, who
is guilty for the war?

82

00:05:04,590 --> 00:05:06,330

And I said, of course, Germany.

83

00:05:06,330 --> 00:05:15,550

And so then again, he
told me, carry on talking.

84
00:05:15,550 --> 00:05:19,650
And then a third question was--

85
00:05:19,650 --> 00:05:24,030

86
00:05:24,030 --> 00:05:24,780
well, what was it?

87
00:05:24,780 --> 00:05:28,640

88
00:05:28,640 --> 00:05:31,760
What did I think about
what happened to the Jews?

89
00:05:31,760 --> 00:05:35,600
And I said that that was just
the most worst terrible thing

90
00:05:35,600 --> 00:05:38,700
that could ever have happened.

91
00:05:38,700 --> 00:05:41,000
So then he said,
carry on talking.

92
00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:43,400
And after a short while,
he said, no, it's OK.

93
00:05:43,400 --> 00:05:43,970
You can go.

94
00:05:43,970 --> 00:05:46,520

95
00:05:46,520 --> 00:05:52,490
And I was taken back

to my original camp.

96

00:05:52,490 --> 00:05:54,660

But first thing in the
morning, about 6 o'clock,

97

00:05:54,660 --> 00:05:59,450

just after it became light,
I was fished out again.

98

00:05:59,450 --> 00:06:06,950

I was given my bag, my
backpack, and taken to a camp

99

00:06:06,950 --> 00:06:12,890

just across the way from
where I had just been,

100

00:06:12,890 --> 00:06:15,980

which, in my time, when
I was there training,

101

00:06:15,980 --> 00:06:20,650

was the camp of the Russian
prisoner of war camp.

102

00:06:20,650 --> 00:06:27,120

But now it was a German
prisoner of war camp.

103

00:06:27,120 --> 00:06:31,140

It hadn't been changed
one little bit.

104

00:06:31,140 --> 00:06:34,050

The awful way it
looked when I was there

105

00:06:34,050 --> 00:06:38,400

two months earlier
was just the same now.

106

00:06:38,400 --> 00:06:41,670

Americans have just
swapped the inmates.

107
00:06:41,670 --> 00:06:44,670

108
00:06:44,670 --> 00:06:50,050
But in there, there was a
different bunch of people.

109
00:06:50,050 --> 00:06:53,520
These were obviously
ex-Army people,

110
00:06:53,520 --> 00:06:57,360
but again, they seemed to
have been more the admin

111
00:06:57,360 --> 00:07:04,980
people rather than frontline,
ordinary soldiers like myself.

112
00:07:04,980 --> 00:07:07,110
They were in reasonable shape.

113
00:07:07,110 --> 00:07:10,330
And a lot of them were
teachers and doctors,

114
00:07:10,330 --> 00:07:12,630
some people like that.

115
00:07:12,630 --> 00:07:17,820
And they had an immense
amount of social life carrying

116
00:07:17,820 --> 00:07:23,580
on, social life in, if you
like, the pre-Hitler time,

117
00:07:23,580 --> 00:07:27,210
the good old times.

118

00:07:27,210 --> 00:07:28,610

There was a choir.

119

00:07:28,610 --> 00:07:32,990

There were discussion groups,
and all that kind of thing.

120

00:07:32,990 --> 00:07:35,550

And I really threw
myself into that,

121

00:07:35,550 --> 00:07:39,080

although, I mean, I was
a sort of the odd type,

122

00:07:39,080 --> 00:07:42,570

because I hadn't
had any relief right

123

00:07:42,570 --> 00:07:45,870

from the frontline service.

124

00:07:45,870 --> 00:07:48,570

So I was as dirty
as you can imagine--

125

00:07:48,570 --> 00:07:52,110

I mean, apart from
superficial washing.

126

00:07:52,110 --> 00:07:56,040

My clothes-- my uniform, or
whatever you might have called

127

00:07:56,040 --> 00:07:57,180

it--

128

00:07:57,180 --> 00:07:59,220

was in rags.

129

00:07:59,220 --> 00:08:02,430

I was full of lice and whatever.

130
00:08:02,430 --> 00:08:05,750
It was crawling all
over the place of me.

131
00:08:05,750 --> 00:08:11,390
And so I wasn't
much of a companion,

132
00:08:11,390 --> 00:08:13,490
certainly, to people
in the hut where

133
00:08:13,490 --> 00:08:18,170
I had been in the punishment
or in the investigation camp.

134
00:08:18,170 --> 00:08:21,930
They really sort of
shied away from me a bit.

135
00:08:21,930 --> 00:08:26,610
But now, again, in this camp,
there was still no improvement.

136
00:08:26,610 --> 00:08:31,960
And of course, it was still
also the basic Russian camp.

137
00:08:31,960 --> 00:08:34,140
It had all the lice.

138
00:08:34,140 --> 00:08:37,380
In fact, it was so
heavy there that often I

139
00:08:37,380 --> 00:08:39,690
slept rather in
the open at night

140
00:08:39,690 --> 00:08:42,830
than staying inside,
because these animals would

141
00:08:42,830 --> 00:08:47,790
be falling on you from the
ceiling or floor, everywhere.

142
00:08:47,790 --> 00:08:50,880
So the social life was strong.

143
00:08:50,880 --> 00:08:58,620
The choir-- I joined the choir,
all the old German songs.

144
00:08:58,620 --> 00:09:03,950
And as I say, their
various lectures going on.

145
00:09:03,950 --> 00:09:08,640
And there was particularly
talk about obviously

146
00:09:08,640 --> 00:09:10,110
that there was--

147
00:09:10,110 --> 00:09:10,620
what is it?

148
00:09:10,620 --> 00:09:15,450
The [NON-ENGLISH] was
the name of the book,

149
00:09:15,450 --> 00:09:16,800
written by somebody--

150
00:09:16,800 --> 00:09:20,820
I'm just trying to think
of his name again--

151
00:09:20,820 --> 00:09:24,000
written after the end
of the First World War,

152
00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:30,750

saying that Europe-- that
[NON-ENGLISH] was finished.

153
00:09:30,750 --> 00:09:34,920
And now these guys was
discussing and saying, now,

154
00:09:34,920 --> 00:09:36,240
what did it all mean?

155
00:09:36,240 --> 00:09:38,880

156
00:09:38,880 --> 00:09:41,730
Was it now really actually--
has it now happened?

157
00:09:41,730 --> 00:09:44,030
Was all the Hitler--

158
00:09:44,030 --> 00:09:47,810
this terrible thing,
all that kind of--

159
00:09:47,810 --> 00:09:50,700
so we had kind of
discussions, but not

160
00:09:50,700 --> 00:09:56,190
so much about war guilt, but
about fate, that kind of thing.

161
00:09:56,190 --> 00:09:57,360
And-- sorry.

162
00:09:57,360 --> 00:09:59,670
Can I interrupt for a second?

163
00:09:59,670 --> 00:10:01,150
A few questions.

164
00:10:01,150 --> 00:10:04,230

So the first camp
that you were in,

165
00:10:04,230 --> 00:10:07,320
it turns out to be an
interrogation camp.

166
00:10:07,320 --> 00:10:08,417
Is that right?

167
00:10:08,417 --> 00:10:09,250
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

168
00:10:09,250 --> 00:10:10,292
Yeah, that's what it was.

169
00:10:10,292 --> 00:10:12,510
So it's sort of like
a filtration camp

170
00:10:12,510 --> 00:10:15,990
to find out who were true
Nazis and who would have

171
00:10:15,990 --> 00:10:18,360
been in the higher positions?

172
00:10:18,360 --> 00:10:19,950
Yeah.

173
00:10:19,950 --> 00:10:22,050
Is that so?

174
00:10:22,050 --> 00:10:24,270
I think that's what it was, yes.

175
00:10:24,270 --> 00:10:24,810
OK.

176
00:10:24,810 --> 00:10:27,530
Now--

177

00:10:27,530 --> 00:10:32,610

The guy who interviewed me, the
American with perfect German

178

00:10:32,610 --> 00:10:34,650

who interviewed--

179

00:10:34,650 --> 00:10:37,500

I had this sort of
almost a feeling

180

00:10:37,500 --> 00:10:41,700

that he was born in Germany.

181

00:10:41,700 --> 00:10:45,240

I wondered whether he might be
one of these Jewish refugees

182

00:10:45,240 --> 00:10:46,890

who'd come to Germany--

183

00:10:46,890 --> 00:10:48,130

to America.

184

00:10:48,130 --> 00:10:49,260

Anyway--

185

00:10:49,260 --> 00:10:51,600

You wondered-- I'm
going to pause it.

186

00:10:51,600 --> 00:10:53,910

Stay at this moment.

187

00:10:53,910 --> 00:10:55,980

Actually, there
were many who were.

188

00:10:55,980 --> 00:11:00,690

And they were involved in
debriefings and interrogations

189

00:11:00,690 --> 00:11:02,040
and so on and so forth.

190

00:11:02,040 --> 00:11:06,020

191

00:11:06,020 --> 00:11:08,480
When he asked you,
what do you think

192

00:11:08,480 --> 00:11:10,430
of what happened to the Jews?

193

00:11:10,430 --> 00:11:13,340
How much did you know
at that time about what

194

00:11:13,340 --> 00:11:15,020
happened to the Jews?

195

00:11:15,020 --> 00:11:20,960
Well, all I knew was that
they had been taken away.

196

00:11:20,960 --> 00:11:30,800
I certainly-- I had no true
or certain information of what

197

00:11:30,800 --> 00:11:31,790
happened with--

198

00:11:31,790 --> 00:11:36,500
to what extent they were
tortured or anything like that.

199

00:11:36,500 --> 00:11:40,910
There obviously had
been rumors, but never

200

00:11:40,910 --> 00:11:43,820
any confirmation of
one sort or another.

201
00:11:43,820 --> 00:11:46,460
And of course, really,
I mean, at that time

202
00:11:46,460 --> 00:11:51,210
I didn't know whether Hitler
was dead or alive, because--

203
00:11:51,210 --> 00:11:54,600
indeed, where he committed
suicide maybe three weeks

204
00:11:54,600 --> 00:11:56,700
before that.

205
00:11:56,700 --> 00:11:59,730
So when you were taken--

206
00:11:59,730 --> 00:12:01,830
I forgot our dates
now a little bit--

207
00:12:01,830 --> 00:12:05,850
was this at the end
of April of 1945?

208
00:12:05,850 --> 00:12:08,420
Do you know approximately when--

209
00:12:08,420 --> 00:12:13,600
It was on the 4th of May that
we surrendered to the Americans.

210
00:12:13,600 --> 00:12:14,610
OK.

211
00:12:14,610 --> 00:12:18,250
And so the war ends
only a few days later.

212
00:12:18,250 --> 00:12:21,240

So by the time that
you're interrogated,

213
00:12:21,240 --> 00:12:24,480
it's really around that
time of the war ending,

214
00:12:24,480 --> 00:12:27,150
of Hitler having already
committed suicide.

215
00:12:27,150 --> 00:12:28,650
But you don't know that.

216
00:12:28,650 --> 00:12:29,630
You don't know that.

217
00:12:29,630 --> 00:12:31,850
No, I didn't know that.

218
00:12:31,850 --> 00:12:36,750
But I mean, for me personally,
the most important thing

219
00:12:36,750 --> 00:12:41,070
was that I was out
of the war now.

220
00:12:41,070 --> 00:12:41,610
Of course.

221
00:12:41,610 --> 00:12:42,270
Of course.

222
00:12:42,270 --> 00:12:43,860
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

223
00:12:43,860 --> 00:12:47,930
--out of the war criminal camp.

224
00:12:47,930 --> 00:12:50,330
Well, is that how you

saw it at the time,

225

00:12:50,330 --> 00:12:53,090

that the first
interrogation camp is those

226

00:12:53,090 --> 00:12:56,177

where there are war criminals
or possible war criminals?

227

00:12:56,177 --> 00:12:57,010

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

228

00:12:57,010 --> 00:13:04,430

I was only in there because of
my [NON-ENGLISH] membership.

229

00:13:04,430 --> 00:13:08,360

The whole [NON-ENGLISH]
organization was automatically

230

00:13:08,360 --> 00:13:14,450

declared to be a
criminal organization.

231

00:13:14,450 --> 00:13:19,970

And had the Americans, when
they took you, declared that?

232

00:13:19,970 --> 00:13:23,000

How do you know that
it was declared a war

233

00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:26,040

criminal organization?

234

00:13:26,040 --> 00:13:26,540

Who said it?

235

00:13:26,540 --> 00:13:27,373

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

236

00:13:27,373 --> 00:13:33,770
--at the camp in Hanover, when
they called us up to go on this

237
00:13:33,770 --> 00:13:38,510
transport to [NON-ENGLISH],,
they said that.

238
00:13:38,510 --> 00:13:41,600
They said that anybody
who has been a member

239
00:13:41,600 --> 00:13:45,500
of the [NON-ENGLISH] is
a suspect war criminal.

240
00:13:45,500 --> 00:13:50,610
And you must report to the--

241
00:13:50,610 --> 00:13:54,110
for transport to the camp.

242
00:13:54,110 --> 00:13:56,430
Now, that was quite clear.

243
00:13:56,430 --> 00:14:01,210
I hadn't seen anything written
down on paper anywhere, no.

244
00:14:01,210 --> 00:14:01,710
OK.

245
00:14:01,710 --> 00:14:03,480
It was simply that
up till now, I

246
00:14:03,480 --> 00:14:08,970
didn't realize there had
been such communication that

247
00:14:08,970 --> 00:14:13,020
had taken place
and that it is not

248
00:14:13,020 --> 00:14:16,170
you kind of seeing
the kind of people

249
00:14:16,170 --> 00:14:19,470
who were in there in this
camp that gave you that idea.

250
00:14:19,470 --> 00:14:24,670
It was, that's how the Americans
were defining you in this--

251
00:14:24,670 --> 00:14:28,350
I mean, there's a lot of us.

252
00:14:28,350 --> 00:14:30,840
It was on my
birthday party it all

253
00:14:30,840 --> 00:14:36,750
happened at that time, when the
announcement in the camp came.

254
00:14:36,750 --> 00:14:45,260
And they had to be then raided
the following morning to go

255
00:14:45,260 --> 00:14:49,990
to come on the truck
to [NON-ENGLISH],,

256
00:14:49,990 --> 00:14:53,030
to [NON-ENGLISH].

257
00:14:53,030 --> 00:14:58,610
So you had said yesterday that
the Americans didn't treat you

258
00:14:58,610 --> 00:15:03,470
very well compared to
how the British were.

259

00:15:03,470 --> 00:15:08,270

And did that extend to your
interrogator, that kind of--

260

00:15:08,270 --> 00:15:11,350

No, the interrogator was kept--

261

00:15:11,350 --> 00:15:12,540

exception to the rule.

262

00:15:12,540 --> 00:15:14,140

I mean, he was perfectly civil.

263

00:15:14,140 --> 00:15:17,600

264

00:15:17,600 --> 00:15:21,240

You know, it was an easy
conversation, really, with him.

265

00:15:21,240 --> 00:15:26,750

And I have the feeling
that he was my age.

266

00:15:26,750 --> 00:15:33,680

So apart from my garments
and everything else,

267

00:15:33,680 --> 00:15:38,120

we were sort of similar looking.

268

00:15:38,120 --> 00:15:47,590

And so he was quite
friendly and normal, yes.

269

00:15:47,590 --> 00:15:51,310

So now let's go back to the camp
that you were transferred to.

270

00:15:51,310 --> 00:15:54,340

And that is a
more, shall we say,

271
00:15:54,340 --> 00:15:58,240
more like a prisoner
of war type camp,

272
00:15:58,240 --> 00:16:00,910
but it's the Russian
one with lots of lice?

273
00:16:00,910 --> 00:16:04,450
Yeah, the camp-- the
physical part of the camp--

274
00:16:04,450 --> 00:16:08,560
was anything but a
German sanctuary.

275
00:16:08,560 --> 00:16:15,190
But the people
there had all got--

276
00:16:15,190 --> 00:16:18,900
had some sort of background--

277
00:16:18,900 --> 00:16:22,090
choirmaster,
schoolteacher-- and they

278
00:16:22,090 --> 00:16:27,580
were using that to bring
themselves back to normal life.

279
00:16:27,580 --> 00:16:31,850
And the rest of us
were the audience.

280
00:16:31,850 --> 00:16:34,360
So there was always
something going on,

281
00:16:34,360 --> 00:16:43,540
which again, took away the
terrible living conditions

282
00:16:43,540 --> 00:16:44,290
otherwise.

283
00:16:44,290 --> 00:16:47,318

284
00:16:47,318 --> 00:16:51,070
And you know, it
was nice to sing

285
00:16:51,070 --> 00:16:55,750
all these songs, the old songs
again, and that kind of thing.

286
00:16:55,750 --> 00:17:00,160
But yeah, I understand
that this is

287
00:17:00,160 --> 00:17:04,760
how they tried to inject
some sort of, I guess,

288
00:17:04,760 --> 00:17:11,150
normality or something
positive in the surroundings.

289
00:17:11,150 --> 00:17:16,780
My question is much more not
who they tried to go back to be,

290
00:17:16,780 --> 00:17:20,260
but who they were when they were
caught and sent to the camp.

291
00:17:20,260 --> 00:17:23,470
Like, was the
choirmaster also somebody

292
00:17:23,470 --> 00:17:27,069
who was a soldier after that and
was captured by the Americans?

293

00:17:27,069 --> 00:17:32,647

In other words, how was this
camp defined by the captors?

294

00:17:32,647 --> 00:17:33,480

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

295

00:17:33,480 --> 00:17:38,420

I think that all
of them had been,

296

00:17:38,420 --> 00:17:42,580

as far as I could understand
from the [INAUDIBLE],,

297

00:17:42,580 --> 00:17:45,580

they had been called
up to the German army

298

00:17:45,580 --> 00:17:48,130

in one capacity or another.

299

00:17:48,130 --> 00:17:52,900

But I mean, obviously the
whole German army consisted not

300

00:17:52,900 --> 00:17:59,200

only just of fighting units
but of all kinds of occupation

301

00:17:59,200 --> 00:18:03,180

units in the
different countries,

302

00:18:03,180 --> 00:18:08,240

and specialists, doctors,
that kind of thing.

303

00:18:08,240 --> 00:18:14,760

But again, nobody really sort
of talked much about the past.

304

00:18:14,760 --> 00:18:16,760
That was something terrible.

305
00:18:16,760 --> 00:18:22,430
And now they didn't
want to go into detail.

306
00:18:22,430 --> 00:18:24,970
So this means when they don't--

307
00:18:24,970 --> 00:18:26,597
amongst yourselves,
the prisoners,

308
00:18:26,597 --> 00:18:28,180
you don't want to
talk about the past,

309
00:18:28,180 --> 00:18:30,880
you're talking about
the immediate past--

310
00:18:30,880 --> 00:18:33,460
that is, a month
ago, two months ago,

311
00:18:33,460 --> 00:18:36,550
stretching back maybe
another 12 years,

312
00:18:36,550 --> 00:18:38,550
because that's the
Hitler time from 1933.

313
00:18:38,550 --> 00:18:39,050
Exactly.

314
00:18:39,050 --> 00:18:42,020

315
00:18:42,020 --> 00:18:43,930
Was your father also arrested?

316

00:18:43,930 --> 00:18:46,535

Because he had been
part of the former--

317

00:18:46,535 --> 00:18:48,070

Yes, he was.

318

00:18:48,070 --> 00:18:52,660

I mean, he obviously--
his work in France was--

319

00:18:52,660 --> 00:18:55,720

had to stop and he had to leave.

320

00:18:55,720 --> 00:19:02,310

And he was then
re-employed as a sort of--

321

00:19:02,310 --> 00:19:07,660

as a group of similar
officers to him.

322

00:19:07,660 --> 00:19:11,650

They were given a
vehicle of some sort

323

00:19:11,650 --> 00:19:19,000

to make sure that the streets on
the German side were in order,

324

00:19:19,000 --> 00:19:21,790

there was no
criminals, that kind

325

00:19:21,790 --> 00:19:27,330

of sort of military control.

326

00:19:27,330 --> 00:19:30,880

And of course, it
didn't last very long,

327

00:19:30,880 --> 00:19:35,530

because the Americans
made fairly quick headway

328
00:19:35,530 --> 00:19:38,110
once they got across the Rhine.

329
00:19:38,110 --> 00:19:45,500
And so he became, I think, for
a week or two a prisoner of war.

330
00:19:45,500 --> 00:19:48,920
But he was then released.

331
00:19:48,920 --> 00:19:54,580
He was not a youngster,
not dangerous looking.

332
00:19:54,580 --> 00:19:59,400
And a lot of people had
only a very brief kind

333
00:19:59,400 --> 00:20:01,410
of prisoner of war experience.

334
00:20:01,410 --> 00:20:04,550

335
00:20:04,550 --> 00:20:07,270
So in this second
camp, were there also

336
00:20:07,270 --> 00:20:09,490
interrogations going on?

337
00:20:09,490 --> 00:20:12,800
No, nothing of the kind.

338
00:20:12,800 --> 00:20:15,370
So you were just being
held there, that's all?

339
00:20:15,370 --> 00:20:16,735

You were being held there?

340
00:20:16,735 --> 00:20:19,190
Held there.

341
00:20:19,190 --> 00:20:23,020
Well, what emerged
was that we were

342
00:20:23,020 --> 00:20:26,080
in the British
sort of occupation,

343
00:20:26,080 --> 00:20:31,430
that we had been taken
prisoner by the Americans.

344
00:20:31,430 --> 00:20:36,340
And the Americans obviously
had to move themselves

345
00:20:36,340 --> 00:20:39,720
from the British
zone of occupation.

346
00:20:39,720 --> 00:20:42,920
And I don't know--

347
00:20:42,920 --> 00:20:45,820
they certainly didn't want
to take all these prisoners

348
00:20:45,820 --> 00:20:48,500
with them to the American zone.

349
00:20:48,500 --> 00:20:52,030
And so then there was a
handover to the British.

350
00:20:52,030 --> 00:20:58,000
And then things
changed fairly rapidly.

351

00:20:58,000 --> 00:21:03,020

We were taken to
a different camp,

352

00:21:03,020 --> 00:21:08,090

and where there was this camp
where we had showers and we

353

00:21:08,090 --> 00:21:12,390

were deloused and cleaned
up from top to bottom.

354

00:21:12,390 --> 00:21:19,840

And we got British army
gear for the complete set

355

00:21:19,840 --> 00:21:24,280

of British soldiers' uniforms--

356

00:21:24,280 --> 00:21:26,065

except, of course,
for the insignia.

357

00:21:26,065 --> 00:21:33,680

358

00:21:33,680 --> 00:21:38,170

Do you know where you
were taken, where--

359

00:21:38,170 --> 00:21:40,610

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

360

00:21:40,610 --> 00:21:44,150

At that time, we didn't
know anything for certain,

361

00:21:44,150 --> 00:21:46,850

except that we weren't
going to be released.

362

00:21:46,850 --> 00:21:48,110

That was clear.

363
00:21:48,110 --> 00:21:55,420

364
00:21:55,420 --> 00:22:02,500
People were-- camp was dissolved
and we were put on the train

365
00:22:02,500 --> 00:22:03,385
to Brussels.

366
00:22:03,385 --> 00:22:06,090

367
00:22:06,090 --> 00:22:07,930
And about when did that happen?

368
00:22:07,930 --> 00:22:10,710
Was that a month later,
two months later--

369
00:22:10,710 --> 00:22:11,880
A couple of months later.

370
00:22:11,880 --> 00:22:24,935
I think we got to Brussels
about August 1945.

371
00:22:24,935 --> 00:22:26,390
OK.

372
00:22:26,390 --> 00:22:27,860
And then what happens?

373
00:22:27,860 --> 00:22:30,230
Now, that was, of course, then--

374
00:22:30,230 --> 00:22:33,950
that was as far
as you could see,

375

00:22:33,950 --> 00:22:37,900

there were these
British army tanks.

376

00:22:37,900 --> 00:22:45,110

And they were all in
different compartments,

377

00:22:45,110 --> 00:22:48,660

with barbed wire
around each of them.

378

00:22:48,660 --> 00:22:54,120

And we were sort of dumped
in one of those sections, 10

379

00:22:54,120 --> 00:22:55,770

people to each tent.

380

00:22:55,770 --> 00:22:59,670

And the tent was already
fully pre-prepared.

381

00:22:59,670 --> 00:23:05,480

And it was sort of dug into the
ground so that up to the hip

382

00:23:05,480 --> 00:23:07,260

was ground.

383

00:23:07,260 --> 00:23:11,940

And then the tent was on
top of that for 10 people.

384

00:23:11,940 --> 00:23:14,220

And that was that.

385

00:23:14,220 --> 00:23:17,250

And then, of course,
the story got around

386

00:23:17,250 --> 00:23:25,820

that we would be all sent
to Britain for the harvest

387
00:23:25,820 --> 00:23:37,840
to help with the farms to
do the harvest in Britain.

388
00:23:37,840 --> 00:23:38,340
OK.

389
00:23:38,340 --> 00:23:40,820
A couple of questions
at this point.

390
00:23:40,820 --> 00:23:47,370
Does anybody come and tell you
that you are a prisoner of war,

391
00:23:47,370 --> 00:23:52,330
that you are going to
continue to be imprisoned,

392
00:23:52,330 --> 00:23:54,840
that there is some
sort of sentence,

393
00:23:54,840 --> 00:23:59,310
or that it has been
determined that you belong

394
00:23:59,310 --> 00:24:01,710
to the group of
people who was not

395
00:24:01,710 --> 00:24:06,630
released for any particular--
for the following reasons.

396
00:24:06,630 --> 00:24:09,630
Was there any kind of
official explanation.

397
00:24:09,630 --> 00:24:14,040

Nothing, nothing of
that sort at all.

398
00:24:14,040 --> 00:24:16,500
Only at that stage
the communication

399
00:24:16,500 --> 00:24:18,880
was, you're in the camp here.

400
00:24:18,880 --> 00:24:26,670
And But you didn't
have to line up

401
00:24:26,670 --> 00:24:33,110
every morning officially only
for special counting occasions.

402
00:24:33,110 --> 00:24:41,150
And it was just a prisoner camp.

403
00:24:41,150 --> 00:24:46,010
No, official notices
didn't exist.

404
00:24:46,010 --> 00:24:50,540
I mean, the British
soldiers were, shall we say,

405
00:24:50,540 --> 00:24:58,160
less sort of past
than the Americans.

406
00:24:58,160 --> 00:25:00,260
But they didn't have
any instructions,

407
00:25:00,260 --> 00:25:01,730
any further instructions.

408
00:25:01,730 --> 00:25:04,620
When they had instructions
for us, they would tell us.

409
00:25:04,620 --> 00:25:05,470
And that's it.

410
00:25:05,470 --> 00:25:07,770
And of course they started to--

411
00:25:07,770 --> 00:25:09,680
or these working parties--

412
00:25:09,680 --> 00:25:10,460
nothing.

413
00:25:10,460 --> 00:25:12,170
Nothing [INAUDIBLE], no.

414
00:25:12,170 --> 00:25:12,800
Not anymore.

415
00:25:12,800 --> 00:25:17,720
That was before we
were taken to Brussels.

416
00:25:17,720 --> 00:25:19,940
We had all kinds
of working parties

417
00:25:19,940 --> 00:25:24,660
to get milk and
food from Paderborn.

418
00:25:24,660 --> 00:25:29,680
And that's when I started
to act as an interpreter

419
00:25:29,680 --> 00:25:32,440
with my group.

420
00:25:32,440 --> 00:25:35,230
How was your
English at the time?

421

00:25:35,230 --> 00:25:40,540

Well, it just gradually
became sort of manageable.

422

00:25:40,540 --> 00:25:43,480

And I remember in a particular--

423

00:25:43,480 --> 00:25:50,760

my first trip with a
collection party was to the--

424

00:25:50,760 --> 00:25:53,920

425

00:25:53,920 --> 00:25:54,670

for milk.

426

00:25:54,670 --> 00:25:58,600

427

00:25:58,600 --> 00:26:08,076

So when we got to what
we call the milk place.

428

00:26:08,076 --> 00:26:09,108

The dairy farms?

429

00:26:09,108 --> 00:26:09,650

Do you mean--

430

00:26:09,650 --> 00:26:11,150

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

431

00:26:11,150 --> 00:26:16,720

It was a sort of a
big dairy, not a shop.

432

00:26:16,720 --> 00:26:21,850

And the local people, the
German people working there,

433

00:26:21,850 --> 00:26:26,730
they were giving
us cups of cream

434
00:26:26,730 --> 00:26:29,350
while we were doing the work.

435
00:26:29,350 --> 00:26:31,840
And of course, when I
got back to the camp,

436
00:26:31,840 --> 00:26:34,700
I was so sick as
never in my life.

437
00:26:34,700 --> 00:26:38,420

438
00:26:38,420 --> 00:26:41,000
Now, the working party
that came with you,

439
00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:42,950
were they British soldiers who--

440
00:26:42,950 --> 00:26:44,390
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

441
00:26:44,390 --> 00:26:49,790
There was about three British
soldiers and about 20 of us,

442
00:26:49,790 --> 00:26:53,810
you know, that kind of
comparison-- and obviously

443
00:26:53,810 --> 00:26:54,650
a British truck.

444
00:26:54,650 --> 00:26:57,860

445

00:26:57,860 --> 00:26:59,390
So the British soldiers--

446
00:26:59,390 --> 00:27:00,910
I wanted to get a picture.

447
00:27:00,910 --> 00:27:05,780
You were there with about
20 other prisoners of war

448
00:27:05,780 --> 00:27:13,580
to either requisition or
get items, such as the milk.

449
00:27:13,580 --> 00:27:17,680
But they are there to make
sure you don't run away.

450
00:27:17,680 --> 00:27:18,590
That's right.

451
00:27:18,590 --> 00:27:23,760
And then obviously they asked
me to speak to the workers

452
00:27:23,760 --> 00:27:27,200
there exactly what they wanted.

453
00:27:27,200 --> 00:27:32,900
And I would tell the
rest of the guys what

454
00:27:32,900 --> 00:27:36,770
the soldiers wanted us to
do or not to do, you know.

455
00:27:36,770 --> 00:27:39,920
So there was a kind of
conversation going on.

456
00:27:39,920 --> 00:27:44,210
Not much, but it was normal.

457

00:27:44,210 --> 00:27:46,810

And then amongst
yourselves, there

458

00:27:46,810 --> 00:27:51,670

was no talk of what kind
of war experiences you had,

459

00:27:51,670 --> 00:27:53,530

or about the recent past?

460

00:27:53,530 --> 00:27:56,680

It was all as if
it hadn't existed?

461

00:27:56,680 --> 00:27:58,640

Am I getting the
right impression?

462

00:27:58,640 --> 00:28:01,160

Yeah, it was
definitely undigested--

463

00:28:01,160 --> 00:28:05,230

464

00:28:05,230 --> 00:28:14,260

undigested load that nobody was
keen to go too deep into it.

465

00:28:14,260 --> 00:28:17,010

466

00:28:17,010 --> 00:28:20,170

And when you were
transferred to Brussels

467

00:28:20,170 --> 00:28:22,970

and you were in
these tents that are

468

00:28:22,970 --> 00:28:24,870

sort of almost
like dugouts, half

469
00:28:24,870 --> 00:28:28,380
dugouts, because they come into
to the waist, were they clean,

470
00:28:28,380 --> 00:28:31,850
or was it lice infested
like the first place--

471
00:28:31,850 --> 00:28:33,860
No, it was all clean.

472
00:28:33,860 --> 00:28:35,930
It was clean to get into.

473
00:28:35,930 --> 00:28:39,230
And I mean, it was--

474
00:28:39,230 --> 00:28:42,570
you know, British
kind of sense of order

475
00:28:42,570 --> 00:28:47,360
that we were basically
left to ourselves.

476
00:28:47,360 --> 00:28:51,190
I mean, some people had
some books with them.

477
00:28:51,190 --> 00:28:56,060
And I would try and get them
that, as it got sort of autumn

478
00:28:56,060 --> 00:29:01,970
and a bit colder,
we got coal for--

479
00:29:01,970 --> 00:29:05,900
was in the stove in the
thing you could light.

480
00:29:05,900 --> 00:29:07,820
But I mean, we
didn't have anything

481
00:29:07,820 --> 00:29:11,450
to get the coal to burn.

482
00:29:11,450 --> 00:29:14,300
So usually then the
books or anything

483
00:29:14,300 --> 00:29:20,120
like that, paper that had to
be scrounged from somewhere,

484
00:29:20,120 --> 00:29:21,290
to get the fire going.

485
00:29:21,290 --> 00:29:23,800

486
00:29:23,800 --> 00:29:26,340
And I was fairly restless.

487
00:29:26,340 --> 00:29:28,860
I spent a lot of
my time walking.

488
00:29:28,860 --> 00:29:31,390
I mean, it wasn't
all that much--

489
00:29:31,390 --> 00:29:37,900
and around the tents in
each sort of compound.

490
00:29:37,900 --> 00:29:42,390
So I spent a lot of time sort
of lounging around the exit

491
00:29:42,390 --> 00:29:46,856

or entrance to it, just to see
what other people there were.

492

00:29:46,856 --> 00:29:50,580

And I got talking to one of
the guys who [INAUDIBLE] came

493

00:29:50,580 --> 00:29:56,310

from the head office
area, management area,

494

00:29:56,310 --> 00:29:57,600

and talked to him.

495

00:29:57,600 --> 00:30:01,510

And he said, do
you know up there--

496

00:30:01,510 --> 00:30:04,200

all the prisoners of war
were working up there.

497

00:30:04,200 --> 00:30:05,910

They're all Austrians.

498

00:30:05,910 --> 00:30:09,240

So I said to him,
listen, I'm an Austrian.

499

00:30:09,240 --> 00:30:10,330

I can speak English.

500

00:30:10,330 --> 00:30:13,700

501

00:30:13,700 --> 00:30:17,070

And he said he would tell them.

502

00:30:17,070 --> 00:30:18,440

And--

503

00:30:18,440 --> 00:30:20,530

So he was British?

504

00:30:20,530 --> 00:30:21,200

No, no.

505

00:30:21,200 --> 00:30:23,730

He was a soldier--

506

00:30:23,730 --> 00:30:27,824

a German soldier who
was a kind of messenger.

507

00:30:27,824 --> 00:30:31,050

508

00:30:31,050 --> 00:30:36,930

So two hours later, I
was fetched from my camp.

509

00:30:36,930 --> 00:30:45,180

And I'd taken to the guy who
interviewed me was an Austrian.

510

00:30:45,180 --> 00:30:50,685

He was a schoolteacher
from the--

511

00:30:50,685 --> 00:30:53,610

512

00:30:53,610 --> 00:30:57,310

high gymnasium in Linz.

513

00:30:57,310 --> 00:31:02,543

The gymnasium where
Hitler actually did his.

514

00:31:02,543 --> 00:31:03,960

But of course, he
was a young guy.

515

00:31:03,960 --> 00:31:07,800

516
00:31:07,800 --> 00:31:09,270
He was sort of--

517
00:31:09,270 --> 00:31:11,370
Hitler was going to,
I think, establish

518
00:31:11,370 --> 00:31:15,967
some sort of world class
museum in Linz, if my history--

519
00:31:15,967 --> 00:31:16,800
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

520
00:31:16,800 --> 00:31:19,330
It was definitely
his favorite city.

521
00:31:19,330 --> 00:31:21,130
There's no doubt about that.

522
00:31:21,130 --> 00:31:21,990
Yeah.

523
00:31:21,990 --> 00:31:26,400
Anyway, this guy was
a sort of manager

524
00:31:26,400 --> 00:31:31,480
of the German Austrian
[INAUDIBLE] workforce.

525
00:31:31,480 --> 00:31:38,970
In fact, my English was turned
out to be rather better than

526
00:31:38,970 --> 00:31:43,140
most of the Austrians'.

527
00:31:43,140 --> 00:31:45,470

And he had one--

528
00:31:45,470 --> 00:31:49,740
you know, he had
managed to get Austrians

529
00:31:49,740 --> 00:31:57,270
into all the parts
of the British camp,

530
00:31:57,270 --> 00:32:04,080
except for the material side.

531
00:32:04,080 --> 00:32:07,590

532
00:32:07,590 --> 00:32:14,430
He said there was a group of
Russian and Ukrainian people

533
00:32:14,430 --> 00:32:16,520
who were very tough.

534
00:32:16,520 --> 00:32:23,170
And they sort of held out there.

535
00:32:23,170 --> 00:32:26,320
And they said they didn't
want an interpreter.

536
00:32:26,320 --> 00:32:29,260
And he felt that
now that he got me,

537
00:32:29,260 --> 00:32:32,470
I should go there and stay
close to the British people

538
00:32:32,470 --> 00:32:37,450
there, and to these
people that I was now

539

00:32:37,450 --> 00:32:40,720
their interpreter, which I did.

540
00:32:40,720 --> 00:32:46,770
And they immediately said,
for heaven's sake, go away.

541
00:32:46,770 --> 00:32:47,520
We don't need you.

542
00:32:47,520 --> 00:32:48,990
We don't want you.

543
00:32:48,990 --> 00:32:52,770
So I lingered around there
and I found out they were--

544
00:32:52,770 --> 00:32:58,950

545
00:32:58,950 --> 00:33:02,640
they were Russians
or definitely would

546
00:33:02,640 --> 00:33:08,850
be repatriated to Russian
occupied territory.

547
00:33:08,850 --> 00:33:16,620
And they realized, to some
extent, that if that happened,

548
00:33:16,620 --> 00:33:18,690
they might be
killed or certainly

549
00:33:18,690 --> 00:33:21,110
be thrown into prison.

550
00:33:21,110 --> 00:33:23,330
So they were fairly desperate.

551

00:33:23,330 --> 00:33:28,560

And I went back to
my Austrian chief

552

00:33:28,560 --> 00:33:32,610

and said, listen, if I hang
on too long, they'll kill me,

553

00:33:32,610 --> 00:33:36,540

because they just
don't want anything--

554

00:33:36,540 --> 00:33:40,140

they had a good deal with
the British people there.

555

00:33:40,140 --> 00:33:42,630

And they certainly
didn't want any intrusion

556

00:33:42,630 --> 00:33:44,700

from my neighborhood.

557

00:33:44,700 --> 00:33:45,450

So--

558

00:33:45,450 --> 00:33:47,290

What was their good deal?

559

00:33:47,290 --> 00:33:48,690

What was their situation?

560

00:33:48,690 --> 00:33:52,120

And were they in a separate
place from everybody else,

561

00:33:52,120 --> 00:33:53,670

a separate compound?

562

00:33:53,670 --> 00:33:55,217

Or was it just a
series of tents?

563

00:33:55,217 --> 00:33:56,050

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

564

00:33:56,050 --> 00:34:00,870

They were a separate
group of people

565

00:34:00,870 --> 00:34:04,960

who stuck together desperately.

566

00:34:04,960 --> 00:34:10,710

And of course, my
Austrian friend

567

00:34:10,710 --> 00:34:17,070

felt they were kind of an
obstacle in the whole setup,

568

00:34:17,070 --> 00:34:18,750

which in this sense, they were.

569

00:34:18,750 --> 00:34:22,710

But they were a different--
disparate group of people.

570

00:34:22,710 --> 00:34:26,460

And they certainly had
some good relations

571

00:34:26,460 --> 00:34:31,830

with their British counterpart.

572

00:34:31,830 --> 00:34:34,590

Partly maybe the
British realized

573

00:34:34,590 --> 00:34:37,830

that they were fairly
desperate and their future

574

00:34:37,830 --> 00:34:45,989

was particularly unsatisfactory.

575

00:34:45,989 --> 00:34:56,130

Well, I mean, there has been
research done in post-war DP

576

00:34:56,130 --> 00:35:01,140

camps in Germany,
in particular, where

577

00:35:01,140 --> 00:35:07,290

both civilians from
the East and soldiers

578

00:35:07,290 --> 00:35:13,230

were forcibly repatriated by
the Western allies, at least

579

00:35:13,230 --> 00:35:14,670

in the beginning.

580

00:35:14,670 --> 00:35:18,000

And often, this was a
desperate situation.

581

00:35:18,000 --> 00:35:22,350

People committed suicide rather
than be transported back East.

582

00:35:22,350 --> 00:35:23,900

There were such reports.

583

00:35:23,900 --> 00:35:29,970

But maybe you weren't
involved much.

584

00:35:29,970 --> 00:35:34,990

But I'm getting a sense of
contradictory information.

585

00:35:34,990 --> 00:35:38,130

Their desperate
situation really would

586

00:35:38,130 --> 00:35:41,550

depend on what the
British do, if the British

587

00:35:41,550 --> 00:35:45,070

allow the Soviets to
repatriate them or not.

588

00:35:45,070 --> 00:35:48,190

And so that would put
them in an insecure place.

589

00:35:48,190 --> 00:35:52,560

On the other hand, if they
are having a good relation

590

00:35:52,560 --> 00:35:56,280

with the British, their
captors, then they're

591

00:35:56,280 --> 00:36:00,180

more secure, because the
captors then won't do that.

592

00:36:00,180 --> 00:36:01,507

If they're in the--

593

00:36:01,507 --> 00:36:02,340

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

594

00:36:02,340 --> 00:36:04,320

--because the captors
were doing it,

595

00:36:04,320 --> 00:36:10,800

because it was something that
was arranged diplomatically

596

00:36:10,800 --> 00:36:18,360

between the countries that all
the Russians were taken back

597

00:36:18,360 --> 00:36:20,410
to Russia.

598
00:36:20,410 --> 00:36:24,720
In a Brussels came for,
instance, also when

599
00:36:24,720 --> 00:36:29,040
Austria became an independent--

600
00:36:29,040 --> 00:36:34,230
occupied by the Allies, but then
still became a separate state.

601
00:36:34,230 --> 00:36:38,190
All my friends were released
when I had the option

602
00:36:38,190 --> 00:36:40,850
to say, look, I'm an Austrian.

603
00:36:40,850 --> 00:36:44,850
And I would have been
released to Austria.

604
00:36:44,850 --> 00:36:49,920
The only problem was that I
knew that lower Austria, where

605
00:36:49,920 --> 00:36:54,330
I came from, was the
Russian occupied area.

606
00:36:54,330 --> 00:36:57,780
And I didn't have anybody,
family there or anything.

607
00:36:57,780 --> 00:36:59,770
Uncle Georg, yes.

608
00:36:59,770 --> 00:37:02,980
But I imagined they might
be in prison by then.

609
00:37:02,980 --> 00:37:04,790
And he was.

610
00:37:04,790 --> 00:37:08,490
And I never had much
help from him, anyway.

611
00:37:08,490 --> 00:37:12,960
So I felt that I had to
stay German and go back

612
00:37:12,960 --> 00:37:17,550
to my family, be released
to my family in Germany.

613
00:37:17,550 --> 00:37:20,260

614
00:37:20,260 --> 00:37:30,030
But I was by then interpreter
in the regimental office

615
00:37:30,030 --> 00:37:34,250
because the guy from
whom I took over,

616
00:37:34,250 --> 00:37:43,260
a lovely Austrian guy from
Vorarlberg, a barber from--

617
00:37:43,260 --> 00:37:45,090
anyway.

618
00:37:45,090 --> 00:37:51,390
I mean, his English knowledge
or French knowledge was nil.

619
00:37:51,390 --> 00:37:55,630
But he was such a lovely person
that he got on with everybody

620

00:37:55,630 --> 00:37:56,700
well.

621
00:37:56,700 --> 00:38:02,020
And then when I took over in
the regimental office, which

622
00:38:02,020 --> 00:38:05,230
was part of his, he
was then only working

623
00:38:05,230 --> 00:38:07,320
with the post corporal.

624
00:38:07,320 --> 00:38:13,590
He and the post corporal
were complete friends.

625
00:38:13,590 --> 00:38:16,750
They managed
everything together.

626
00:38:16,750 --> 00:38:18,740
And then the other
thing, of course,

627
00:38:18,740 --> 00:38:23,320
I became then the third of the
particular-- well, the second,

628
00:38:23,320 --> 00:38:27,640
because there were only
two prisoners, he and I.

629
00:38:27,640 --> 00:38:32,170
He had also made friends with
the Belgian farmer whose house

630
00:38:32,170 --> 00:38:35,725
was in the middle of the
British camp, obviously

631
00:38:35,725 --> 00:38:38,740

with barbed wire
fence surrounding it,

632
00:38:38,740 --> 00:38:44,330
because all this tent
camp was on his fields.

633
00:38:44,330 --> 00:38:52,700
And he would go--

634
00:38:52,700 --> 00:38:55,860
the British worked
these strict hours.

635
00:38:55,860 --> 00:39:00,835
Then they would go back
to their part of the camp.

636
00:39:00,835 --> 00:39:05,340
And obviously all our
cleaning and other work

637
00:39:05,340 --> 00:39:14,630
had to be done either before
8 o'clock in the morning--

638
00:39:14,630 --> 00:39:17,990
I think from 8:00 to 6:00
were the office hours.

639
00:39:17,990 --> 00:39:22,850
But after that, I mean,
he and I were sort

640
00:39:22,850 --> 00:39:24,720
of doing the other housework.

641
00:39:24,720 --> 00:39:29,000
And we started to talk
to the Belgian farmer

642
00:39:29,000 --> 00:39:30,245
across the fence.

643
00:39:30,245 --> 00:39:32,250
And he was short of coal.

644
00:39:32,250 --> 00:39:35,600
So we would throw
some coal over to him.

645
00:39:35,600 --> 00:39:39,170
And then occasionally we would
go through the barbed wire

646
00:39:39,170 --> 00:39:42,680
and have a drink
session with him.

647
00:39:42,680 --> 00:39:44,450
[INAUDIBLE]

648
00:39:44,450 --> 00:39:48,450
I mean, he was also complaining.

649
00:39:48,450 --> 00:39:50,350
Obviously-- I don't
know to what extent

650
00:39:50,350 --> 00:39:55,990
he got recompensed for his
farm being used in the way

651
00:39:55,990 --> 00:39:58,440
by the camp.

652
00:39:58,440 --> 00:40:01,360
But the Austrians [INAUDIBLE]
all these things--

653
00:40:01,360 --> 00:40:03,810
with him in particular--
all these things

654
00:40:03,810 --> 00:40:08,580

were possible, because once
the Austrian went back and were

655
00:40:08,580 --> 00:40:12,030
replaced by Germans,
none of these things

656
00:40:12,030 --> 00:40:13,390
were possible anymore.

657
00:40:13,390 --> 00:40:15,750
Everything was strict.

658
00:40:15,750 --> 00:40:19,070
You couldn't just go to the
back of the sergeant's mess

659
00:40:19,070 --> 00:40:22,920
and ask for fish and chips.

660
00:40:22,920 --> 00:40:25,590
You would get it
with the Austrians.

661
00:40:25,590 --> 00:40:30,283
And if they wanted any
paper or writing gear,

662
00:40:30,283 --> 00:40:31,200
they would come to me.

663
00:40:31,200 --> 00:40:34,470
And I would give it to
them from the store.

664
00:40:34,470 --> 00:40:38,730
How I or how they
sort of justified it

665
00:40:38,730 --> 00:40:43,980
or accounted to the British,
that was their problem.

666

00:40:43,980 --> 00:40:47,160

But everybody was helping
everybody else as long

667

00:40:47,160 --> 00:40:48,810

as the Austrians were around.

668

00:40:48,810 --> 00:40:52,180

But afterwards, there was
nothing of that anymore.

669

00:40:52,180 --> 00:40:54,930

Everything was strict.

670

00:40:54,930 --> 00:40:57,930

Unless you had an
official note that you

671

00:40:57,930 --> 00:41:02,790

could collect some food from
the Sergeant's mess hall,

672

00:41:02,790 --> 00:41:05,320

from the officer's mess hall--

673

00:41:05,320 --> 00:41:07,500

no go.

674

00:41:07,500 --> 00:41:11,690

So was it such
that people were--

675

00:41:11,690 --> 00:41:14,390

when you say there were
no Austrians anymore,

676

00:41:14,390 --> 00:41:16,025

does that mean
they were released?

677

00:41:16,025 --> 00:41:16,900

Does that mean they--

678
00:41:16,900 --> 00:41:18,090
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

679
00:41:18,090 --> 00:41:18,790
--released.

680
00:41:18,790 --> 00:41:24,700
I mean, I could have been
released in 1947 if I

681
00:41:24,700 --> 00:41:27,300
had opted to being an Austrian.

682
00:41:27,300 --> 00:41:27,800
But--

683
00:41:27,800 --> 00:41:31,830
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

684
00:41:31,830 --> 00:41:35,610
As I explained to
you, I didn't feel

685
00:41:35,610 --> 00:41:39,540
that I would have much chance
in Austria in the Russian zone.

686
00:41:39,540 --> 00:41:42,100

687
00:41:42,100 --> 00:41:42,600
OK.

688
00:41:42,600 --> 00:41:47,280
So a few things that I wanted
to kind of follow up on.

689
00:41:47,280 --> 00:41:49,920
Number one, does
that mean that you

690

00:41:49,920 --> 00:41:54,240
were in this prisoner of
war camp outside Brussels

691

00:41:54,240 --> 00:41:58,120
for a number of
years, two years?

692

00:41:58,120 --> 00:42:01,000
Not at all.

693

00:42:01,000 --> 00:42:10,220
As soon as it came to
the spring, spring 1947,

694

00:42:10,220 --> 00:42:13,360
all these prisoners from--

695

00:42:13,360 --> 00:42:15,820
the camp was
gradually emptied out.

696

00:42:15,820 --> 00:42:20,090
All these 20,000,
25,000 prisoners

697

00:42:20,090 --> 00:42:24,530
were sent over to England
and distributed basically

698

00:42:24,530 --> 00:42:25,300
on farm work.

699

00:42:25,300 --> 00:42:25,940
Yes.

700

00:42:25,940 --> 00:42:27,230
All over the place.

701

00:42:27,230 --> 00:42:29,120
Hang on a second.

702

00:42:29,120 --> 00:42:35,330

You are kind of taken
there in August of 1945.

703

00:42:35,330 --> 00:42:37,850

That's when you
said you were moved

704

00:42:37,850 --> 00:42:40,640

to this place outside Brussels.

705

00:42:40,640 --> 00:42:43,820

And then the next
time you're moved

706

00:42:43,820 --> 00:42:50,210

is in spring of 1947, which
is not quite two years.

707

00:42:50,210 --> 00:42:52,620

It's like a year
and several months.

708

00:42:52,620 --> 00:42:55,060

1946, sorry.

709

00:42:55,060 --> 00:42:56,860

It was '46.

710

00:42:56,860 --> 00:43:01,610

I was only just over
the winter, so to speak,

711

00:43:01,610 --> 00:43:04,470

we were in the Brussels camp.

712

00:43:04,470 --> 00:43:04,970

OK.

713

00:43:04,970 --> 00:43:11,900

And then another question,
while you were there

714
00:43:11,900 --> 00:43:19,040
and this group of Soviet
Russian or Ukrainian POWs,

715
00:43:19,040 --> 00:43:22,760
do if they actually
were repatriated?

716
00:43:22,760 --> 00:43:23,750
Did they stay?

717
00:43:23,750 --> 00:43:26,610
Or did you know what
happened to them?

718
00:43:26,610 --> 00:43:33,050
No, I don't, because as the
different nationalities were

719
00:43:33,050 --> 00:43:37,940
moved out, including the
Austrians, they also moved.

720
00:43:37,940 --> 00:43:44,520
But I was at the
headquarters in the office.

721
00:43:44,520 --> 00:43:49,160
I couldn't run around
and check everything.

722
00:43:49,160 --> 00:43:50,300
But by the time--

723
00:43:50,300 --> 00:43:54,110

724
00:43:54,110 --> 00:43:58,640
by the turn of the
year, they were also

725

00:43:58,640 --> 00:44:01,910
occupied by some
other German people.

726
00:44:01,910 --> 00:44:05,250

727
00:44:05,250 --> 00:44:07,440
Did you have writing privileges?

728
00:44:07,440 --> 00:44:11,400
That is, could you
correspond with your family?

729
00:44:11,400 --> 00:44:14,520
What were the rules that
you had to live under

730
00:44:14,520 --> 00:44:16,920
and what kind of
conditions did you have?

731
00:44:16,920 --> 00:44:22,470
Well, it was strict
prisoner of war convention,

732
00:44:22,470 --> 00:44:25,410
Geneva Convention type thing.

733
00:44:25,410 --> 00:44:26,190
I can't remember.

734
00:44:26,190 --> 00:44:30,220
I think you had one letter a
month or three letters a month,

735
00:44:30,220 --> 00:44:33,370
something like that, but no
parcels or anything like that.

736
00:44:33,370 --> 00:44:36,490
Not that we could have
sent any parcels, anyway.

737
00:44:36,490 --> 00:44:39,060
We didn't have
anything like that.

738
00:44:39,060 --> 00:44:41,783
Well, could you receive parcels?

739
00:44:41,783 --> 00:44:42,950
Could they send them to you?

740
00:44:42,950 --> 00:44:45,720
No.

741
00:44:45,720 --> 00:44:46,220
OK.

742
00:44:46,220 --> 00:44:50,390
But I mean, at head
office, I suppose

743
00:44:50,390 --> 00:44:54,540
we weren't really in
need of parcels, either.

744
00:44:54,540 --> 00:44:55,040
OK.

745
00:44:55,040 --> 00:45:02,520
This brings up another possible
question, which is food.

746
00:45:02,520 --> 00:45:04,380
Were you still hungry?

747
00:45:04,380 --> 00:45:06,030
Or was that some--

748
00:45:06,030 --> 00:45:07,950
No.

749

00:45:07,950 --> 00:45:10,560
We had a kind of--

750
00:45:10,560 --> 00:45:13,890
the headquarters people
had their own kitchen

751
00:45:13,890 --> 00:45:17,280
and we had our own set of food.

752
00:45:17,280 --> 00:45:21,090
And we had much better
tents to sleep in.

753
00:45:21,090 --> 00:45:24,240
But we were in--

754
00:45:24,240 --> 00:45:26,640
you slept in the
headquarters area.

755
00:45:26,640 --> 00:45:29,370
And of course, as long as
the Austrians were there,

756
00:45:29,370 --> 00:45:32,610
of course, we could
go, have a meal

757
00:45:32,610 --> 00:45:35,880
at the back of the sergeant's
mess or the officer's mess.

758
00:45:35,880 --> 00:45:39,140

759
00:45:39,140 --> 00:45:43,460
And explain to me then how--

760
00:45:43,460 --> 00:45:47,420
what I understood was that
when you become friends

761

00:45:47,420 --> 00:45:50,720
with somebody who is kind
of like the messenger

762

00:45:50,720 --> 00:45:53,000
and tells you where
the Austrians are,

763

00:45:53,000 --> 00:45:55,550
you then get transferred
to the Austrians.

764

00:45:55,550 --> 00:45:57,920
But I didn't understand
that that had anything

765

00:45:57,920 --> 00:45:59,560
to do with headquarters.

766

00:45:59,560 --> 00:46:04,400
And what was-- how did you
get to be in headquarters?

767

00:46:04,400 --> 00:46:07,310
Rather, was it just because
you were an interpreter

768

00:46:07,310 --> 00:46:08,420
and you spoke English?

769

00:46:08,420 --> 00:46:10,540
Was that what took you
there, brought you there?

770

00:46:10,540 --> 00:46:14,210
Well, it's because the
guy reported that I was--

771

00:46:14,210 --> 00:46:19,220
that here was a young Austrian
who could speak English.

772

00:46:19,220 --> 00:46:25,820
And of course this schoolmaster
from [NON-ENGLISH] no,

773
00:46:25,820 --> 00:46:30,450
we need him here, because
I mean, quite frankly,

774
00:46:30,450 --> 00:46:34,660
my colleague there who then
worked with the postman--

775
00:46:34,660 --> 00:46:37,520
with a British post guy--

776
00:46:37,520 --> 00:46:39,450
I mean, he was totally over--

777
00:46:39,450 --> 00:46:43,120

778
00:46:43,120 --> 00:46:45,190
I mean, the fact that--

779
00:46:45,190 --> 00:46:46,475
He was overburdened.

780
00:46:46,475 --> 00:46:47,433
He couldn't do the job.

781
00:46:47,433 --> 00:46:48,200
He was overburdened.

782
00:46:48,200 --> 00:46:48,700
Yeah.

783
00:46:48,700 --> 00:46:50,740
And he couldn't really
talk to anybody.

784
00:46:50,740 --> 00:46:54,410
I mean, I, of

course, in cleaning

785

00:46:54,410 --> 00:47:00,780

the commanders, the major's
a Colonel, I think--

786

00:47:00,780 --> 00:47:05,350

Colonel's desk, I would
read all the correspondence

787

00:47:05,350 --> 00:47:06,610

while I'm there.

788

00:47:06,610 --> 00:47:10,030

And that told me straight
away that everybody

789

00:47:10,030 --> 00:47:15,790

was going to be transported
to the farm work to England,

790

00:47:15,790 --> 00:47:19,210

and that through
these messages that

791

00:47:19,210 --> 00:47:24,830

existed I sent the messages
to all the parts of the camp

792

00:47:24,830 --> 00:47:27,370

that that's what's
going to happen,

793

00:47:27,370 --> 00:47:31,250

because it wasn't actually
officially told them.

794

00:47:31,250 --> 00:47:34,060

But obviously it
didn't make much--

795

00:47:34,060 --> 00:47:35,560

that much difference.

796
00:47:35,560 --> 00:47:36,970
It still happened.

797
00:47:36,970 --> 00:47:42,220
And nobody-- escaping, I
think, was pretty impossible

798
00:47:42,220 --> 00:47:45,780
from that camp.

799
00:47:45,780 --> 00:47:50,250
Now-- oh, I had a question
on the tip of my tongue.

800
00:47:50,250 --> 00:47:51,870
I think I'll try to retrieve it.

801
00:47:51,870 --> 00:47:56,880

802
00:47:56,880 --> 00:48:03,110
You are there from August
of '45 to spring of '46.

803
00:48:03,110 --> 00:48:04,590
Here is my question.

804
00:48:04,590 --> 00:48:06,330
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

805
00:48:06,330 --> 00:48:09,020
It was more June, I think.

806
00:48:09,020 --> 00:48:09,800
OK.

807
00:48:09,800 --> 00:48:10,880
June of '46.

808
00:48:10,880 --> 00:48:12,080

So almost a year.

809
00:48:12,080 --> 00:48:12,800
Not quite.

810
00:48:12,800 --> 00:48:14,370
About 10 months.

811
00:48:14,370 --> 00:48:18,680
And you could have
been released if you

812
00:48:18,680 --> 00:48:20,120
had said you were Austrian.

813
00:48:20,120 --> 00:48:21,670
You could have been sent home.

814
00:48:21,670 --> 00:48:25,040
But because you said
you were German,

815
00:48:25,040 --> 00:48:27,470
you were still kept in the camp.

816
00:48:27,470 --> 00:48:28,718
Is that right?

817
00:48:28,718 --> 00:48:29,260
That's right.

818
00:48:29,260 --> 00:48:30,590
Yeah.

819
00:48:30,590 --> 00:48:32,540
And it had nothing to do--

820
00:48:32,540 --> 00:48:34,460
you said you're
a German citizen.

821

00:48:34,460 --> 00:48:36,740
So it had nothing to
do with your belonging

822
00:48:36,740 --> 00:48:40,620
to the Waffen SS at this point
that you are still a prisoner.

823
00:48:40,620 --> 00:48:41,120
No.

824
00:48:41,120 --> 00:48:46,380
I mean, that's-- the Waffen
SS thing was completely gone.

825
00:48:46,380 --> 00:48:49,760
I was just a German
prisoner of war.

826
00:48:49,760 --> 00:48:52,310
Well, this is also
curious as to why

827
00:48:52,310 --> 00:48:55,640
would Austrians be
released so much sooner

828
00:48:55,640 --> 00:48:58,080
than German prisoners of war?

829
00:48:58,080 --> 00:48:58,580
No.

830
00:48:58,580 --> 00:49:00,000
I mean, that was obvious.

831
00:49:00,000 --> 00:49:03,800
I mean, Austria was
being resurrected

832
00:49:03,800 --> 00:49:09,390
as quickly as feasible after
the war as a separate country.

833
00:49:09,390 --> 00:49:15,950
And so then the Austrian
prisoners of war,

834
00:49:15,950 --> 00:49:19,700
they're repatriated
to their own country,

835
00:49:19,700 --> 00:49:24,560
whereas being a German
prisoner of war,

836
00:49:24,560 --> 00:49:30,980
you were sort of part of the
ultimate guilty party anyway.

837
00:49:30,980 --> 00:49:35,180
And the prisoners
weren't taken back.

838
00:49:35,180 --> 00:49:39,850
I think that there were
obviously some reasons given.

839
00:49:39,850 --> 00:49:42,350
Being at the regimental
headquarters,

840
00:49:42,350 --> 00:49:45,770
I could read all the British
newspapers, and so on.

841
00:49:45,770 --> 00:49:51,180
I was in a much more
knowledgeable surroundings.

842
00:49:51,180 --> 00:49:56,370
But it was justified
that, A, the Germans were

843
00:49:56,370 --> 00:50:01,460
the guilty party, and B,

Britain needed to recover

844

00:50:01,460 --> 00:50:04,730
and the British soldiers
were still out there

845

00:50:04,730 --> 00:50:07,530
in the Far East
against the Japanese.

846

00:50:07,530 --> 00:50:12,710
And then, yeah, that was that.

847

00:50:12,710 --> 00:50:17,400
The orders were made and that's
where they were carried out.

848

00:50:17,400 --> 00:50:20,000
Except when-- I'm sorry.

849

00:50:20,000 --> 00:50:21,260
Can I--

850

00:50:21,260 --> 00:50:21,760
Sure.

851

00:50:21,760 --> 00:50:29,050
--except when all the big
camp had been cleared out

852

00:50:29,050 --> 00:50:35,420
by the summer of 1946.

853

00:50:35,420 --> 00:50:38,570
The Colonel took us
who were there to--

854

00:50:38,570 --> 00:50:39,680
[INAUDIBLE] people.

855

00:50:39,680 --> 00:50:43,820
Maybe about 100, 120 people.

856
00:50:43,820 --> 00:50:46,990
And he said, look.

857
00:50:46,990 --> 00:50:50,930
I should have sent
you to Britain.

858
00:50:50,930 --> 00:50:54,950
I said, well, that's
one instruction.

859
00:50:54,950 --> 00:50:59,090
The only thing I can do and
I will do because I think

860
00:50:59,090 --> 00:51:04,023
I'm grateful that you've done
your good work [?so on for us?]

861
00:51:04,023 --> 00:51:08,150
is I'll make your sick
transport to Germany.

862
00:51:08,150 --> 00:51:13,910
If you're accepted as a sick
transport, they'll release you.

863
00:51:13,910 --> 00:51:18,200
If they don't, then you might
have to end up in England,

864
00:51:18,200 --> 00:51:18,995
as well.

865
00:51:18,995 --> 00:51:22,500
And that's what happens.

866
00:51:22,500 --> 00:51:24,370
So what is a sick transport?

867
00:51:24,370 --> 00:51:25,610

And did anybody go--

868
00:51:25,610 --> 00:51:27,110
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

869
00:51:27,110 --> 00:51:33,650
Any people who had
a wound or needed

870
00:51:33,650 --> 00:51:36,810
serious medical treatment
apart from scratches

871
00:51:36,810 --> 00:51:42,200
and small other things
were always [INAUDIBLE]..

872
00:51:42,200 --> 00:51:45,470
I think that's part of
the Geneva Convention

873
00:51:45,470 --> 00:51:48,060
too, that they do not--

874
00:51:48,060 --> 00:51:55,850
I mean-- and so--

875
00:51:55,850 --> 00:51:56,350
Yeah?

876
00:51:56,350 --> 00:52:01,380

877
00:52:01,380 --> 00:52:05,590
They were the exceptions to
prove the rule, if you like.

878
00:52:05,590 --> 00:52:07,750
So when you had access--

879
00:52:07,750 --> 00:52:10,450

880
00:52:10,450 --> 00:52:11,870
this is quite privileged.

881
00:52:11,870 --> 00:52:15,760
I mean, that's my impression
is that having access to news

882
00:52:15,760 --> 00:52:19,450
and newspapers is something--

883
00:52:19,450 --> 00:52:24,220
did you read in those
newspapers any articles

884
00:52:24,220 --> 00:52:27,550
about what the Allies
were discovering

885
00:52:27,550 --> 00:52:29,080
when they were in Germany--

886
00:52:29,080 --> 00:52:32,320
in other words, the
concentration camps?

887
00:52:32,320 --> 00:52:33,220
Of course.

888
00:52:33,220 --> 00:52:36,070
I mean, the papers were
absolutely full of them,

889
00:52:36,070 --> 00:52:39,850
from the Daily
Mirror to the Times.

890
00:52:39,850 --> 00:52:42,550
I was in charge of
all the newspapers.

891
00:52:42,550 --> 00:52:47,850

And the British
officers didn't really

892
00:52:47,850 --> 00:52:51,880
read much of the newspapers--

893
00:52:51,880 --> 00:52:54,800
Mirror and the
Daily Mail, maybe.

894
00:52:54,800 --> 00:53:00,980
But the Times and the
more serious Observer I

895
00:53:00,980 --> 00:53:02,900
virtually had to myself.

896
00:53:02,900 --> 00:53:06,530
And I always got the
papers back, of course.

897
00:53:06,530 --> 00:53:13,300
So I spent a lot of the day just
reading newspapers and learning

898
00:53:13,300 --> 00:53:19,720
English that way, because
during the day, basically,

899
00:53:19,720 --> 00:53:23,480
I was there on call
if something needed.

900
00:53:23,480 --> 00:53:27,610
And of course, then the--

901
00:53:27,610 --> 00:53:31,480
I got on quite well with
all the British soldiers.

902
00:53:31,480 --> 00:53:34,240
And the Sergeant, who was
in charge of the telephone

903
00:53:34,240 --> 00:53:38,460
exchange, every
now and then asked

904
00:53:38,460 --> 00:53:43,725
me to stand in for him when he
went to the loo or something,

905
00:53:43,725 --> 00:53:46,390
or wanted some
other thing to do.

906
00:53:46,390 --> 00:53:48,660
And of course, that
went on quite nicely

907
00:53:48,660 --> 00:53:51,120
for while it lasted.

908
00:53:51,120 --> 00:53:55,170
But then suddenly, I heard the
voice of our commanding officer

909
00:53:55,170 --> 00:53:55,800
on the phone.

910
00:53:55,800 --> 00:53:58,020
And he said, who
is that speaking?

911
00:53:58,020 --> 00:54:00,760
And I said, prisoner Schweitzer.

912
00:54:00,760 --> 00:54:03,890
Oh, and he blew up.

913
00:54:03,890 --> 00:54:11,540
And the Sergeant and I really
got a real talk in the office,

914
00:54:11,540 --> 00:54:13,590

saying [GERMAN].

915

00:54:13,590 --> 00:54:15,850

But otherwise nothing happened.

916

00:54:15,850 --> 00:54:21,570

I mean, obviously I wasn't
doing that anymore after that.

917

00:54:21,570 --> 00:54:24,930

So that meant you used the phone
to make a personal phone call

918

00:54:24,930 --> 00:54:26,810

to your family or something?

919

00:54:26,810 --> 00:54:27,480

No, no.

920

00:54:27,480 --> 00:54:28,620

Nothing at all.

921

00:54:28,620 --> 00:54:34,410

Somebody happened to be at the
telephone exchange and make--

922

00:54:34,410 --> 00:54:38,390

you know, to pass on the
calls to the right officer,

923

00:54:38,390 --> 00:54:39,280

and so on.

924

00:54:39,280 --> 00:54:45,210

But the other people
didn't seem to know or take

925

00:54:45,210 --> 00:54:47,700

any objection to my language.

926

00:54:47,700 --> 00:54:49,770

But the colonel

certainly didn't think

927

00:54:49,770 --> 00:54:52,870

it was the right thing for the
POW to do that kind of work.

928

00:54:52,870 --> 00:54:55,620

929

00:54:55,620 --> 00:54:57,840

It would be very curious.

930

00:54:57,840 --> 00:55:01,610

So here is the question
about the newspapers.

931

00:55:01,610 --> 00:55:05,250

As you're reading
them, are you learning

932

00:55:05,250 --> 00:55:08,550

things you didn't know
before about what had gone on

933

00:55:08,550 --> 00:55:10,230

in Germany?

934

00:55:10,230 --> 00:55:11,320

Yes, of course.

935

00:55:11,320 --> 00:55:13,200

Plenty of it.

936

00:55:13,200 --> 00:55:16,450

Germany was being
trampled on and trampled

937

00:55:16,450 --> 00:55:20,370

on by all the events that
actually were discovered.

938

00:55:20,370 --> 00:55:25,020

I mean, it was a--

939

00:55:25,020 --> 00:55:30,710

well, obviously being a--

940

00:55:30,710 --> 00:55:35,040

or then a kind of

German, you felt really

941

00:55:35,040 --> 00:55:44,120

that we were the lousiest

bunch of people on Earth, which

942

00:55:44,120 --> 00:55:45,190

perhaps would be--

943

00:55:45,190 --> 00:55:49,000

to some extent we

had been, anyway.

944

00:55:49,000 --> 00:55:53,230

So when you read these

pieces and these articles,

945

00:55:53,230 --> 00:55:57,220

was it that you were saying,

well, this is so one sided

946

00:55:57,220 --> 00:56:03,280

and this is so dismissive

and who knows how much of it

947

00:56:03,280 --> 00:56:04,180

would be true?

948

00:56:04,180 --> 00:56:06,250

What I do know is

they hate us and we're

949

00:56:06,250 --> 00:56:08,410

the lousiest people on Earth.

950

00:56:08,410 --> 00:56:13,390
Or was it an eye opener
in the sense of, ah,

951
00:56:13,390 --> 00:56:15,940
what I thought about
Joan of Arc was actually

952
00:56:15,940 --> 00:56:19,120
true and much worse than I
could have ever imagined?

953
00:56:19,120 --> 00:56:21,217
I'm trying to get a sense
of how you reacted--

954
00:56:21,217 --> 00:56:22,050
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

955
00:56:22,050 --> 00:56:23,980
Definitely.

956
00:56:23,980 --> 00:56:30,600
I mean, quite obviously with
all these news appearing

957
00:56:30,600 --> 00:56:35,320
in the British press,
even in Hitler's Germany,

958
00:56:35,320 --> 00:56:40,460
was always respected
to quite a degree.

959
00:56:40,460 --> 00:56:41,740
I mean, I certainly had no--

960
00:56:41,740 --> 00:56:48,260

961
00:56:48,260 --> 00:56:57,180
I mean, I realized
that, in a sense,

962
00:56:57,180 --> 00:57:09,100
Hitler wanted to put
down Soviet Russia.

963
00:57:09,100 --> 00:57:12,890
I mean, that was
his ultimate aim.

964
00:57:12,890 --> 00:57:21,500
But in the war, in
all this progress--

965
00:57:21,500 --> 00:57:24,550
and Soviet Russia during
the '30s, of course,

966
00:57:24,550 --> 00:57:28,180
had avoided a
terrible reputation

967
00:57:28,180 --> 00:57:32,800
of killing opponents
and concentration camps

968
00:57:32,800 --> 00:57:36,040
and Siberia, all
that kind of thing.

969
00:57:36,040 --> 00:57:38,670

970
00:57:38,670 --> 00:57:45,880
And now the Germans had
virtually outdone the Russians

971
00:57:45,880 --> 00:57:46,870
at their own game.

972
00:57:46,870 --> 00:57:52,290
I mean, I sort of realized
that that's what happened.

973

00:57:52,290 --> 00:57:57,800

The Germans may have been
better people to staffers.

974

00:57:57,800 --> 00:58:00,400

But in wrangling
around with Russia,

975

00:58:00,400 --> 00:58:01,570

they got worse and worse.

976

00:58:01,570 --> 00:58:06,630

977

00:58:06,630 --> 00:58:08,880

So was it an eye opener?

978

00:58:08,880 --> 00:58:09,480

When you see--

979

00:58:09,480 --> 00:58:10,313

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

980

00:58:10,313 --> 00:58:12,910

Yeah, of course it
was an eye-opener.

981

00:58:12,910 --> 00:58:15,540

Definitely.

982

00:58:15,540 --> 00:58:19,870

And did you talk about it
with some of the other POWs?

983

00:58:19,870 --> 00:58:23,170

I mean, since you were
able to read the colonel's

984

00:58:23,170 --> 00:58:25,060

correspondence and let
them know if they're

985

00:58:25,060 --> 00:58:28,180

going to Britain
to work on farms,

986

00:58:28,180 --> 00:58:30,430

was this something
that you also shared?

987

00:58:30,430 --> 00:58:32,320

Or was this something
that you kind of kept

988

00:58:32,320 --> 00:58:37,610

to yourself, these articles that
you might see in those papers?

989

00:58:37,610 --> 00:58:46,360

I certainly talked about
it to the people I closely

990

00:58:46,360 --> 00:58:52,330

worked with, like my
Austrian friend post corporal

991

00:58:52,330 --> 00:58:55,580

kind of person.

992

00:58:55,580 --> 00:59:04,420

But I didn't really have a
great wide circle of prisoners

993

00:59:04,420 --> 00:59:08,060

in my line of work.

994

00:59:08,060 --> 00:59:14,470

So it wasn't a deliberate,
organized effort.

995

00:59:14,470 --> 00:59:18,040

It was just casual
conversations, yes,

996

00:59:18,040 --> 00:59:21,100
because obviously I had
these newspapers, which

997
00:59:21,100 --> 00:59:24,700
nobody else had.

998
00:59:24,700 --> 00:59:30,340
And did the British ever
have any kind of public--

999
00:59:30,340 --> 00:59:33,310
within the compounds,
within the prison camp,

1000
00:59:33,310 --> 00:59:38,590
did they ever have any newsreels
that everyone had to go see?

1001
00:59:38,590 --> 00:59:41,560
Or did they show
anything like that?

1002
00:59:41,560 --> 00:59:42,310
No, no, no.

1003
00:59:42,310 --> 00:59:44,022
It's nothing of the sort.

1004
00:59:44,022 --> 00:59:47,330

1005
00:59:47,330 --> 00:59:53,300
I mean, later in Britain
when maybe there--

1006
00:59:53,300 --> 00:59:55,640
not in our particular camp.

1007
00:59:55,640 --> 01:00:02,000
But in the camp we were
[INAUDIBLE] German prisoner

1008

01:00:02,000 --> 01:00:06,170
of war camp in Greenford,
where we were, to start with,

1009

01:00:06,170 --> 01:00:10,570
which was run then by
German people, first camp--

1010

01:00:10,570 --> 01:00:12,650
prisoner of war
camp that wasn't run

1011

01:00:12,650 --> 01:00:16,310
by the part of British
but German people

1012

01:00:16,310 --> 01:00:18,530
under supervision.

1013

01:00:18,530 --> 01:00:22,230
They had the sort of courses--

1014

01:00:22,230 --> 01:00:28,480
the educational courses
in the evenings, yes.

1015

01:00:28,480 --> 01:00:29,990
Re-education.

1016

01:00:29,990 --> 01:00:31,550
Well, this is
exactly my question.

1017

01:00:31,550 --> 01:00:34,910
Was it re-educational courses,
or educational, which--

1018

01:00:34,910 --> 01:00:36,500
re-education means
that you've been

1019

01:00:36,500 --> 01:00:39,875

programmed in some way that
needs to be unprogrammed.

1020
01:00:39,875 --> 01:00:42,610
Education means something else.

1021
01:00:42,610 --> 01:00:45,080
So what kind of
courses would these

1022
01:00:45,080 --> 01:00:49,520
have been that you
were referring to?

1023
01:00:49,520 --> 01:00:50,450
Were they political?

1024
01:00:50,450 --> 01:00:52,510
Were they historical?

1025
01:00:52,510 --> 01:00:56,630
Yeah, both political
and historical.

1026
01:00:56,630 --> 01:01:01,220
And of course, because
the foreign office took--

1027
01:01:01,220 --> 01:01:05,910
actively taking charge
of re-education,

1028
01:01:05,910 --> 01:01:12,900
including the prisoners
of war, and in particular,

1029
01:01:12,900 --> 01:01:17,200
when I was [?in bomb?] disposal,
I was in very good relationship

1030
01:01:17,200 --> 01:01:19,870
with Doctor--

1031

01:01:19,870 --> 01:01:25,220
it was a German language weekly
newspaper, [NON-ENGLISH],,

1032

01:01:25,220 --> 01:01:28,926
and I used to write
for [NON-ENGLISH]..

1033

01:01:28,926 --> 01:01:32,980
And Doctor-- what was his name?

1034

01:01:32,980 --> 01:01:38,820
I'm sorry-- became quite
a friend with the editor.

1035

01:01:38,820 --> 01:01:40,220
I'll think of his name.

1036

01:01:40,220 --> 01:01:43,510
I can look it up.

1037

01:01:43,510 --> 01:01:48,200
That became, for me, quite
an important relationship.

1038

01:01:48,200 --> 01:01:54,530
I used to visit him
privately, as well.

1039

01:01:54,530 --> 01:01:57,950
And he was very interested
to have a prisoner of war who

1040

01:01:57,950 --> 01:02:02,900
could review his newspapers
from a prisoner of war

1041

01:02:02,900 --> 01:02:09,270
kind of standpoint and make
helpful critical remarks,

1042

01:02:09,270 --> 01:02:10,940

that kind of thing.

1043
01:02:10,940 --> 01:02:12,990
This is--

1044
01:02:12,990 --> 01:02:14,860
But that is one--

1045
01:02:14,860 --> 01:02:16,550
That's when you were in Britain?

1046
01:02:16,550 --> 01:02:18,810
But a few months later--

1047
01:02:18,810 --> 01:02:21,540
OK.

1048
01:02:21,540 --> 01:02:27,060
So let's go back now to
Brussels and to June 1946.

1049
01:02:27,060 --> 01:02:32,550
And you then are
transferred to the UK.

1050
01:02:32,550 --> 01:02:33,360
Is that right?

1051
01:02:33,360 --> 01:02:36,150
Is that when you were
moved out of Brussels?

1052
01:02:36,150 --> 01:02:39,570
Because as I told
you, the colonel

1053
01:02:39,570 --> 01:02:44,010
said we would be a sick
transport for release

1054
01:02:44,010 --> 01:02:45,420
to Germany.

1055

01:02:45,420 --> 01:02:49,530

And it was then, if we were
lucky, we would be released.

1056

01:02:49,530 --> 01:02:56,300

And if we weren't so lucky, we
might still end up in prison.

1057

01:02:56,300 --> 01:02:58,350

That's all he could do for us.

1058

01:02:58,350 --> 01:03:04,110

And of course, so we got
back to North Germany,

1059

01:03:04,110 --> 01:03:09,100

the British zone to the
[?release camp?] there and sort

1060

01:03:09,100 --> 01:03:12,710

of, I think, early autumn '46.

1061

01:03:12,710 --> 01:03:15,600

1062

01:03:15,600 --> 01:03:21,705

And the first thing
they did at that camp

1063

01:03:21,705 --> 01:03:27,340

was to have a health
test, a medical test.

1064

01:03:27,340 --> 01:03:35,110

And in those, at that
time, I found out--

1065

01:03:35,110 --> 01:03:43,250

or we found out a sort of a
complete transport of returnees

1066

01:03:43,250 --> 01:03:45,260
was a rare exception.

1067
01:03:45,260 --> 01:03:49,980
But what the [? sixth ?]
release camp was dealing with

1068
01:03:49,980 --> 01:03:55,950
was sick people from
Russia, from North Africa,

1069
01:03:55,950 --> 01:04:01,650
from America, from all over
the place that they were

1070
01:04:01,650 --> 01:04:07,620
odd people, or maybe two or
three together, never 120

1071
01:04:07,620 --> 01:04:11,640
people together.

1072
01:04:11,640 --> 01:04:15,300
So as far as that is
concerned, our arrival

1073
01:04:15,300 --> 01:04:19,680
was a kind of most
unusual event.

1074
01:04:19,680 --> 01:04:25,680
And of course, they immediately
then gave us the medical tests.

1075
01:04:25,680 --> 01:04:29,615
They found that we
were all fit guys.

1076
01:04:29,615 --> 01:04:34,130
And they then didn't
immediately come

1077
01:04:34,130 --> 01:04:39,420

to just the final
solution to send us back

1078
01:04:39,420 --> 01:04:44,820
or didn't have the trains
or whatever it was,

1079
01:04:44,820 --> 01:04:50,020
just maybe just the bureaucracy
of the administration.

1080
01:04:50,020 --> 01:04:53,430
So we were in Germany,
in the release camp

1081
01:04:53,430 --> 01:04:59,310
for something like a month, six
weeks before we finally then

1082
01:04:59,310 --> 01:05:05,920
rolled off to Belgium,
Antwerp, and Britain.

1083
01:05:05,920 --> 01:05:06,510
OK.

1084
01:05:06,510 --> 01:05:08,980
The release camp,
where was it located?

1085
01:05:08,980 --> 01:05:11,070
And do you remember its name?

1086
01:05:11,070 --> 01:05:15,390
Yes, I do remember it's name,
except I can't think of it now.

1087
01:05:15,390 --> 01:05:23,650

1088
01:05:23,650 --> 01:05:27,180
Can I come back to it?

1089

01:05:27,180 --> 01:05:30,600
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1090

01:05:30,600 --> 01:05:35,910
It was naturally a very
interesting place to be,

1091

01:05:35,910 --> 01:05:37,430
to see--

1092

01:05:37,430 --> 01:05:41,520
the state of the prisoners
that came back, particularly

1093

01:05:41,520 --> 01:05:45,690
from Russia and from the
French side, from North Africa,

1094

01:05:45,690 --> 01:05:48,150
they were in a terrible state.

1095

01:05:48,150 --> 01:05:51,010
But the guys from
America, obviously,

1096

01:05:51,010 --> 01:05:56,330
were also fit and normal,
reasonably dressed--

1097

01:05:56,330 --> 01:05:57,680
Excuse me.

1098

01:05:57,680 --> 01:06:01,035
Is there some background
noise that I am hearing?

1099

01:06:01,035 --> 01:06:04,812
Yes, there is some
coffee being made for me.

1100

01:06:04,812 --> 01:06:06,130
Sorry.

1101
01:06:06,130 --> 01:06:06,630
OK.

1102
01:06:06,630 --> 01:06:09,320

1103
01:06:09,320 --> 01:06:10,000
All right.

1104
01:06:10,000 --> 01:06:10,801
OK.

1105
01:06:10,801 --> 01:06:13,690
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1106
01:06:13,690 --> 01:06:14,450
OK.

1107
01:06:14,450 --> 01:06:15,950
All right, I just
wanted to know.

1108
01:06:15,950 --> 01:06:16,450
All right.

1109
01:06:16,450 --> 01:06:17,120
Thank you.

1110
01:06:17,120 --> 01:06:18,630
Sorry about that.

1111
01:06:18,630 --> 01:06:19,130
One more.

1112
01:06:19,130 --> 01:06:19,545
One more.

1113
01:06:19,545 --> 01:06:20,045
One more.

1114

01:06:20,045 --> 01:06:24,430

It's one short one, the cup.

1115

01:06:24,430 --> 01:06:29,950

I think [INAUDIBLE]

sounded so bad.

1116

01:06:29,950 --> 01:06:32,350

It is loud-- it's not

so that it's so bad,

1117

01:06:32,350 --> 01:06:34,900

but microphones

are very sensitive.

1118

01:06:34,900 --> 01:06:39,010

When they work, they pick

up all kinds of noise

1119

01:06:39,010 --> 01:06:40,990

that we wouldn't expect.

1120

01:06:40,990 --> 01:06:42,820

Yeah.

1121

01:06:42,820 --> 01:06:45,940

So are we good now?

1122

01:06:45,940 --> 01:06:48,090

Can we continue?

1123

01:06:48,090 --> 01:06:48,590

Yes.

1124

01:06:48,590 --> 01:06:49,790

It's just about finished.

1125

01:06:49,790 --> 01:06:55,020

1126

01:06:55,020 --> 01:06:55,520

Yep.

1127
01:06:55,520 --> 01:06:56,810
All done.

1128
01:06:56,810 --> 01:06:57,310
Sorry.

1129
01:06:57,310 --> 01:06:57,810
Sorry.

1130
01:06:57,810 --> 01:06:58,310
Sorry.

1131
01:06:58,310 --> 01:06:59,630
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1132
01:06:59,630 --> 01:07:00,920
Sorry about that.

1133
01:07:00,920 --> 01:07:01,712
That's all right.

1134
01:07:01,712 --> 01:07:02,420
That's all right.

1135
01:07:02,420 --> 01:07:03,770
OK, so let's continue.

1136
01:07:03,770 --> 01:07:07,520
So you said especially guys
who came back from Russia

1137
01:07:07,520 --> 01:07:10,855
you saw what state they were
in, those from North Africa--

1138
01:07:10,855 --> 01:07:12,134
Sorry.

1139
01:07:12,134 --> 01:07:14,930

OK.

1140
01:07:14,930 --> 01:07:15,430
Yep.

1141
01:07:15,430 --> 01:07:17,910
Drink it while
it's warm, please.

1142
01:07:17,910 --> 01:07:20,240
Yeah.

1143
01:07:20,240 --> 01:07:23,820
There are vast
differences between them.

1144
01:07:23,820 --> 01:07:24,930
How did those look?

1145
01:07:24,930 --> 01:07:27,640
How did they look,
these veteran soldiers?

1146
01:07:27,640 --> 01:07:38,990
They had rags on and starved
and [INAUDIBLE] in a bad way

1147
01:07:38,990 --> 01:07:39,603
all around.

1148
01:07:39,603 --> 01:07:42,850

1149
01:07:42,850 --> 01:07:47,440
And you were then
determined to be fit.

1150
01:07:47,440 --> 01:07:53,260
And so therefore, since
you're fit, not released,

1151
01:07:53,260 --> 01:07:57,400

when do you get sent
back to Antwerp?

1152
01:07:57,400 --> 01:08:00,830
About when does this take place?

1153
01:08:00,830 --> 01:08:05,630
Antwerp, I think we were
there about five weeks.

1154
01:08:05,630 --> 01:08:12,790
In the meantime, as far as
the postal sending letters

1155
01:08:12,790 --> 01:08:15,550
and so on from the
released campus,

1156
01:08:15,550 --> 01:08:19,750
an almost normal kind of thing.

1157
01:08:19,750 --> 01:08:22,689
There weren't the
same restrictions.

1158
01:08:22,689 --> 01:08:25,750
So I couldn't
obviously correspond

1159
01:08:25,750 --> 01:08:30,760
with my family very much
better than at any time before.

1160
01:08:30,760 --> 01:08:35,649
And my father actually
came up to the cabin.

1161
01:08:35,649 --> 01:08:38,770
And we talked across
the barbed wire.

1162
01:08:38,770 --> 01:08:43,840
And he said, for heaven's

sake, don't try and escape,

1163
01:08:43,840 --> 01:08:47,170
because there's nothing
for you and for us

1164
01:08:47,170 --> 01:08:49,700
in Germany at the moment.

1165
01:08:49,700 --> 01:08:54,529
I mean, maybe in England,
you learn something, at least

1166
01:08:54,529 --> 01:08:55,960
language.

1167
01:08:55,960 --> 01:09:00,109
And in any case, I had
no intention to escape.

1168
01:09:00,109 --> 01:09:09,580
And as we were traveling
by train to Antwerp,

1169
01:09:09,580 --> 01:09:12,510
obviously the train
sometimes had to stop.

1170
01:09:12,510 --> 01:09:17,760
There were British
soldiers, guards around.

1171
01:09:17,760 --> 01:09:19,970
And when some of the prisoners--

1172
01:09:19,970 --> 01:09:23,189
[INAUDIBLE] prisoners jumped
off and the train stopped or was

1173
01:09:23,189 --> 01:09:26,340
going through, they
didn't fire or anything;

1174
01:09:26,340 --> 01:09:27,279
just let it happen.

1175
01:09:27,279 --> 01:09:31,100

1176
01:09:31,100 --> 01:09:32,890
So if I understand
that, there were

1177
01:09:32,890 --> 01:09:37,347
prisoners who tried to escape
and succeeded in doing so--

1178
01:09:37,347 --> 01:09:38,180
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1179
01:09:38,180 --> 01:09:39,460
--fire on them.

1180
01:09:39,460 --> 01:09:40,189
OK.

1181
01:09:40,189 --> 01:09:41,529
Yeah.

1182
01:09:41,529 --> 01:09:43,510
I mean, I didn't
mean to say they

1183
01:09:43,510 --> 01:09:47,229
weren't picked up by the
local police straight away.

1184
01:09:47,229 --> 01:09:51,609
But you know, I saw
them just jump off

1185
01:09:51,609 --> 01:09:59,490
and wondering how they would
cope with the consequences.

1186

01:09:59,490 --> 01:10:03,720

1187

01:10:03,720 --> 01:10:08,050

OK, so now you're
in Antwerp and you--

1188

01:10:08,050 --> 01:10:16,020

do you go by ferry, by some sort
of military craft to Britain?

1189

01:10:16,020 --> 01:10:16,660

Yes.

1190

01:10:16,660 --> 01:10:24,610

They were actually minesweepers,
British minesweepers,

1191

01:10:24,610 --> 01:10:32,300

a British minesweeper, that
had been sort of re-shaped

1192

01:10:32,300 --> 01:10:39,580

with [INAUDIBLE] all in
the body of the boat.

1193

01:10:39,580 --> 01:10:44,080

And it had a bit of food on it.

1194

01:10:44,080 --> 01:10:52,640

And we embarked one
evening, one afternoon.

1195

01:10:52,640 --> 01:10:54,030

And I made sure--

1196

01:10:54,030 --> 01:10:58,280

I didn't want to
go under the deck.

1197

01:10:58,280 --> 01:11:06,330

And I put myself in front of

the main mast with my blanket.

1198

01:11:06,330 --> 01:11:09,360

And that was my place.

1199

01:11:09,360 --> 01:11:13,920

I wanted, for the first time in
my life, my first sea journey,

1200

01:11:13,920 --> 01:11:15,300

I wanted to experience it.

1201

01:11:15,300 --> 01:11:18,030

1202

01:11:18,030 --> 01:11:19,770

And it was quite a rough--

1203

01:11:19,770 --> 01:11:21,580

I mean, it took
these minesweepers--

1204

01:11:21,580 --> 01:11:25,970

what, fairly small boats
and it's a fairly windy day.

1205

01:11:25,970 --> 01:11:34,070

And most of the people under
the deck were sick, everybody.

1206

01:11:34,070 --> 01:11:37,900

But I think [INAUDIBLE]
fresh air behind them--

1207

01:11:37,900 --> 01:11:39,070

or in front of them.

1208

01:11:39,070 --> 01:11:41,730

That mast that--

1209

01:11:41,730 --> 01:11:43,950

I didn't get seasick.

1210
01:11:43,950 --> 01:11:48,310
I mean, I went down
sometimes to get some food.

1211
01:11:48,310 --> 01:11:50,970
And the British people
were dishing up--

1212
01:11:50,970 --> 01:11:54,960
were sort of in charge
of having the food.

1213
01:11:54,960 --> 01:11:56,400
They were all sick.

1214
01:11:56,400 --> 01:11:59,970
So I just could
pick what I wanted.

1215
01:11:59,970 --> 01:12:06,640
And we arrived there some 2,
3 o'clock in the morning in--

1216
01:12:06,640 --> 01:12:10,800

1217
01:12:10,800 --> 01:12:11,460
my memory.

1218
01:12:11,460 --> 01:12:15,030

1219
01:12:15,030 --> 01:12:21,330
In the Thames estuary,
the first big landing

1220
01:12:21,330 --> 01:12:24,630
place, a port of
London, but short of it.

1221
01:12:24,630 --> 01:12:31,240

1222
01:12:31,240 --> 01:12:33,790
Have a sip of coffee
while I look it up

1223
01:12:33,790 --> 01:12:35,380
and see if I can find it.

1224
01:12:35,380 --> 01:13:12,000

1225
01:13:12,000 --> 01:13:13,350
Tilbury.

1226
01:13:13,350 --> 01:13:14,550
Tilbury.

1227
01:13:14,550 --> 01:13:15,810
OK.

1228
01:13:15,810 --> 01:13:16,430
Tilbury.

1229
01:13:16,430 --> 01:13:19,500
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1230
01:13:19,500 --> 01:13:23,340
And so that means
southern England.

1231
01:13:23,340 --> 01:13:25,500
You were taken to
southern England.

1232
01:13:25,500 --> 01:13:30,250
And from there,
where did you go?

1233
01:13:30,250 --> 01:13:32,950
Or where were you
taken, actually?

1234
01:13:32,950 --> 01:13:35,310
We were taken to Norfolk.

1235
01:13:35,310 --> 01:13:39,850
But I've got to tell you a
little bit of a story that--

1236
01:13:39,850 --> 01:13:41,780
what happened at Tilbury.

1237
01:13:41,780 --> 01:13:43,970
OK.

1238
01:13:43,970 --> 01:13:48,060
So we sort of--

1239
01:13:48,060 --> 01:13:53,780
5 o'clock or what we
disembarked on a little sink

1240
01:13:53,780 --> 01:14:00,430
up to the actual deck of the--

1241
01:14:00,430 --> 01:14:01,860
no, not the deck.

1242
01:14:01,860 --> 01:14:03,845
Whatever it is,
the harbor proper

1243
01:14:03,845 --> 01:14:08,010
is, where there's a sort of
a train on the other side

1244
01:14:08,010 --> 01:14:09,600
of the platform.

1245
01:14:09,600 --> 01:14:13,050
And as we came up, there
was a Tommy soldier

1246

01:14:13,050 --> 01:14:18,000

standing there handing a
proper English cup of tea

1247

01:14:18,000 --> 01:14:19,890

to everybody as we came.

1248

01:14:19,890 --> 01:14:22,310

And of course, we were--

1249

01:14:22,310 --> 01:14:24,940

most of us having been
seasick and so on,

1250

01:14:24,940 --> 01:14:26,650

a pretty rough crowd.

1251

01:14:26,650 --> 01:14:32,460

And as I came up and saw him,
and he smiled at me as he

1252

01:14:32,460 --> 01:14:34,500

handed me a tea cup of tea.

1253

01:14:34,500 --> 01:14:43,140

I had the most immense feeling
of joy, just indescribable.

1254

01:14:43,140 --> 01:14:47,290

It's something I've
never experienced before.

1255

01:14:47,290 --> 01:14:57,460

And I had a similar experience
later on in my life.

1256

01:14:57,460 --> 01:15:00,320

I put it down to
my mother, who was

1257

01:15:00,320 --> 01:15:06,500

a clairvoyant kind of person.

1258
01:15:06,500 --> 01:15:07,640
My late mother.

1259
01:15:07,640 --> 01:15:09,250
A medium.

1260
01:15:09,250 --> 01:15:09,780
A medium.

1261
01:15:09,780 --> 01:15:10,280
Yes.

1262
01:15:10,280 --> 01:15:13,160

1263
01:15:13,160 --> 01:15:16,010
So it was a totally
extraordinary experience

1264
01:15:16,010 --> 01:15:17,700
for me.

1265
01:15:17,700 --> 01:15:23,960
And it sort of set the tone
for my being in Britain.

1266
01:15:23,960 --> 01:15:27,140

1267
01:15:27,140 --> 01:15:28,730
How did you understand it?

1268
01:15:28,730 --> 01:15:29,330
I mean--

1269
01:15:29,330 --> 01:15:30,770
I didn't understand it.

1270
01:15:30,770 --> 01:15:34,730
But it was such an immense joy.

1271
01:15:34,730 --> 01:15:39,870
It's something that I hadn't
anywhere near the experience

1272
01:15:39,870 --> 01:15:42,180
for years at that time.

1273
01:15:42,180 --> 01:15:45,490

1274
01:15:45,490 --> 01:15:46,880
Totally irrational.

1275
01:15:46,880 --> 01:15:48,500
Totally irrational.

1276
01:15:48,500 --> 01:15:49,430
But--

1277
01:15:49,430 --> 01:15:53,510
And all it was is that he hands
you a cup of tea and smiles?

1278
01:15:53,510 --> 01:15:54,010
Yeah.

1279
01:15:54,010 --> 01:16:01,950

1280
01:16:01,950 --> 01:16:06,230
So after that,
you-- oh, hang on.

1281
01:16:06,230 --> 01:16:08,070
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1282
01:16:08,070 --> 01:16:13,980
I took it much more
as a kind of destiny,

1283

01:16:13,980 --> 01:16:17,400
that England had to be--

1284
01:16:17,400 --> 01:16:20,340
well, it was
something real and not

1285
01:16:20,340 --> 01:16:24,740
just going to be a
passing experience.

1286
01:16:24,740 --> 01:16:26,740
And that turned out
to be true, didn't it?

1287
01:16:26,740 --> 01:16:27,780
Oh, that's very true.

1288
01:16:27,780 --> 01:16:30,010
Yes.

1289
01:16:30,010 --> 01:16:34,930
So after that, you get
the tea and then you--

1290
01:16:34,930 --> 01:16:36,780
do you go to the train
that is waiting for--

1291
01:16:36,780 --> 01:16:37,280
Yes.

1292
01:16:37,280 --> 01:16:40,780
We [? went ?] to a
very comfortable train,

1293
01:16:40,780 --> 01:16:43,950
not like the German
trains in those days.

1294
01:16:43,950 --> 01:16:50,370
They had all wooden seats
but the proper [? posters. ?]

1295
01:16:50,370 --> 01:16:52,110
And we went to Norfolk.

1296
01:16:52,110 --> 01:16:59,880
And we were put into a camp that
had been for the American air

1297
01:16:59,880 --> 01:17:05,980
crews who flew their
flights from that area to--

1298
01:17:05,980 --> 01:17:07,350
in the war.

1299
01:17:07,350 --> 01:17:10,060
And that obviously
was now surrounded

1300
01:17:10,060 --> 01:17:14,950
by barbed wire and British
soldiers guarding us.

1301
01:17:14,950 --> 01:17:20,840
About how many prisoners were
in this particular transport?

1302
01:17:20,840 --> 01:17:26,590
About 150.

1303
01:17:26,590 --> 01:17:35,530
And then I had by that time
formed a little group skat

1304
01:17:35,530 --> 01:17:40,140
group, card game skat.

1305
01:17:40,140 --> 01:17:44,430
And so we were four or
five people, really,

1306
01:17:44,430 --> 01:17:53,780

who became sort of
friends during that time.

1307
01:17:53,780 --> 01:17:59,880
And we became later on the
leadership of the bomb disposal

1308
01:17:59,880 --> 01:18:02,390
group.

1309
01:18:02,390 --> 01:18:05,220
But that--

1310
01:18:05,220 --> 01:18:06,660
Repeat that, please?

1311
01:18:06,660 --> 01:18:08,490
The what kind of group?

1312
01:18:08,490 --> 01:18:10,500
The bomb disposal group.

1313
01:18:10,500 --> 01:18:14,793

1314
01:18:14,793 --> 01:18:15,750
[SNEEZING]

1315
01:18:15,750 --> 01:18:16,840
Sorry.

1316
01:18:16,840 --> 01:18:18,160
Bless you.

1317
01:18:18,160 --> 01:18:19,240
Bless you.

1318
01:18:19,240 --> 01:18:20,650
Now I understand.

1319
01:18:20,650 --> 01:18:23,470

Yeah, bless you.

1320
01:18:23,470 --> 01:18:27,820
At the skat group I was
the English, basically,

1321
01:18:27,820 --> 01:18:31,280
the English speaker and
kind of interpreter.

1322
01:18:31,280 --> 01:18:35,350

1323
01:18:35,350 --> 01:18:39,140
And it's sort of--

1324
01:18:39,140 --> 01:18:42,650

1325
01:18:42,650 --> 01:18:46,380
we were a group that sort
of, in the end, sort of

1326
01:18:46,380 --> 01:18:56,055
fitted the requirements to run
the German camp for the bomb

1327
01:18:56,055 --> 01:18:56,555
disposal.

1328
01:18:56,555 --> 01:18:59,070

1329
01:18:59,070 --> 01:19:00,100
So explain--

1330
01:19:00,100 --> 01:19:03,070
I'm jumping the gun,
because obviously it

1331
01:19:03,070 --> 01:19:04,270
didn't happen like that.

1332
01:19:04,270 --> 01:19:07,550

1333
01:19:07,550 --> 01:19:11,270
I'd like to get a sense,
both chronologically of what

1334
01:19:11,270 --> 01:19:18,020
happens, how events happen,
the sequence of them.

1335
01:19:18,020 --> 01:19:21,627
And then we'll come to the
bomb disposal question,

1336
01:19:21,627 --> 01:19:23,210
because I didn't
know there were bombs

1337
01:19:23,210 --> 01:19:25,880
to dispose of within Britain.

1338
01:19:25,880 --> 01:19:27,380
Oh, yes.

1339
01:19:27,380 --> 01:19:30,800
Definitely.

1340
01:19:30,800 --> 01:19:33,710
So certainly we didn't
know anything about that,

1341
01:19:33,710 --> 01:19:37,550
either, at that time.

1342
01:19:37,550 --> 01:19:42,560
You know, again, everything
went alphabetically.

1343
01:19:42,560 --> 01:19:49,050
So the A to K suddenly were

called out and disappeared.

1344

01:19:49,050 --> 01:19:55,036

I don't know whether they went
to farming or what kind of job.

1345

01:19:55,036 --> 01:20:01,600

But the L to Z were left
behind for another week or so.

1346

01:20:01,600 --> 01:20:05,160

And then we were put on
a train back to London,

1347

01:20:05,160 --> 01:20:07,080

to Liverpool Street.

1348

01:20:07,080 --> 01:20:14,650

And again, we didn't know
where we were going to end up.

1349

01:20:14,650 --> 01:20:17,390

But here we were at
Liverpool Street.

1350

01:20:17,390 --> 01:20:22,870

We got out-- first
time in the big city.

1351

01:20:22,870 --> 01:20:34,182

And we then put on open trucks
to ride through the city.

1352

01:20:34,182 --> 01:20:36,730

And it was an amazing
sort of experience

1353

01:20:36,730 --> 01:20:42,820

to see all the crowds of people
there, a busy, busy city.

1354

01:20:42,820 --> 01:20:47,894

And dropped off at

Paddington station.

1355

01:20:47,894 --> 01:20:51,400

At Paddington, we
were on the platform

1356

01:20:51,400 --> 01:20:57,530

waiting for collection.

1357

01:20:57,530 --> 01:21:02,420

And you know, it was a
fairly busy sort of platform.

1358

01:21:02,420 --> 01:21:05,140

There was a couple of
policemen standing there

1359

01:21:05,140 --> 01:21:08,720

and there were these two
guys who were guarding it.

1360

01:21:08,720 --> 01:21:13,060

And suddenly, one of
these railway workers

1361

01:21:13,060 --> 01:21:18,820

came up to us, to our
sort of standing group.

1362

01:21:18,820 --> 01:21:20,470

And he said hello.

1363

01:21:20,470 --> 01:21:27,430

He said, I was a prisoner of
war in Germany, in the last war.

1364

01:21:27,430 --> 01:21:34,910

And I was with a farming family
and I had a very good time.

1365

01:21:34,910 --> 01:21:37,930

I hope you will have a
good time here in Britain.

1366
01:21:37,930 --> 01:21:42,100
And he sort of talked like
that, sometimes showing

1367
01:21:42,100 --> 01:21:44,370
that he knew a few
words of German.

1368
01:21:44,370 --> 01:21:49,210
And I sort of helped
translating his English parts,

1369
01:21:49,210 --> 01:21:50,630
to a certain extent.

1370
01:21:50,630 --> 01:21:54,790
And you know, I was
sort of a bit stunned,

1371
01:21:54,790 --> 01:22:01,630
because at that time,
prisoners were English people

1372
01:22:01,630 --> 01:22:08,282
and prisoners were forbidden
to speak to each other.

1373
01:22:08,282 --> 01:22:11,330
And it was definitely--

1374
01:22:11,330 --> 01:22:17,650
but neither the police nor
the soldiers made any moves.

1375
01:22:17,650 --> 01:22:21,060
They just let it happen.

1376
01:22:21,060 --> 01:22:24,890
So in the end,
our train arrived.

1377

01:22:24,890 --> 01:22:30,110
And the guy said, good
luck, boys, waved,

1378
01:22:30,110 --> 01:22:35,290
and then we turned and had a
quick sort of suburban trip

1379
01:22:35,290 --> 01:22:40,270
to Greenford, was it?

1380
01:22:40,270 --> 01:22:41,230
Anyway.

1381
01:22:41,230 --> 01:22:44,230
Just a little bit
further east where

1382
01:22:44,230 --> 01:22:50,020
there was this German prisoner
of war camp run by Germans.

1383
01:22:50,020 --> 01:22:54,110
You could come back for
seconds helpings of food,

1384
01:22:54,110 --> 01:22:55,603
which was [?at the restaurant?].

1385
01:22:55,603 --> 01:22:59,400

1386
01:22:59,400 --> 01:23:00,000
Excuse me.

1387
01:23:00,000 --> 01:23:01,200
I didn't quite catch that.

1388
01:23:01,200 --> 01:23:04,080
You went to Greenwood,
I think you said.

1389

01:23:04,080 --> 01:23:04,820
And you could--

1390
01:23:04,820 --> 01:23:05,370
Greenford.

1391
01:23:05,370 --> 01:23:07,780
Greenford.

1392
01:23:07,780 --> 01:23:10,320
And what was that, Greenford?

1393
01:23:10,320 --> 01:23:12,180
What was that?

1394
01:23:12,180 --> 01:23:18,560
Well, it is a suburb at the
Hoover factory [?is there?].

1395
01:23:18,560 --> 01:23:21,030
Uh huh.

1396
01:23:21,030 --> 01:23:25,620
There was a German prisoner of
war camp run by Germans, not

1397
01:23:25,620 --> 01:23:30,000
by British people.

1398
01:23:30,000 --> 01:23:37,860
And we were there just without--

1399
01:23:37,860 --> 01:23:40,120
as newcomers.

1400
01:23:40,120 --> 01:23:43,540
But we were kind
of kept separate.

1401
01:23:43,540 --> 01:23:45,820
These people were there--

1402

01:23:45,820 --> 01:23:53,710
they had occasional kind of jobs
to do in various Army stores

1403

01:23:53,710 --> 01:23:55,510
doing work in the Army stores.

1404

01:23:55,510 --> 01:23:57,370
But it wasn't a regular thing.

1405

01:23:57,370 --> 01:24:03,120
It was working parties now
and then when required.

1406

01:24:03,120 --> 01:24:07,010
And we were just there on hold.

1407

01:24:07,010 --> 01:24:13,660
But they had sort of obviously
quite a few internal things

1408

01:24:13,660 --> 01:24:25,460
organized, like a little
library or talks, instructions

1409

01:24:25,460 --> 01:24:28,190
and that kind of thing.

1410

01:24:28,190 --> 01:24:31,010
I tried to help with it.

1411

01:24:31,010 --> 01:24:37,340
I got myself in trouble
with the sergeants.

1412

01:24:37,340 --> 01:24:40,945
I mean, there was a group of
sergeants who ran the camp.

1413

01:24:40,945 --> 01:24:43,520
And they were sort
of old fashioned

1414
01:24:43,520 --> 01:24:46,160
German army kind of people.

1415
01:24:46,160 --> 01:24:49,940
And I'd try to introduce
more discussion and so on.

1416
01:24:49,940 --> 01:24:51,230
So I got myself in trouble.

1417
01:24:51,230 --> 01:24:53,590
And my skat friend
said, for heaven's sake,

1418
01:24:53,590 --> 01:24:56,120
keep out of this.

1419
01:24:56,120 --> 01:25:04,160
But then suddenly, one morning
these big American five ton

1420
01:25:04,160 --> 01:25:08,500
trucks arrived to pick us up.

1421
01:25:08,500 --> 01:25:14,170
And then we were taken
into town to Fulham.

1422
01:25:14,170 --> 01:25:16,630
And in Fulham, there was this--

1423
01:25:16,630 --> 01:25:19,440

1424
01:25:19,440 --> 01:25:26,000
royal engineers thing on
the [INAUDIBLE] polo ground,

1425
01:25:26,000 --> 01:25:30,390
where they were at the camp.

1426
01:25:30,390 --> 01:25:33,370

1427
01:25:33,370 --> 01:25:35,530
When we arrived,
all their trucks

1428
01:25:35,530 --> 01:25:38,800
were just moving
out to work and we

1429
01:25:38,800 --> 01:25:44,080
were left standing there
waiting for things to happen.

1430
01:25:44,080 --> 01:25:49,560
And a soldier came
from the office

1431
01:25:49,560 --> 01:25:53,885
and said he wanted to
speak to [INAUDIBLE]..

1432
01:25:53,885 --> 01:26:00,290

1433
01:26:00,290 --> 01:26:04,790
So however, he led me
then into the office.

1434
01:26:04,790 --> 01:26:07,920
And there was Major Gibson.

1435
01:26:07,920 --> 01:26:14,610
And he said, you know,
we want you to work here.

1436
01:26:14,610 --> 01:26:17,980
I want to talk to your people.

1437
01:26:17,980 --> 01:26:20,570
You will be translating for me.

1438
01:26:20,570 --> 01:26:28,000
And we really hope that
you'll be happy here.

1439
01:26:28,000 --> 01:26:28,950
OK.

1440
01:26:28,950 --> 01:26:33,570
So we went outside
and Major Gibson

1441
01:26:33,570 --> 01:26:41,780
did this talk to our people,
about 80 people now, I think.

1442
01:26:41,780 --> 01:26:47,470
And he kept saying,
you get your-- you're

1443
01:26:47,470 --> 01:26:48,750
like the British soldiers.

1444
01:26:48,750 --> 01:26:50,530
You have your free time.

1445
01:26:50,530 --> 01:26:57,620

1446
01:26:57,620 --> 01:27:00,910
You obviously have to work,
but only during normal working

1447
01:27:00,910 --> 01:27:01,950
hours.

1448
01:27:01,950 --> 01:27:07,210
And otherwise, you can go
out and have your free time

1449
01:27:07,210 --> 01:27:09,140
and spend it the way you like.

1450
01:27:09,140 --> 01:27:13,200

1451
01:27:13,200 --> 01:27:16,940
And the work is bomb disposal.

1452
01:27:16,940 --> 01:27:19,360
So I thought, well,
all these other guys

1453
01:27:19,360 --> 01:27:26,260
in the other camp, they
worked at these army stores.

1454
01:27:26,260 --> 01:27:35,620
And that bomb disposal
sounded like just moving bombs

1455
01:27:35,620 --> 01:27:37,990
from one place to another.

1456
01:27:37,990 --> 01:27:40,690
But then he said,
well, I'd like it--

1457
01:27:40,690 --> 01:27:44,250
he said, look, I want
you to talk it over

1458
01:27:44,250 --> 01:27:51,420
and to let me know whether
you want to do this work.

1459
01:27:51,420 --> 01:27:52,900
So that sounded fishy, you know.

1460
01:27:52,900 --> 01:27:56,540
And I thought, well, you
know, Geneva Convention--

1461
01:27:56,540 --> 01:27:59,220

1462
01:27:59,220 --> 01:28:02,100
so I said to him,
look, I'm sorry,

1463
01:28:02,100 --> 01:28:04,272
what actually is bomb disposal?

1464
01:28:04,272 --> 01:28:08,280
And he said, well look,
there are unexploded bombs

1465
01:28:08,280 --> 01:28:16,500
all over the place in London
from when the Germans attacked.

1466
01:28:16,500 --> 01:28:19,140
They have to be removed--

1467
01:28:19,140 --> 01:28:22,200
that is to say, dug
out from the ground.

1468
01:28:22,200 --> 01:28:31,816
But only an officer
could defuse some--

1469
01:28:31,816 --> 01:28:34,390
a trained officer.

1470
01:28:34,390 --> 01:28:38,580
It wouldn't mean that
any prisoners of war

1471
01:28:38,580 --> 01:28:43,430
would have to actually handle,
or even touch the bomb.

1472
01:28:43,430 --> 01:28:47,710
But it's-- some of these bombs
are quite deep in the ground.

1473

01:28:47,710 --> 01:28:50,760

So we have to have
a sort of shaft.

1474

01:28:50,760 --> 01:28:53,790

So he said I'll leave
you to talk it over.

1475

01:28:53,790 --> 01:29:00,040

And let me know.

1476

01:29:00,040 --> 01:29:03,980

So everybody was talking
now, this and that.

1477

01:29:03,980 --> 01:29:09,580

The older people, the most
senior people, sort of had--

1478

01:29:09,580 --> 01:29:16,560

why should we help the enemy
to do all this kind of work.

1479

01:29:16,560 --> 01:29:18,160

And the younger
people basically were

1480

01:29:18,160 --> 01:29:23,030

happy to do something useful.

1481

01:29:23,030 --> 01:29:24,790

So in the end, I'll
sort of cut it short,

1482

01:29:24,790 --> 01:29:31,880

I said, I'll tell the major
we are happy to do our bit.

1483

01:29:31,880 --> 01:29:35,690

Nobody objected, so I went
to Major Gibson and I said,

1484

01:29:35,690 --> 01:29:38,770
look, we are in for it.

1485
01:29:38,770 --> 01:29:48,560
And so then he said,
there's not much--

1486
01:29:48,560 --> 01:29:54,370
there's not much you could
do today, because you know,

1487
01:29:54,370 --> 01:29:56,640
it's already out at work.

1488
01:29:56,640 --> 01:30:01,850
But maybe you could just
clear up the yard here,

1489
01:30:01,850 --> 01:30:06,510
because it seems
a bit of a mess.

1490
01:30:06,510 --> 01:30:10,220
So we spent the day
clearing up, finding

1491
01:30:10,220 --> 01:30:19,310
quite a few empty houses of
cases of bombs, which would all

1492
01:30:19,310 --> 01:30:23,750
stack up to a kind of monument
at the entrance, which

1493
01:30:23,750 --> 01:30:30,530
later became a kind of
standard part of our group.

1494
01:30:30,530 --> 01:30:35,270
Anyway, so then
these big trucks--

1495
01:30:35,270 --> 01:30:40,520

American trucks-- came at
5:00 or 6:00 in the evening,

1496
01:30:40,520 --> 01:30:43,250
took us back to Greenford.

1497
01:30:43,250 --> 01:30:44,350
where we were.

1498
01:30:44,350 --> 01:30:45,930
By the time we got
there-- you know

1499
01:30:45,930 --> 01:30:50,280
the usual sort of town traffic.

1500
01:30:50,280 --> 01:30:56,020
So it was too late to
get any food from there.

1501
01:30:56,020 --> 01:31:00,390
And next morning, again,
we are there for sandwiches

1502
01:31:00,390 --> 01:31:07,760
up front from the kitchen to
take us down back to Fulham.

1503
01:31:07,760 --> 01:31:13,730
And then the group was sort of--

1504
01:31:13,730 --> 01:31:16,650
the [INAUDIBLE]
will organize to--

1505
01:31:16,650 --> 01:31:19,290

1506
01:31:19,290 --> 01:31:24,250
it was basically,
we are [INAUDIBLE]

1507

01:31:24,250 --> 01:31:30,740
was roughly the same as the
spot on the British squadron

1508
01:31:30,740 --> 01:31:32,860
was there.

1509
01:31:32,860 --> 01:31:37,270
They worked in--
under a sergeant

1510
01:31:37,270 --> 01:31:43,150
in each case who had a truck.

1511
01:31:43,150 --> 01:31:48,150
So there was for every
three British soldiers,

1512
01:31:48,150 --> 01:31:53,710
there were three Germans
in the new set up.

1513
01:31:53,710 --> 01:31:57,010
They were desperate for drivers.

1514
01:31:57,010 --> 01:32:02,440
And you know, there were
quite a few among our crowd

1515
01:32:02,440 --> 01:32:09,310
who were adding drivers,
not on English soil,

1516
01:32:09,310 --> 01:32:14,830
but so it all got quite
a few engineers, which

1517
01:32:14,830 --> 01:32:20,590
were, again, useful for
building a shaft and so on.

1518
01:32:20,590 --> 01:32:24,190
And the whole thing got

very quickly working.

1519
01:32:24,190 --> 01:32:30,100
And it became quite
successful in a short time,

1520
01:32:30,100 --> 01:32:32,980
the extra member--

1521
01:32:32,980 --> 01:32:37,070
and you know,
there have been a--

1522
01:32:37,070 --> 01:32:41,140
people obviously
from the war knew

1523
01:32:41,140 --> 01:32:45,835
often where a bomb had
fallen and not exploded.

1524
01:32:45,835 --> 01:32:48,670

1525
01:32:48,670 --> 01:32:50,830
Otherwise, of course, you
had magnets and things

1526
01:32:50,830 --> 01:32:54,970
like that to make sure the
thing was there in the ground

1527
01:32:54,970 --> 01:32:56,380
somewhere or not.

1528
01:32:56,380 --> 01:32:59,910

1529
01:32:59,910 --> 01:33:02,090
So that became the
[INAUDIBLE] site.

1530

01:33:02,090 --> 01:33:05,290
And you build a shaft down.

1531
01:33:05,290 --> 01:33:09,880
There's a crane and a pump
to pump the water out,

1532
01:33:09,880 --> 01:33:12,550
wherever you take
the ground in London.

1533
01:33:12,550 --> 01:33:13,945
It gets wet very quickly.

1534
01:33:13,945 --> 01:33:16,780

1535
01:33:16,780 --> 01:33:21,610
And the press was
what was interested.

1536
01:33:21,610 --> 01:33:27,050
When the pump came,
it was actually--

1537
01:33:27,050 --> 01:33:28,710
and the area had to be cleared.

1538
01:33:28,710 --> 01:33:30,860
It was all very formal.

1539
01:33:30,860 --> 01:33:40,070
And then the--
commanding officer

1540
01:33:40,070 --> 01:33:44,746
was called back to
assess the situation.

1541
01:33:44,746 --> 01:33:50,000

1542

01:33:50,000 --> 01:33:51,890
So I have a number
of questions here.

1543
01:33:51,890 --> 01:33:54,420

1544
01:33:54,420 --> 01:33:59,600
And so I'm going to start
a little chronologically

1545
01:33:59,600 --> 01:34:03,990
and see whether or
not I'm accurate.

1546
01:34:03,990 --> 01:34:07,560
So when you go from Tilbury,
you're taken to Norfolk.

1547
01:34:07,560 --> 01:34:11,390
A through K, whoever's last
name begins A through K

1548
01:34:11,390 --> 01:34:13,180
are taken off somewhere.

1549
01:34:13,180 --> 01:34:15,630
And L through Z is left.

1550
01:34:15,630 --> 01:34:18,650
And then about a
week later, you're

1551
01:34:18,650 --> 01:34:21,920
taken to Green Fort, the camp--

1552
01:34:21,920 --> 01:34:26,780
model camp at Greenford,
which is near Fulham.

1553
01:34:26,780 --> 01:34:31,780
So we're talking about London,
the outskirts of London.

1554
01:34:31,780 --> 01:34:36,620
And the following day, American
army trucks come and take--

1555
01:34:36,620 --> 01:34:38,030
But it wasn't the following day.

1556
01:34:38,030 --> 01:34:39,970
It was about two weeks later.

1557
01:34:39,970 --> 01:34:40,970
OK.

1558
01:34:40,970 --> 01:34:43,220
They come and they take you to--

1559
01:34:43,220 --> 01:34:44,750
did I hear it correctly?

1560
01:34:44,750 --> 01:34:48,680
A polo match place, a
place where people--

1561
01:34:48,680 --> 01:34:52,022
There's a polo ground
in the [INAUDIBLE]..

1562
01:34:52,022 --> 01:34:54,620

1563
01:34:54,620 --> 01:34:59,180
Yeah, the polo
ground is obviously--

1564
01:34:59,180 --> 01:35:03,280
it's now high rise
buildings [INAUDIBLE]..

1565
01:35:03,280 --> 01:35:03,890
OK.

1566

01:35:03,890 --> 01:35:07,430

But it was a polo ground
where the British military

1567

01:35:07,430 --> 01:35:10,932

had some sort of either
headquarters or installation--

1568

01:35:10,932 --> 01:35:11,840

No.

1569

01:35:11,840 --> 01:35:14,480

Well, the royal
engineers had been

1570

01:35:14,480 --> 01:35:17,150

given that place,
the polo ground,

1571

01:35:17,150 --> 01:35:21,890

to set up their bomb
disposal squadron.

1572

01:35:21,890 --> 01:35:22,810

OK.

1573

01:35:22,810 --> 01:35:26,900

And that's where you
meet Major Gibson, who--

1574

01:35:26,900 --> 01:35:31,490

it sounds so strange to
hear that the captor is

1575

01:35:31,490 --> 01:35:34,730

giving the captives an option.

1576

01:35:34,730 --> 01:35:39,120

They can do this or they
can refuse to do this.

1577

01:35:39,120 --> 01:35:42,540

And so therefore, you weren't sure what he was talking about.

1578
01:35:42,540 --> 01:35:43,610
And then he explained.

1579
01:35:43,610 --> 01:35:46,580
I wasn't sure, but I realized, obviously,

1580
01:35:46,580 --> 01:35:52,250
afterwards that from as far as the Geneva Convention was

1581
01:35:52,250 --> 01:36:01,460
concerned, it was something that wasn't exactly right,

1582
01:36:01,460 --> 01:36:05,120
because the Geneva Convention made it expressively

1583
01:36:05,120 --> 01:36:11,630
clear that Christmas must not be put into a potentially

1584
01:36:11,630 --> 01:36:13,980
dangerous situation.

1585
01:36:13,980 --> 01:36:18,950
Now here, dealing with unexploded bombs,

1586
01:36:18,950 --> 01:36:23,130
never mind whether you touch something or not,

1587
01:36:23,130 --> 01:36:28,530
it was, I think in those days, was considered

1588
01:36:28,530 --> 01:36:31,490
a potentially dangerous job.

1589
01:36:31,490 --> 01:36:33,810
And he wanted--

1590
01:36:33,810 --> 01:36:38,670
Major Gibson wanted us to say
we volunteered, not that we were

1591
01:36:38,670 --> 01:36:41,690
forced to do that kind of work.

1592
01:36:41,690 --> 01:36:46,950

1593
01:36:46,950 --> 01:36:51,510
On that ground, we sort of
accepted the responsibility

1594
01:36:51,510 --> 01:36:55,170
that we might blow ourselves up.

1595
01:36:55,170 --> 01:36:57,180
And did that happen to anybody?

1596
01:36:57,180 --> 01:36:58,980
Were there accidents?

1597
01:36:58,980 --> 01:37:01,290
Were there any accidents
during the time

1598
01:37:01,290 --> 01:37:03,240
that you were working
on these bombs?

1599
01:37:03,240 --> 01:37:07,200
I mean, there is also something
of divine justice in here.

1600
01:37:07,200 --> 01:37:10,790
If these are German bombs
that were falling on Britain,

1601
01:37:10,790 --> 01:37:14,670
then if I were
British, I would say,

1602
01:37:14,670 --> 01:37:19,110
well, you know, it's only fair
that somebody who is German

1603
01:37:19,110 --> 01:37:21,190
defuses them.

1604
01:37:21,190 --> 01:37:23,700
And I, let's say
a British citizen,

1605
01:37:23,700 --> 01:37:26,910
doesn't have to expose
myself to that danger.

1606
01:37:26,910 --> 01:37:29,780
I mean, that's without talking
about any of-- when you don't

1607
01:37:29,780 --> 01:37:33,600
get down to the details,
that argument may not

1608
01:37:33,600 --> 01:37:34,740
be so straightforward.

1609
01:37:34,740 --> 01:37:36,480
But it was really--

1610
01:37:36,480 --> 01:37:40,250
I mean, the issue was raised.

1611
01:37:40,250 --> 01:37:53,370
Also, I mean, when you think
of it, in Britain, it was--

1612
01:37:53,370 --> 01:37:56,250

in London, it was
a hot situation,

1613
01:37:56,250 --> 01:38:01,980
because the press got
hold of it and people--

1614
01:38:01,980 --> 01:38:06,990
there were always people writing
in saying, in our backyard

1615
01:38:06,990 --> 01:38:09,390
or in our factory
or on the front,

1616
01:38:09,390 --> 01:38:12,480
there is an unexploded
German bomb.

1617
01:38:12,480 --> 01:38:16,590
Now, what would-- you
do something about it.

1618
01:38:16,590 --> 01:38:20,700
I mean, we don't feel safe
sitting there underground.

1619
01:38:20,700 --> 01:38:26,270
But when you were in Berlin,
weren't you, for two years?

1620
01:38:26,270 --> 01:38:30,710
I'm sure you would have had
dozens of bombs under you

1621
01:38:30,710 --> 01:38:33,770
there which nobody knew about.

1622
01:38:33,770 --> 01:38:37,910
Nobody had time to look after.

1623
01:38:37,910 --> 01:38:40,970
But it didn't become

a public issue,

1624
01:38:40,970 --> 01:38:45,650
or it never will,
unless they find one now

1625
01:38:45,650 --> 01:38:51,070
when they build a new
super building on some.

1626
01:38:51,070 --> 01:38:54,250
And anyway, so it
was a hot issue

1627
01:38:54,250 --> 01:38:57,010
as far as publicity
was concerned.

1628
01:38:57,010 --> 01:39:01,930
But obviously, as soon as one
of those bombs was uncovered

1629
01:39:01,930 --> 01:39:07,860
and the people in the area
[INAUDIBLE] moved their homes.

1630
01:39:07,860 --> 01:39:14,794
And then the officer
came and to undo the--

1631
01:39:14,794 --> 01:39:17,640

1632
01:39:17,640 --> 01:39:19,970
make the bomb safe.

1633
01:39:19,970 --> 01:39:22,950
Then the press was there too.

1634
01:39:22,950 --> 01:39:26,970
And it then was in The
Mirror and the Daily Mail.

1635

01:39:26,970 --> 01:39:30,810

And of course, from
now on, the picture

1636

01:39:30,810 --> 01:39:35,290

of the team that dug up
the bomb was a mixed team.

1637

01:39:35,290 --> 01:39:36,960

There was a German
prisoners and there

1638

01:39:36,960 --> 01:39:40,440

was all the British
soldiers all together.

1639

01:39:40,440 --> 01:39:44,130

So it became quite
a sort of issue--

1640

01:39:44,130 --> 01:39:47,530

1641

01:39:47,530 --> 01:39:49,810

in a positive sort of way.

1642

01:39:49,810 --> 01:39:53,860

OK, because I mean, it does--

1643

01:39:53,860 --> 01:39:57,330

it does look like it
could be a good issue.

1644

01:39:57,330 --> 01:40:02,260

And I mean, in the sense that
here is a former enemy which is

1645

01:40:02,260 --> 01:40:06,180

helping to dispose of a danger.

1646

01:40:06,180 --> 01:40:07,140

Right.

1647
01:40:07,140 --> 01:40:10,200
I certainly felt that very much.

1648
01:40:10,200 --> 01:40:13,740
And I think most of the
young people did, too.

1649
01:40:13,740 --> 01:40:18,390
And I think the
older ones, as well,

1650
01:40:18,390 --> 01:40:21,150
except they felt that they
ought to have been released.

1651
01:40:21,150 --> 01:40:25,150
They had wives and children
back home and so on,

1652
01:40:25,150 --> 01:40:30,990
and why are they being held
back to dig up these bombs?

1653
01:40:30,990 --> 01:40:36,300
But a lot of them were drivers.

1654
01:40:36,300 --> 01:40:39,090
Being able to drive
a truck was, again,

1655
01:40:39,090 --> 01:40:43,110
something special, not just--

1656
01:40:43,110 --> 01:40:50,700
so it all developed very
happily and fairly well.

1657
01:40:50,700 --> 01:40:53,430
I mean, at Christmas we had--

1658
01:40:53,430 --> 01:40:55,930

I mean, we could go
out and obviously

1659
01:40:55,930 --> 01:41:01,220
we-- in Fulham
[INAUDIBLE] in Fulham

1660
01:41:01,220 --> 01:41:03,840
is fairly working
class kind of area.

1661
01:41:03,840 --> 01:41:06,700

1662
01:41:06,700 --> 01:41:15,790
And to have girls and contacts
there, it was quite easy.

1663
01:41:15,790 --> 01:41:18,680
The prisoners were
sort of a novelty,

1664
01:41:18,680 --> 01:41:20,610
you know, going
out in the evening.

1665
01:41:20,610 --> 01:41:27,300
And once you had a
place outside the camp,

1666
01:41:27,300 --> 01:41:29,790
you had some civilian
clothes there.

1667
01:41:29,790 --> 01:41:36,580
So you went out as a prisoner
of war and you changed clothes.

1668
01:41:36,580 --> 01:41:39,960
And then with your
girl or with a family

1669
01:41:39,960 --> 01:41:43,675

you had your spare
time like a civilian.

1670
01:41:43,675 --> 01:41:46,390

1671
01:41:46,390 --> 01:41:50,890
So you know, the term prisoner
sounds so different here,

1672
01:41:50,890 --> 01:41:57,550
because prisoner sort of has
this connotation that you're

1673
01:41:57,550 --> 01:41:59,110
in a jail.

1674
01:41:59,110 --> 01:42:02,350
And a jail, of course,
is not some place

1675
01:42:02,350 --> 01:42:04,000
that you can walk out of.

1676
01:42:04,000 --> 01:42:05,500
Or you're in a camp.

1677
01:42:05,500 --> 01:42:08,470
And a camp is surrounded
by barbed wire,

1678
01:42:08,470 --> 01:42:14,200
and that if you go any place,
that you never go by yourself

1679
01:42:14,200 --> 01:42:17,500
you have somebody watching you
so that you don't run away.

1680
01:42:17,500 --> 01:42:20,120
Now, it doesn't sound
like any of that--

1681
01:42:20,120 --> 01:42:23,200
or only a little bit of that--

1682
01:42:23,200 --> 01:42:26,950
was the actual situation.

1683
01:42:26,950 --> 01:42:29,200
You do have a camp.

1684
01:42:29,200 --> 01:42:33,372
And you did have a uniform
so that could identify you

1685
01:42:33,372 --> 01:42:33,955
as a prisoner.

1686
01:42:33,955 --> 01:42:36,490

1687
01:42:36,490 --> 01:42:39,010
But you have free time.

1688
01:42:39,010 --> 01:42:45,430
And free time doesn't
mean that you are

1689
01:42:45,430 --> 01:42:47,740
limited to just the camp area.

1690
01:42:47,740 --> 01:42:50,140
It means that you can
go and be in town.

1691
01:42:50,140 --> 01:42:51,820
You can walk around.

1692
01:42:51,820 --> 01:42:53,080
Well, exactly.

1693
01:42:53,080 --> 01:43:00,430
I mean, all the prisoners,

[?were?] including myself,

1694
01:43:00,430 --> 01:43:02,020
we just felt our way.

1695
01:43:02,020 --> 01:43:11,970
We went out and talked to
people and make corrections.

1696
01:43:11,970 --> 01:43:17,380
At that Christmas, at
that first Christmas,

1697
01:43:17,380 --> 01:43:27,100
we had a kind of resolve to get
every one of our POWs invited

1698
01:43:27,100 --> 01:43:31,120
to family for Christmas dinner.

1699
01:43:31,120 --> 01:43:36,670
And we just about managed
it, with the new connections

1700
01:43:36,670 --> 01:43:37,540
we've made.

1701
01:43:37,540 --> 01:43:43,660
But obviously, we were popular,
because people, as you said,

1702
01:43:43,660 --> 01:43:48,580
were appreciative that here were
the Germans helping to get rid

1703
01:43:48,580 --> 01:43:52,090
of these unexploded bombs.

1704
01:43:52,090 --> 01:43:54,510
And so it was a good spirit.

1705
01:43:54,510 --> 01:43:58,980

And altogether these
early post-war years

1706
01:43:58,980 --> 01:44:05,780
were so conciliatory, so
friendly with ordinary people.

1707
01:44:05,780 --> 01:44:14,100
I mean, full of intent once were
just ordinary British people,

1708
01:44:14,100 --> 01:44:15,310
nothing special.

1709
01:44:15,310 --> 01:44:19,180
Later on, when we
were in Richmond park,

1710
01:44:19,180 --> 01:44:25,830
there, to make contact
with local people,

1711
01:44:25,830 --> 01:44:27,120
that was a class problem.

1712
01:44:27,120 --> 01:44:29,460
I mean, they were
upper class people.

1713
01:44:29,460 --> 01:44:34,590
They weren't just speaking
particular to Germans, of all

1714
01:44:34,590 --> 01:44:35,620
people.

1715
01:44:35,620 --> 01:44:39,180
You know, it was a
totally different affair.

1716
01:44:39,180 --> 01:44:44,400
But they also needed more
help gardening and so on.

1717
01:44:44,400 --> 01:44:48,970
And so they could get jobs.

1718
01:44:48,970 --> 01:44:52,470
They could pay extra
pay or underhand

1719
01:44:52,470 --> 01:44:56,250
pay, whatever you like it.

1720
01:44:56,250 --> 01:45:00,030
But most of our guys
always went back

1721
01:45:00,030 --> 01:45:04,530
to Fulham and
Putney and that area

1722
01:45:04,530 --> 01:45:09,050
because that's where they
had their original contracts.

1723
01:45:09,050 --> 01:45:10,610
But I had a--

1724
01:45:10,610 --> 01:45:12,890
Was there any fraternization?

1725
01:45:12,890 --> 01:45:13,670
What?

1726
01:45:13,670 --> 01:45:15,530
Was there any fraternization?

1727
01:45:15,530 --> 01:45:16,490
Yes, sure.

1728
01:45:16,490 --> 01:45:19,560

1729

01:45:19,560 --> 01:45:20,060
OK.

1730
01:45:20,060 --> 01:45:24,360

1731
01:45:24,360 --> 01:45:33,370
So did you ever
meet anybody from--

1732
01:45:33,370 --> 01:45:37,090
did you ever meet anybody
Jewish from Germany?

1733
01:45:37,090 --> 01:45:43,630
Some people had escaped
before World War II

1734
01:45:43,630 --> 01:45:46,970
and had found refuge in London.

1735
01:45:46,970 --> 01:45:51,180
And did your path ever cross
with them, people like that?

1736
01:45:51,180 --> 01:45:54,280
Well, we had once--

1737
01:45:54,280 --> 01:45:56,470
I mean, at first, of
course, we were still

1738
01:45:56,470 --> 01:45:58,270
at the camp in
Greenford when they

1739
01:45:58,270 --> 01:46:03,940
had to travel back and forth
every day except Saturday

1740
01:46:03,940 --> 01:46:05,950
and Sunday.

1741

01:46:05,950 --> 01:46:08,935

And then Greenford
itself, the camp

1742

01:46:08,935 --> 01:46:15,720

was not open for going out.

1743

01:46:15,720 --> 01:46:19,380

I mean, that you could only
do from the camp in Fulham,

1744

01:46:19,380 --> 01:46:23,650

from the royal engineer's place.

1745

01:46:23,650 --> 01:46:35,850

So by about October or November,
there was a group of our people

1746

01:46:35,850 --> 01:46:41,040

and royal engineers,
soldiers, who were so detailed

1747

01:46:41,040 --> 01:46:45,390

to put up the extra
[INAUDIBLE] huts for us

1748

01:46:45,390 --> 01:46:56,230

to join the camp at Fulham.

1749

01:46:56,230 --> 01:47:04,860

And that meant that we became a
separate prisoner of war camp.

1750

01:47:04,860 --> 01:47:09,290

1751

01:47:09,290 --> 01:47:19,680

And the regulations were,
according to the foreign office

1752

01:47:19,680 --> 01:47:26,550

situation was that the camp

leader would be elected

1753

01:47:26,550 --> 01:47:29,902

by the other prisoners of war.

1754

01:47:29,902 --> 01:47:30,985

We would have an election.

1755

01:47:30,985 --> 01:47:34,490

1756

01:47:34,490 --> 01:47:42,620

But the Geneva Convention from,
I think, after the first war--

1757

01:47:42,620 --> 01:47:46,880

only after first World War there
was no such thing as elections

1758

01:47:46,880 --> 01:47:49,190

or anything like that.

1759

01:47:49,190 --> 01:47:52,346

And it was still a much
more military kind of age.

1760

01:47:52,346 --> 01:47:56,270

There did you read the
Geneva Conventions?

1761

01:47:56,270 --> 01:47:57,410

It's the highest ranking--

1762

01:47:57,410 --> 01:48:01,030

1763

01:48:01,030 --> 01:48:02,020

what you call it?

1764

01:48:02,020 --> 01:48:07,700

Non-commissioned officer who
will become the commander.

1765
01:48:07,700 --> 01:48:10,220
So [INAUDIBLE]?

1766
01:48:10,220 --> 01:48:13,730
You're talking about the
leader of the prisoners, not

1767
01:48:13,730 --> 01:48:17,060
an official commander.

1768
01:48:17,060 --> 01:48:28,260
Well, a prisoner of war camp
has to have a leader, a manager.

1769
01:48:28,260 --> 01:48:30,180
Excuse me, but
just to make clear

1770
01:48:30,180 --> 01:48:31,710
that we're talking
about a leader

1771
01:48:31,710 --> 01:48:37,376
or manager from whose side,
the captor or the captives?

1772
01:48:37,376 --> 01:48:40,510
That is, the prisoners
or the British?

1773
01:48:40,510 --> 01:48:42,570
Who needed--

1774
01:48:42,570 --> 01:48:52,730
I mean, the whole new idea
was that the German side

1775
01:48:52,730 --> 01:48:56,780
or the German
soldiers should elect

1776

01:48:56,780 --> 01:49:01,910
that that was the War of the
foreign office saying should

1777
01:49:01,910 --> 01:49:07,390
elect the guy they think is
most suitable or most desirable

1778
01:49:07,390 --> 01:49:10,440
to be their leader.

1779
01:49:10,440 --> 01:49:14,770
But the Geneva Convention was--

1780
01:49:14,770 --> 01:49:18,050
still is, I think--

1781
01:49:18,050 --> 01:49:20,000
that it should
have been the most

1782
01:49:20,000 --> 01:49:23,360
senior non-commissioned
officer who

1783
01:49:23,360 --> 01:49:26,112
becomes then the camp leader.

1784
01:49:26,112 --> 01:49:27,320
That's the military approach.

1785
01:49:27,320 --> 01:49:30,200

1786
01:49:30,200 --> 01:49:33,830
So there was that
kind of problem.

1787
01:49:33,830 --> 01:49:41,600
I mean, the guys said to me when
we had to actually move to--

1788

01:49:41,600 --> 01:49:45,570
and the question-- and I
said, look, we've got to--

1789
01:49:45,570 --> 01:49:49,090
we must now have an
election for a camp leader.

1790
01:49:49,090 --> 01:49:50,450
They said, forget it.

1791
01:49:50,450 --> 01:49:52,080
You're doing it.

1792
01:49:52,080 --> 01:49:54,800
You know, I was the
English speaker.

1793
01:49:54,800 --> 01:49:59,710
And as far as we're
concerned, carry on.

1794
01:49:59,710 --> 01:50:02,360
And so that was that.

1795
01:50:02,360 --> 01:50:12,630
Then the war office
came in and said,

1796
01:50:12,630 --> 01:50:15,210
that's not according to
the Geneva Convention.

1797
01:50:15,210 --> 01:50:18,030
He is a mere private.

1798
01:50:18,030 --> 01:50:19,770
We can't accept it.

1799
01:50:19,770 --> 01:50:23,700
But then Major Gibson put
his foot down and said,

1800

01:50:23,700 --> 01:50:26,490

don't you want
these bombs dug up?

1801

01:50:26,490 --> 01:50:28,800

I mean, that guy's
doing a good job.

1802

01:50:28,800 --> 01:50:29,910

Everything's working.

1803

01:50:29,910 --> 01:50:33,870

For heaven's sake,
don't upset the process.

1804

01:50:33,870 --> 01:50:39,730

So the war office step back,
and then I was camp leader.

1805

01:50:39,730 --> 01:50:43,870

And then I had to, of course,
organize the rest of the staff.

1806

01:50:43,870 --> 01:50:51,420

We had to-- had our own
kitchen, get our own supplies,

1807

01:50:51,420 --> 01:50:54,450

and all these things.

1808

01:50:54,450 --> 01:50:59,320

And so it suddenly became a--

1809

01:50:59,320 --> 01:51:05,540

then of course
[INAUDIBLE] office

1810

01:51:05,540 --> 01:51:10,420

in the camp with
a lieutenant, who

1811

01:51:10,420 --> 01:51:17,350

was sort of allocated to look
after the prisoner of war side.

1812
01:51:17,350 --> 01:51:22,020
But he was-- you know,
he didn't like that I

1813
01:51:22,020 --> 01:51:25,090
had my desk in his office.

1814
01:51:25,090 --> 01:51:31,720
But most of the time
he was away, anyway.

1815
01:51:31,720 --> 01:51:36,530
So that worked out--

1816
01:51:36,530 --> 01:51:37,810
British lieutenant, right?

1817
01:51:37,810 --> 01:51:40,930
A British lieutenant, yeah.

1818
01:51:40,930 --> 01:51:41,540
Yeah.

1819
01:51:41,540 --> 01:51:44,090
So just Major Gibson, basically.

1820
01:51:44,090 --> 01:51:48,170
Then there was a captain
Wallace, I think,

1821
01:51:48,170 --> 01:51:53,210
who was in charge of the British
side and the technical side,

1822
01:51:53,210 --> 01:52:01,550
and this young lieutenant who
was the administration and then

1823
01:52:01,550 --> 01:52:03,380

the Germans.

1824
01:52:03,380 --> 01:52:05,240
But between us--

1825
01:52:05,240 --> 01:52:09,510
I mean, the Major Gibson
only dealt with me directly.

1826
01:52:09,510 --> 01:52:16,670
I didn't sort of say
to the other one.

1827
01:52:16,670 --> 01:52:18,780
And in fact, he took me--

1828
01:52:18,780 --> 01:52:23,550
he said, look, when I go out
to one of the-- to inspect

1829
01:52:23,550 --> 01:52:29,760
these sites, would you like
to come with me and I'll show

1830
01:52:29,760 --> 01:52:31,350
you a bit of London?

1831
01:52:31,350 --> 01:52:35,680
So he did that in
his own private car.

1832
01:52:35,680 --> 01:52:39,630
He didn't even have
an official car.

1833
01:52:39,630 --> 01:52:41,690
He wasn't a regular soldier.

1834
01:52:41,690 --> 01:52:47,510
He was a-- call it a building--

1835
01:52:47,510 --> 01:52:49,580

Was he reserve?

1836
01:52:49,580 --> 01:52:51,140
Yeah, he was a reserve.

1837
01:52:51,140 --> 01:52:54,750
And I think he was only
a major because of his--

1838
01:52:54,750 --> 01:52:58,010
the position he
was holding, not--

1839
01:52:58,010 --> 01:52:58,510
anyway.

1840
01:52:58,510 --> 01:53:01,620

1841
01:53:01,620 --> 01:53:05,740
And I remember the first
time he took me along.

1842
01:53:05,740 --> 01:53:09,940
We went along the River
Thames from Fulham to--

1843
01:53:09,940 --> 01:53:12,850

1844
01:53:12,850 --> 01:53:16,820
towards Westminster--
past Westminster.

1845
01:53:16,820 --> 01:53:18,900
Then we got to the--

1846
01:53:18,900 --> 01:53:25,900

1847
01:53:25,900 --> 01:53:28,960
what's the big church?

1848
01:53:28,960 --> 01:53:30,490
St Paul's Cathedral?

1849
01:53:30,490 --> 01:53:32,020
St Paul's Cathedral.

1850
01:53:32,020 --> 01:53:36,330
And then sort of in front of St
Paul's Cathedral, he stopped.

1851
01:53:36,330 --> 01:53:38,280
And he said, now look.

1852
01:53:38,280 --> 01:53:43,610
Here the bomb went through
the back of the church.

1853
01:53:43,610 --> 01:53:46,950
And it was right
by the main altar,

1854
01:53:46,950 --> 01:53:50,460
right behind the main altar.

1855
01:53:50,460 --> 01:53:53,580
It didn't explode.

1856
01:53:53,580 --> 01:53:56,690
And we diffused it.

1857
01:53:56,690 --> 01:53:57,735
Very proud.

1858
01:53:57,735 --> 01:54:02,460

1859
01:54:02,460 --> 01:54:04,230
So how long did this last?

1860
01:54:04,230 --> 01:54:06,300

I'm sorry to interrupt you.

1861
01:54:06,300 --> 01:54:08,700
But this situation
that you were--

1862
01:54:08,700 --> 01:54:11,457
that the prisoners were
defusing the bombs,

1863
01:54:11,457 --> 01:54:12,540
that you were the leader--

1864
01:54:12,540 --> 01:54:14,520
No, we weren't
diffusing the bombs.

1865
01:54:14,520 --> 01:54:18,570
I mean, it will always have
to be a British officer.

1866
01:54:18,570 --> 01:54:20,670
I mean--

1867
01:54:20,670 --> 01:54:25,110
I meant involved in the
diffusion of the bombs that--

1868
01:54:25,110 --> 01:54:28,740
For the rest of our prisoner
of war period, which

1869
01:54:28,740 --> 01:54:32,430
we were released in June 1948.

1870
01:54:32,430 --> 01:54:38,380
So it was a number of
years, in other words.

1871
01:54:38,380 --> 01:54:39,660
This was--

1872

01:54:39,660 --> 01:54:40,991
A couple of years, yeah.

1873
01:54:40,991 --> 01:54:43,937

1874
01:54:43,937 --> 01:54:46,400
OK.

1875
01:54:46,400 --> 01:54:47,500
Yes.

1876
01:54:47,500 --> 01:54:50,790
Oh, that's Rivkeh
unpacking something.

1877
01:54:50,790 --> 01:54:53,544
Wow, that you can hear that.

1878
01:54:53,544 --> 01:54:55,954
[INAUDIBLE]

1879
01:54:55,954 --> 01:55:01,440

1880
01:55:01,440 --> 01:55:09,170
It was-- yeah.

1881
01:55:09,170 --> 01:55:12,690
I have some notes here.

1882
01:55:12,690 --> 01:55:18,070
And I don't know whether or
not these say anything to you.

1883
01:55:18,070 --> 01:55:24,100
But a Doctor [PERSONAL NAME],,
a Wandsworth parish priest--

1884
01:55:24,100 --> 01:55:25,835
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1885

01:55:25,835 --> 01:55:29,390

Can you tell me
about these things?

1886

01:55:29,390 --> 01:55:38,080

Doctor [NON-ENGLISH] is a guy
at the foreign office who issued

1887

01:55:38,080 --> 01:55:44,970

the weekly [GERMAN] newspaper,
and with whom I also--

1888

01:55:44,970 --> 01:55:49,160

we did some recordings
for the BBC together.

1889

01:55:49,160 --> 01:55:55,640

And they had-- I
sort of talked to you

1890

01:55:55,640 --> 01:55:57,270

and I was friendly with him.

1891

01:55:57,270 --> 01:56:01,060

And his son had been to the
London School of Economics

1892

01:56:01,060 --> 01:56:02,740

and graduated there.

1893

01:56:02,740 --> 01:56:08,330

He now was in Saudi Arabia
in some oil company, busy.

1894

01:56:08,330 --> 01:56:11,560

1895

01:56:11,560 --> 01:56:14,460

And he said, well, why
don't you study here?

1896

01:56:14,460 --> 01:56:20,120

And so I went to
the LCC and said,

1897
01:56:20,120 --> 01:56:22,100
can I do [? my trick ?] here?

1898
01:56:22,100 --> 01:56:23,180
They said yes.

1899
01:56:23,180 --> 01:56:24,440
Why not?

1900
01:56:24,440 --> 01:56:25,610
OK, now excuse me.

1901
01:56:25,610 --> 01:56:28,410
I mention these things
but I am confused.

1902
01:56:28,410 --> 01:56:31,940
Dr. [PERSONAL NAME] was the
editor of the [GERMAN] post.

1903
01:56:31,940 --> 01:56:33,670
And you mentioned
[GERMAN] post before.

1904
01:56:33,670 --> 01:56:36,520

1905
01:56:36,520 --> 01:56:41,540
He was from Berlin, a Jewish
guy from Berlin who escaped--

1906
01:56:41,540 --> 01:56:48,390
not a religious guy in any
way, but an intellectual.

1907
01:56:48,390 --> 01:56:54,120
And he and his wife
were living in London.

1908

01:56:54,120 --> 01:56:56,790
But their only son
had already graduated

1909
01:56:56,790 --> 01:57:00,890
and was in Saudi
Arabia now, working.

1910
01:57:00,890 --> 01:57:04,770
And when did your
paths cross with his?

1911
01:57:04,770 --> 01:57:06,090
At what point?

1912
01:57:06,090 --> 01:57:07,230
Almost at once.

1913
01:57:07,230 --> 01:57:11,630
I mean, we were the one
prisoner of war camp

1914
01:57:11,630 --> 01:57:16,730
which was sort of just at
the back of the war office.

1915
01:57:16,730 --> 01:57:24,980
So a lot of guys who wanted to
know about the prisoner of war

1916
01:57:24,980 --> 01:57:31,800
situation who came
to the war office

1917
01:57:31,800 --> 01:57:38,720
were taken along to
this Fulham place.

1918
01:57:38,720 --> 01:57:42,010
And I guess it
was easy to get to

1919
01:57:42,010 --> 01:57:45,220

and it looked a bit better
than most other places

1920
01:57:45,220 --> 01:57:47,800
because if you had
the sort of job

1921
01:57:47,800 --> 01:57:54,170
to a certain extent right
on the spot [INAUDIBLE]..

1922
01:57:54,170 --> 01:57:55,970
Now I'm confused again.

1923
01:57:55,970 --> 01:57:58,550

1924
01:57:58,550 --> 01:58:00,650
Greenford was one kind of camp.

1925
01:58:00,650 --> 01:58:02,180
You didn't stay there long.

1926
01:58:02,180 --> 01:58:03,530
You were moved to Fulham.

1927
01:58:03,530 --> 01:58:04,710
Is that correct?

1928
01:58:04,710 --> 01:58:05,210
No, no.

1929
01:58:05,210 --> 01:58:06,410
That's the same thing.

1930
01:58:06,410 --> 01:58:09,190
Fulham is-- Greenford
is part of Fulham.

1931
01:58:09,190 --> 01:58:11,500
It's just an
extension of Fulham.

1932
01:58:11,500 --> 01:58:13,950
OK, so it's the same camp.

1933
01:58:13,950 --> 01:58:16,880
And it is, you said, right
behind the war office.

1934
01:58:16,880 --> 01:58:20,190
That means physically across
the street or behind it?

1935
01:58:20,190 --> 01:58:23,140
Not as much as that,
but down the road.

1936
01:58:23,140 --> 01:58:28,010
Down Fulham Road, basically,
from the war office.

1937
01:58:28,010 --> 01:58:34,720
And I mean, it's much closer
than any other camp would be.

1938
01:58:34,720 --> 01:58:38,300
And it's right in this
city, so obviously it

1939
01:58:38,300 --> 01:58:43,190
was an easy kind
of place to pick.

1940
01:58:43,190 --> 01:58:47,300
The Red Cross would come to
us to see what was going on

1941
01:58:47,300 --> 01:58:52,460
rather than go out there
somewhere into the suburbs

1942
01:58:52,460 --> 01:58:55,400
to see another camp.

1943

01:58:55,400 --> 01:59:05,300

So we were very much
in the open there.

1944

01:59:05,300 --> 01:59:07,270

OK.

1945

01:59:07,270 --> 01:59:11,060

So geographically, you're
in a convenient place

1946

01:59:11,060 --> 01:59:14,480

for either war office
officials or for someone

1947

01:59:14,480 --> 01:59:17,420

like Dr. [PERSONAL NAME]
to come and to visit

1948

01:59:17,420 --> 01:59:18,800

and to get to know you.

1949

01:59:18,800 --> 01:59:20,810

What else made the
camp special, though?

1950

01:59:20,810 --> 01:59:22,790

You give a sense that it was a--

1951

01:59:22,790 --> 01:59:24,875

there was something
special about this camp.

1952

01:59:24,875 --> 01:59:27,380

1953

01:59:27,380 --> 01:59:28,460

Was it the set up?

1954

01:59:28,460 --> 01:59:29,180

Was it the--

1955

01:59:29,180 --> 01:59:30,620
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1956

01:59:30,620 --> 01:59:33,620
--pump disposal work, of
course, made it special.

1957

01:59:33,620 --> 01:59:36,710

1958

01:59:36,710 --> 01:59:39,480
I mean, otherwise,
obviously that here

1959

01:59:39,480 --> 01:59:43,100
was a youngster, actually,
the camp leader against--

1960

01:59:43,100 --> 01:59:48,080
which was strictly according
to the Geneva Convention

1961

01:59:48,080 --> 01:59:52,580
and that kind of thing.

1962

01:59:52,580 --> 01:59:55,840
So you get to know Dr.
[PERSONAL NAME] while you

1963

01:59:55,840 --> 02:00:01,480
are also fulfilling whatever
duties you have as camp leader

1964

02:00:01,480 --> 02:00:06,220
for this bomb disposal activity
that the prisoners are involved

1965

02:00:06,220 --> 02:00:10,660
with alongside the
British officers who

1966

02:00:10,660 --> 02:00:12,190

actually do the diffusion.

1967
02:00:12,190 --> 02:00:14,980
I'm just trying to
place it in context.

1968
02:00:14,980 --> 02:00:17,590
Can I sort of fill you in?

1969
02:00:17,590 --> 02:00:18,280
Yes, please.

1970
02:00:18,280 --> 02:00:19,113
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1971
02:00:19,113 --> 02:00:23,410
--as a camp leader
basically was high action

1972
02:00:23,410 --> 02:00:27,190
early in the
morning as the teams

1973
02:00:27,190 --> 02:00:31,060
were leaving for
their different sites.

1974
02:00:31,060 --> 02:00:35,190
And again, in the evening,
after they all came back.

1975
02:00:35,190 --> 02:00:43,730
So that between 7 o'clock
when they usually--

1976
02:00:43,730 --> 02:00:48,170
well, it's been 7
and 8, some teams.

1977
02:00:48,170 --> 02:00:50,960
There were about
10 different teams

1978

02:00:50,960 --> 02:00:55,220

that were working on 10
different sites somewhere

1979

02:00:55,220 --> 02:01:01,340

in London, East London were
there these bomb sites.

1980

02:01:01,340 --> 02:01:07,910

And so as far as my camp
leader work was concerned,

1981

02:01:07,910 --> 02:01:11,960

the daily kind of work
was an enormous amount

1982

02:01:11,960 --> 02:01:17,790

while they were going out, any
kind of problems, and so on.

1983

02:01:17,790 --> 02:01:22,940

And when they came back at
6 o'clock, any more problems

1984

02:01:22,940 --> 02:01:25,130

or issues.

1985

02:01:25,130 --> 02:01:28,470

But in between, of
course, in particular,

1986

02:01:28,470 --> 02:01:31,730

to begin with, our drivers--

1987

02:01:31,730 --> 02:01:36,520

German drivers straight
in the big city traffic,

1988

02:01:36,520 --> 02:01:39,260

you know, all the tramways
still in the middle

1989

02:01:39,260 --> 02:01:42,650
of the road, things that
they weren't used to.

1990
02:01:42,650 --> 02:01:45,380
We had quite a bit of
damage occasionally

1991
02:01:45,380 --> 02:01:47,410
with their trucks hitting--

1992
02:01:47,410 --> 02:01:48,840
brushing something.

1993
02:01:48,840 --> 02:01:52,830
And then in some cases,
there was a court case.

1994
02:01:52,830 --> 02:01:57,560
So I had to go as an interpreter
at the court for this traffic

1995
02:01:57,560 --> 02:02:00,280
issue to be dealt with.

1996
02:02:00,280 --> 02:02:02,660
It was quite a busy time.

1997
02:02:02,660 --> 02:02:05,960
But particularly
once it settled down,

1998
02:02:05,960 --> 02:02:11,880
basically I had
plenty of spare time

1999
02:02:11,880 --> 02:02:15,920
during the middle of the
day between the morning

2000
02:02:15,920 --> 02:02:18,310
and the afternoon.

2001

02:02:18,310 --> 02:02:22,850

And so I started this idea--

2002

02:02:22,850 --> 02:02:24,030

well, I wrote--

2003

02:02:24,030 --> 02:02:26,960

I mean, Dr. [PERSONAL NAME]

wrote some articles.

2004

02:02:26,960 --> 02:02:31,150

But he said, well, you
know, you can do more.

2005

02:02:31,150 --> 02:02:37,010

Why can't you-- and that to
me seemed a wonderful idea.

2006

02:02:37,010 --> 02:02:43,610

So I entered from a trick.

2007

02:02:43,610 --> 02:02:45,170

Now-- excuse me.

2008

02:02:45,170 --> 02:02:49,650

When he says you can do
more, what did that mean?

2009

02:02:49,650 --> 02:02:51,110

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2010

02:02:51,110 --> 02:02:51,875

Educate myself.

2011

02:02:51,875 --> 02:02:54,510

2012

02:02:54,510 --> 02:02:55,010

Ah.

2013

02:02:55,010 --> 02:02:55,510

OK.

2014

02:02:55,510 --> 02:02:58,510

So continue a formal
education of some kind?

2015

02:02:58,510 --> 02:02:59,300

Yeah.

2016

02:02:59,300 --> 02:03:02,840

Again the London County Council
had no objection to treat

2017

02:03:02,840 --> 02:03:05,240

[INAUDIBLE] as a
German prisoner of war

2018

02:03:05,240 --> 02:03:09,410

wanted to sit in their exams.

2019

02:03:09,410 --> 02:03:11,180

I mean, they would give me the--

2020

02:03:11,180 --> 02:03:13,610

if I passed, they would
give me their certificate,

2021

02:03:13,610 --> 02:03:15,805

which they did.

2022

02:03:15,805 --> 02:03:16,990

But then they--

2023

02:03:16,990 --> 02:03:22,040

Doctor [PERSONAL NAME] said, if
some went to the London School

2024

02:03:22,040 --> 02:03:25,940

of Economics, and they were--

2025

02:03:25,940 --> 02:03:30,830

that was good quite a good

international high school.

2026

02:03:30,830 --> 02:03:34,460

It was still on a
separate University then.

2027

02:03:34,460 --> 02:03:39,185

It was part of the London
University College.

2028

02:03:39,185 --> 02:03:42,260

2029

02:03:42,260 --> 02:03:44,610

Why don't you apply for that?

2030

02:03:44,610 --> 02:03:49,700

So hoping that I
would get my matric.

2031

02:03:49,700 --> 02:03:57,260

I applied to the LLC, and
sure enough, they said,

2032

02:03:57,260 --> 02:04:00,850

you can sit for the examination.

2033

02:04:00,850 --> 02:04:04,940

But we expect you to be in
civilian clothes, just the same

2034

02:04:04,940 --> 02:04:08,910

as the London County Council
said, you can come to the exam,

2035

02:04:08,910 --> 02:04:13,190

but not as a prisoner
of war, as a civilian.

2036

02:04:13,190 --> 02:04:19,360

By that time I had also
my outside position.

2037
02:04:19,360 --> 02:04:20,930
And--

2038
02:04:20,930 --> 02:04:23,030
What does that mean,
outside position?

2039
02:04:23,030 --> 02:04:35,130
Well, my English friends,
civilian friends, who could--

2040
02:04:35,130 --> 02:04:42,330
then I had my civilian suit
and would change and then

2041
02:04:42,330 --> 02:04:44,680
go to these exams.

2042
02:04:44,680 --> 02:04:47,490
You know, that's--

2043
02:04:47,490 --> 02:04:51,240
It's just unusual to hear
that a prisoner of war

2044
02:04:51,240 --> 02:04:54,010
could attend University
while he is--

2045
02:04:54,010 --> 02:04:54,930
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2046
02:04:54,930 --> 02:04:57,270
I was amazed.

2047
02:04:57,270 --> 02:05:02,220
But of course, I jumped
at it, at the opportunity.

2048
02:05:02,220 --> 02:05:04,460
And--

2049

02:05:04,460 --> 02:05:05,620

Another question.

2050

02:05:05,620 --> 02:05:09,920

OK, say what you wanted to say,
then I have another question.

2051

02:05:09,920 --> 02:05:11,800

I don't know what
I wanted to say.

2052

02:05:11,800 --> 02:05:13,580

[INAUDIBLE] question then.

2053

02:05:13,580 --> 02:05:14,450

Sorry.

2054

02:05:14,450 --> 02:05:15,590

Sorry about that.

2055

02:05:15,590 --> 02:05:19,910

So Dr. [PERSONAL NAME] sounds
like somewhat of a mentor,

2056

02:05:19,910 --> 02:05:20,610

not just--

2057

02:05:20,610 --> 02:05:21,480

Yeah.

2058

02:05:21,480 --> 02:05:22,700

Sure.

2059

02:05:22,700 --> 02:05:25,100

And did you get to know him?

2060

02:05:25,100 --> 02:05:27,150

Did he get to know you?

2061

02:05:27,150 --> 02:05:28,370

Yes.

2062
02:05:28,370 --> 02:05:31,270
I mean, as I say,
we met socially.

2063
02:05:31,270 --> 02:05:37,750
I came to his flat during the
weekend and that kind of thing.

2064
02:05:37,750 --> 02:05:40,880
And this is, as I said,
we did some recordings

2065
02:05:40,880 --> 02:05:43,670
together for the BBC at--

2066
02:05:43,670 --> 02:05:48,720

2067
02:05:48,720 --> 02:05:54,010
so but he had a biography
that was so different.

2068
02:05:54,010 --> 02:05:56,490
And when you say
he was someone who

2069
02:05:56,490 --> 02:05:59,090
was Jewish who is
an intellectual who

2070
02:05:59,090 --> 02:06:03,870
had escaped Berlin, did he ever
share his biography with you?

2071
02:06:03,870 --> 02:06:05,040
Did he ever tell you--

2072
02:06:05,040 --> 02:06:06,920
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2073
02:06:06,920 --> 02:06:08,170

He never seriously did.

2074

02:06:08,170 --> 02:06:11,130

And I never asked him, either.

2075

02:06:11,130 --> 02:06:13,440

I mean, he just
escaped from Berlin.

2076

02:06:13,440 --> 02:06:16,050

But that that's
all I knew in time

2077

02:06:16,050 --> 02:06:23,670

before the Nazis
became impossible.

2078

02:06:23,670 --> 02:06:25,280

OK.

2079

02:06:25,280 --> 02:06:29,450

Was he the-- I mean, were there
other Jewish people or other

2080

02:06:29,450 --> 02:06:33,080

German Jews that you met
living in London, or was he,

2081

02:06:33,080 --> 02:06:35,070

let's say, the first--

2082

02:06:35,070 --> 02:06:35,770

Oh, yes.

2083

02:06:35,770 --> 02:06:38,890

2084

02:06:38,890 --> 02:06:44,230

I mean, there was, of course,
the parson who came from once

2085

02:06:44,230 --> 02:06:49,820

was-- he was the parson-- the
parish parsons in Wandsworth

2086
02:06:49,820 --> 02:06:54,650
And he came and he said
he would like to give us.

2087
02:06:54,650 --> 02:06:59,700
And he was an ex judge
from Saxony, Jewish guy.

2088
02:06:59,700 --> 02:07:05,790
And from Saxony.

2089
02:07:05,790 --> 02:07:13,500
And Chief Justice or high court
justice from Saxony that--

2090
02:07:13,500 --> 02:07:17,220
we tried it, but
our guys weren't--

2091
02:07:17,220 --> 02:07:24,630
I mean, he was too formal
and official as a--

2092
02:07:24,630 --> 02:07:30,210
talking to our people
about the religion.

2093
02:07:30,210 --> 02:07:31,260
They didn't cotton on.

2094
02:07:31,260 --> 02:07:33,870
So it faded out.

2095
02:07:33,870 --> 02:07:38,900
But I got very friendly
with her in particular.

2096
02:07:38,900 --> 02:07:41,190
I mean, they were
a lonely couple

2097
02:07:41,190 --> 02:07:43,890
and you know, that [INAUDIBLE].

2098
02:07:43,890 --> 02:07:47,430

2099
02:07:47,430 --> 02:07:49,200
So they had converted?

2100
02:07:49,200 --> 02:07:53,100
They had converted
to Christianity?

2101
02:07:53,100 --> 02:07:53,760
Yeah.

2102
02:07:53,760 --> 02:07:57,600
I don't know whether
they were ever--

2103
02:07:57,600 --> 02:08:05,820
ever had been, shall we say,
had proper Jewish beliefs.

2104
02:08:05,820 --> 02:08:06,990
They may have been--

2105
02:08:06,990 --> 02:08:11,940
I mean, he obviously
was a highly educated

2106
02:08:11,940 --> 02:08:16,050
German individual.

2107
02:08:16,050 --> 02:08:20,160
And a lot of these people don't
practice religion seriously

2108
02:08:20,160 --> 02:08:21,600
any more.

2109

02:08:21,600 --> 02:08:23,010

I don't-- no.

2110

02:08:23,010 --> 02:08:27,120

Again, it was one of
those sensitive topics

2111

02:08:27,120 --> 02:08:32,250

that you don't sort of
question too much about.

2112

02:08:32,250 --> 02:08:34,070

So that means that--

2113

02:08:34,070 --> 02:08:35,450

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2114

02:08:35,450 --> 02:08:38,860

He was a Church of
England chaplain there.

2115

02:08:38,860 --> 02:08:43,960

And I mean, how he got
there, I don't know.

2116

02:08:43,960 --> 02:08:44,460

OK.

2117

02:08:44,460 --> 02:08:48,750

So a question that I think would
be acceptable today to ask him

2118

02:08:48,750 --> 02:08:53,190

how do you go from being a
secular Jewish person who

2119

02:08:53,190 --> 02:08:58,320

holds a judicial position
as a high judge in Saxony

2120

02:08:58,320 --> 02:09:01,410

to being a parish

priest in Wandsworth

2121
02:09:01,410 --> 02:09:03,630
of Church of England,
I mean that does--

2122
02:09:03,630 --> 02:09:05,620
there is a transformation.

2123
02:09:05,620 --> 02:09:07,650
And it's one that we
could talk about today,

2124
02:09:07,650 --> 02:09:12,510
but was not polite
to bring up then.

2125
02:09:12,510 --> 02:09:13,860
Is that the issue?

2126
02:09:13,860 --> 02:09:17,670

2127
02:09:17,670 --> 02:09:21,420
I mean, as far as I'm concerned,
it was something marvelous,

2128
02:09:21,420 --> 02:09:25,770
how he could have managed that.

2129
02:09:25,770 --> 02:09:28,950
I didn't have the impression
that he was really

2130
02:09:28,950 --> 02:09:31,090
very happy with it.

2131
02:09:31,090 --> 02:09:32,490
And that was part
of the problem,

2132
02:09:32,490 --> 02:09:35,640

I think, when he gave--

2133
02:09:35,640 --> 02:09:41,070
he wanted to give these two
instructions or services

2134
02:09:41,070 --> 02:09:46,850
to fellow prisoners of war.

2135
02:09:46,850 --> 02:09:48,510
You know, he was too--

2136
02:09:48,510 --> 02:09:50,940
I don't know, too cold.

2137
02:09:50,940 --> 02:09:53,220
Maybe he was
legalistic about it.

2138
02:09:53,220 --> 02:09:55,180
He was legalistic about it.

2139
02:09:55,180 --> 02:09:58,350
And that was the
last thing that they

2140
02:09:58,350 --> 02:10:02,610
could really sort of accept.

2141
02:10:02,610 --> 02:10:05,580
Did you, amongst
any of this when

2142
02:10:05,580 --> 02:10:09,060
you become a prisoner of war,
from the very beginning to,

2143
02:10:09,060 --> 02:10:13,140
let's say, this point,
did you ever encounter

2144
02:10:13,140 --> 02:10:18,230

anti-Semitism within your
fellow prisoners of war,

2145
02:10:18,230 --> 02:10:23,780
meaning did you ever
hear them say things that

2146
02:10:23,780 --> 02:10:27,860
were derogatory, things
that echoed the Nazi party

2147
02:10:27,860 --> 02:10:34,940
line, even if they may not have
been exactly Nazis, et cetera?

2148
02:10:34,940 --> 02:10:40,640
I think there was always a sort
of background of that, yes,

2149
02:10:40,640 --> 02:10:44,120
which was so typical of
the German situation.

2150
02:10:44,120 --> 02:10:51,800
I know a strange situation,
too, that a kind of something,

2151
02:10:51,800 --> 02:10:53,890
you know.

2152
02:10:53,890 --> 02:10:57,430
Was it expressed
or not expressed?

2153
02:10:57,430 --> 02:10:59,620
By and large, it
wasn't expressed.

2154
02:10:59,620 --> 02:11:07,370
But you know, I grew up
with that kind of situation.

2155
02:11:07,370 --> 02:11:08,890

And I knew it.

2156
02:11:08,890 --> 02:11:11,980
Maybe I've felt it a bit more.

2157
02:11:11,980 --> 02:11:17,080
And I was trying to do something
about it, particularly after I

2158
02:11:17,080 --> 02:11:23,050
read all the newspaper stories
in the Belgian camp, you know.

2159
02:11:23,050 --> 02:11:30,520
I felt that there was
something to do about it,

2160
02:11:30,520 --> 02:11:35,530
not just to sort of
say, oh well, yes.

2161
02:11:35,530 --> 02:11:38,095
How did that take
expression for you?

2162
02:11:38,095 --> 02:11:41,440
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2163
02:11:41,440 --> 02:11:45,880
It was a kind of
feeling, an undercurrent

2164
02:11:45,880 --> 02:11:47,950
that I was looking for--

2165
02:11:47,950 --> 02:11:52,260
I mean, for instance, the fact
that I had a good contact with

2166
02:11:52,260 --> 02:11:57,120
Dr. [PERSONAL NAME]
and also Doctor--

2167
02:11:57,120 --> 02:12:00,320

2168
02:12:00,320 --> 02:12:03,400
the priest, the parish priest.

2169
02:12:03,400 --> 02:12:11,560
That made me sort of
honored that I would have--

2170
02:12:11,560 --> 02:12:19,480
that I could, in some way,
respond positively to this gap.

2171
02:12:19,480 --> 02:12:28,190
And to my upbringing, which
was fundamentally anti-Semitic.

2172
02:12:28,190 --> 02:12:30,730

2173
02:12:30,730 --> 02:12:32,710
Is that hard to say?

2174
02:12:32,710 --> 02:12:33,930
What?

2175
02:12:33,930 --> 02:12:38,040
Is that hard to say, that my
upbringing was fundamentally

2176
02:12:38,040 --> 02:12:40,020
anti-Semitic?

2177
02:12:40,020 --> 02:12:42,360
Well, it was and it wasn't.

2178
02:12:42,360 --> 02:12:45,050
I mean, it's typically--

2179
02:12:45,050 --> 02:12:47,250

I mean, [? Baby ?]
[? Schmidt, ?] for instance,

2180
02:12:47,250 --> 02:12:51,504
who was a great
friend of the family,

2181
02:12:51,504 --> 02:12:53,990
who everybody knew about.

2182
02:12:53,990 --> 02:12:56,940
The family knew
that she was Jewish,

2183
02:12:56,940 --> 02:12:58,500
made no difference at all.

2184
02:12:58,500 --> 02:12:59,865
She was totally accepted.

2185
02:12:59,865 --> 02:13:02,880

2186
02:13:02,880 --> 02:13:10,830
The guy with the egg buyer
with his caftan and his thing

2187
02:13:10,830 --> 02:13:12,420
wasn't accepted.

2188
02:13:12,420 --> 02:13:17,460
And of course, he treated
that, as well, in the process.

2189
02:13:17,460 --> 02:13:19,565
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

2190
02:13:19,565 --> 02:13:22,260
--didn't have any--

2191
02:13:22,260 --> 02:13:25,380
I mean, that had its--

2192
02:13:25,380 --> 02:13:27,630
he shouted at him
and chased him away.

2193
02:13:27,630 --> 02:13:33,030
He didn't actually search him
or do anything or send him

2194
02:13:33,030 --> 02:13:34,860
to police or anything like that.

2195
02:13:34,860 --> 02:13:38,460
But he was obviously
upset that the guy

2196
02:13:38,460 --> 02:13:44,400
had so easily conned him.

2197
02:13:44,400 --> 02:13:47,220
Were you referring to the
incident when you're still

2198
02:13:47,220 --> 02:13:52,140
a little boy in
[PLACE NAME] and it

2199
02:13:52,140 --> 02:13:55,530
is an issue of the gentleman
wanting to buy eggs

2200
02:13:55,530 --> 02:13:58,410
and he doesn't have enough
money for all of them

2201
02:13:58,410 --> 02:14:00,420
and didn't let your father know?

2202
02:14:00,420 --> 02:14:03,290
But this is way back, way
back we're talking about?

2203

02:14:03,290 --> 02:14:04,290
It is way back, yeah.

2204
02:14:04,290 --> 02:14:08,010
But I mean, it was one of
those kind of situations.

2205
02:14:08,010 --> 02:14:10,500
I mean, he may well
have had all the money.

2206
02:14:10,500 --> 02:14:13,890
But he just said, nobody knows.

2207
02:14:13,890 --> 02:14:18,060
But that didn't accept it
his words, so to speak,

2208
02:14:18,060 --> 02:14:20,550
and was upset about it
the way it was said.

2209
02:14:20,550 --> 02:14:23,540

2210
02:14:23,540 --> 02:14:25,100
OK.

2211
02:14:25,100 --> 02:14:29,060
Do you remember the name of
the parish priest in Wandsworth

2212
02:14:29,060 --> 02:14:33,150
who had been once
the judge in Saxony?

2213
02:14:33,150 --> 02:14:33,650
Yes.

2214
02:14:33,650 --> 02:14:37,930

2215

02:14:37,930 --> 02:14:40,460

I'm sorry.

2216

02:14:40,460 --> 02:14:42,350

Maybe it will come to you later.

2217

02:14:42,350 --> 02:14:44,015

Maybe it will come to you later.

2218

02:14:44,015 --> 02:14:46,740

It wasn't a very Jewish name.

2219

02:14:46,740 --> 02:14:47,840

I know it was--

2220

02:14:47,840 --> 02:14:56,690

it ended with H-O-N.

It was something

2221

02:14:56,690 --> 02:15:01,160

Robinson-- not Robinson,
but something similar.

2222

02:15:01,160 --> 02:15:01,910

OK.

2223

02:15:01,910 --> 02:15:12,590

So his desire to preach
or to provide services

2224

02:15:12,590 --> 02:15:15,780

was not very well accepted
amongst the other prisoners.

2225

02:15:15,780 --> 02:15:20,420

It just didn't get any
sufficient attendance

2226

02:15:20,420 --> 02:15:21,980

to his meeting.

2227

02:15:21,980 --> 02:15:25,880

So we just sort of faded out.

2228
02:15:25,880 --> 02:15:26,870
OK.

2229
02:15:26,870 --> 02:15:30,430
But we had some--

2230
02:15:30,430 --> 02:15:32,420
can I interrupt for a moment?

2231
02:15:32,420 --> 02:15:33,910
Of course.

2232
02:15:33,910 --> 02:15:35,180
Thank you.

2233
02:15:35,180 --> 02:15:36,790
Of course.

2234
02:15:36,790 --> 02:15:38,230
Just a minute.

2235
02:15:38,230 --> 02:15:39,810
Sure.

2236
02:15:39,810 --> 02:15:52,000