

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,830

2
00:00:06,830 --> 00:00:09,680
This is a United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3
00:00:09,680 --> 00:00:12,560
oral history interview
with Milton Shurr.

4
00:00:12,560 --> 00:00:14,390
Jason DeRose, interviewer.

5
00:00:14,390 --> 00:00:17,730
Today is July 16th, 1996.

6
00:00:17,730 --> 00:00:22,850
This is Tape 1, Side A.
Can I get you to say for me

7
00:00:22,850 --> 00:00:24,790
your name and your
date of birth?

8
00:00:24,790 --> 00:00:26,290
I'm just going to
get a sound check.

9
00:00:26,290 --> 00:00:27,890
Yeah.

10
00:00:27,890 --> 00:00:32,950
I am Milton Shurr, Milton
L Shurr, S-H-U-R-R.

11
00:00:32,950 --> 00:00:40,920
And my date of birth
is January 28th, 1911.

12
00:00:40,920 --> 00:00:41,810

OK.

13

00:00:41,810 --> 00:00:43,610

Can you tell for
me when you first

14

00:00:43,610 --> 00:00:47,300

started to hear about
what was going on

15

00:00:47,300 --> 00:00:50,900

in Europe around the time
of the Second World War,

16

00:00:50,900 --> 00:00:54,070

and when did you really become
aware of what was happening?

17

00:00:54,070 --> 00:00:59,250

18

00:00:59,250 --> 00:01:04,050

In the general press, there
was indications of what

19

00:01:04,050 --> 00:01:05,459

Hitler was doing, and so on.

20

00:01:05,459 --> 00:01:09,420

And being Jewish, probably I
was a little more sensitive

21

00:01:09,420 --> 00:01:12,880

to being concerned about that.

22

00:01:12,880 --> 00:01:16,290

And I recall, from
time to time, we

23

00:01:16,290 --> 00:01:24,660

met some German-Jewish
refugees who had left Germany.

24

00:01:24,660 --> 00:01:26,940
Some were going back again.

25

00:01:26,940 --> 00:01:30,780
And so we got a little bit
of a flavor that things

26

00:01:30,780 --> 00:01:33,930
were becoming difficult.
There some news

27

00:01:33,930 --> 00:01:40,350
of the general press about
the burning of books,

28

00:01:40,350 --> 00:01:44,850
the breaking of store
windows, and things like that.

29

00:01:44,850 --> 00:01:50,480
But this is what the
general population had.

30

00:01:50,480 --> 00:01:54,150
Well, I joined the field
staff of the Council

31

00:01:54,150 --> 00:01:58,140
of Jewish Federations and
Welfare Funds in, I think,

32

00:01:58,140 --> 00:02:00,600
1941.

33

00:02:00,600 --> 00:02:04,950
And my job, after
about three months

34

00:02:04,950 --> 00:02:09,030
orientation in New York
City at their offices,

35

00:02:09,030 --> 00:02:15,180
I then moved out to first
Minneapolis, first Milwaukee

36
00:02:15,180 --> 00:02:18,510
and then Minneapolis,
to get some orientation

37
00:02:18,510 --> 00:02:24,070
from some of the directors of
those particular Jewish Welfare

38
00:02:24,070 --> 00:02:24,570
Funds.

39
00:02:24,570 --> 00:02:32,070

40
00:02:32,070 --> 00:02:34,500
What type of information
were you getting?

41
00:02:34,500 --> 00:02:38,070
Well, how they organized,
how they fundraised and some

42
00:02:38,070 --> 00:02:39,540
of the problems.

43
00:02:39,540 --> 00:02:41,760
The big problem was
always fundraising

44
00:02:41,760 --> 00:02:46,860
there, the budgeting process,
in which money was probably

45
00:02:46,860 --> 00:02:51,720
distributed to
local, national, and

46
00:02:51,720 --> 00:02:54,210
overseas Jewish organizations.

47
00:02:54,210 --> 00:02:56,380
So there was a good
deal of information

48
00:02:56,380 --> 00:03:00,000
that the Council of Jewish
Federations and Welfare Funds

49
00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:02,820
was providing, probably
still provides,

50
00:03:02,820 --> 00:03:07,080
about what was going on
and the various groups that

51
00:03:07,080 --> 00:03:11,610
were being subvented through
the fundraising process.

52
00:03:11,610 --> 00:03:14,430
And I knew a lot about
the whole question

53
00:03:14,430 --> 00:03:16,590
of how to work
within a community,

54
00:03:16,590 --> 00:03:20,870
because I had been doing
that since, oh, 19--

55
00:03:20,870 --> 00:03:27,000

56
00:03:27,000 --> 00:03:28,240
when did I finish Michigan?

57
00:03:28,240 --> 00:03:34,460

58

00:03:34,460 --> 00:03:41,300
Oh, about 19-- let's see.

59
00:03:41,300 --> 00:03:43,150
It was '40.

60
00:03:43,150 --> 00:03:45,070
It would be about '37 or so.

61
00:03:45,070 --> 00:03:48,160

62
00:03:48,160 --> 00:03:51,010
It was the head of the Jewish
Community Council in Omaha,

63
00:03:51,010 --> 00:03:55,380
Nebraska who recommended me to
the Council of Jewish Welfare

64
00:03:55,380 --> 00:03:56,170
Funds.

65
00:03:56,170 --> 00:03:58,860
And the reason was he
felt that my opportunities

66
00:03:58,860 --> 00:04:02,190
in the non-sectarian field were
limited, which they definitely

67
00:04:02,190 --> 00:04:05,140
were at that time.

68
00:04:05,140 --> 00:04:08,920
Well, then there was an opening.

69
00:04:08,920 --> 00:04:12,640
Well, I spent some
time in Omaha arranging

70
00:04:12,640 --> 00:04:17,019

for a regional conference of the
Jewish Federations and Welfare

71
00:04:17,019 --> 00:04:19,300
Funds, which was held.

72
00:04:19,300 --> 00:04:22,380
And then I got tired
of traveling around,

73
00:04:22,380 --> 00:04:32,442
and I had just married in 1941.

74
00:04:32,442 --> 00:04:36,460
The problems are traveling
in the Midwest by bus,

75
00:04:36,460 --> 00:04:39,220
train, and so on,
was pretty enormous.

76
00:04:39,220 --> 00:04:44,020
So at that time, I
looked very favorably

77
00:04:44,020 --> 00:04:47,590
on the possibility of moving
to Oklahoma City as head

78
00:04:47,590 --> 00:04:51,130
of the Jewish Welfare Funds.

79
00:04:51,130 --> 00:04:52,690
Well, my wife and I moved there.

80
00:04:52,690 --> 00:04:55,870
It was a very interesting,
pleasant community.

81
00:04:55,870 --> 00:04:58,480
And there was a
tremendous amount

82

00:04:58,480 --> 00:05:02,230
of overseas information
arriving in the mail that

83

00:05:02,230 --> 00:05:06,940
was sent to all federations
by whatever process.

84

00:05:06,940 --> 00:05:10,360
We learned about GDC, HIAS.

85

00:05:10,360 --> 00:05:15,130
We learned from both the
orthodox side of concern

86

00:05:15,130 --> 00:05:20,830
about problems, as well as
the more conservative areas.

87

00:05:20,830 --> 00:05:24,430
And there was also
news concerning

88

00:05:24,430 --> 00:05:27,670
the camps, people being
moved to camps, and so on.

89

00:05:27,670 --> 00:05:34,150
Of course, even so, you didn't
have the horrible exposition

90

00:05:34,150 --> 00:05:37,930
of problems that we had.

91

00:05:37,930 --> 00:05:41,830
But yes, sure, we were aware
of things going on, probably

92

00:05:41,830 --> 00:05:44,560
more than the general community,
which didn't have access

93

00:05:44,560 --> 00:05:47,230
to such information.

94
00:05:47,230 --> 00:05:51,230
During that particular
time, I raised money.

95
00:05:51,230 --> 00:05:54,410
I directed a campaign and
we were very successful.

96
00:05:54,410 --> 00:05:58,570
I raised about 33%
more monies than they

97
00:05:58,570 --> 00:05:59,890
did the previous year.

98
00:05:59,890 --> 00:06:03,460
And the whole budgeting
process in that community

99
00:06:03,460 --> 00:06:10,080
had been rather a fierce
contest between the reform,

100
00:06:10,080 --> 00:06:12,280
the conservative, and
the orthodox wings

101
00:06:12,280 --> 00:06:15,490
of Jewish community.

102
00:06:15,490 --> 00:06:20,230
Everybody budgeted on the
basis of what was appropriate

103
00:06:20,230 --> 00:06:26,710
and what the consensus was among
the cities in the southwest,

104
00:06:26,710 --> 00:06:30,790
from anywhere from St. Louis,

Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston,

105
00:06:30,790 --> 00:06:32,030
and so forth.

106
00:06:32,030 --> 00:06:36,670
So there was a very good
feeling of community.

107
00:06:36,670 --> 00:06:46,480
We had a few of itinerants,
who mostly were [HEBREW] who

108
00:06:46,480 --> 00:06:51,370
were allegedly raising funds for
various yeshivas in the United

109
00:06:51,370 --> 00:06:54,430
States or Israel.

110
00:06:54,430 --> 00:06:58,990
And part of my experience
was to deal with these people

111
00:06:58,990 --> 00:07:04,930
and try to ascertain if it was
a real deed, and at a minimum,

112
00:07:04,930 --> 00:07:11,020
providing them with bus or train
fare to go to the next town.

113
00:07:11,020 --> 00:07:14,380
And the people were
pretty satisfied with me.

114
00:07:14,380 --> 00:07:15,430
Then I was drafted.

115
00:07:15,430 --> 00:07:19,120

116

00:07:19,120 --> 00:07:24,730
The power sources, the Jewish
power sources in the community,

117
00:07:24,730 --> 00:07:27,430
wanted to keep me in that area.

118
00:07:27,430 --> 00:07:30,160
And they had devised
that, and they

119
00:07:30,160 --> 00:07:32,440
thought they had the
means of doing it

120
00:07:32,440 --> 00:07:35,890
by having my wife take
my place, and they

121
00:07:35,890 --> 00:07:40,840
would keep me at Fort Sill,
Oklahoma at the reception

122
00:07:40,840 --> 00:07:42,370
center.

123
00:07:42,370 --> 00:07:44,620
And that's where I
was for a few months.

124
00:07:44,620 --> 00:07:51,070
Meantime, I had taken the
general army classification

125
00:07:51,070 --> 00:07:56,560
test and qualified
with high enough grades

126
00:07:56,560 --> 00:08:01,690
so I could apply to one of
the various Officer Candidate

127
00:08:01,690 --> 00:08:02,860

Schools.

128
00:08:02,860 --> 00:08:07,780
And meantime, I was
interviewing people,

129
00:08:07,780 --> 00:08:10,390
classifying them as to
which branch of the army

130
00:08:10,390 --> 00:08:12,520
they'd be sent to.

131
00:08:12,520 --> 00:08:14,440
And it was pretty
[? miserable. ?]

132
00:08:14,440 --> 00:08:18,760
I never did basic training and
I was just thrust into that job.

133
00:08:18,760 --> 00:08:23,800

134
00:08:23,800 --> 00:08:28,250
We're talking about the
months of July and August,

135
00:08:28,250 --> 00:08:32,350
and so on, where the
temperature was over 100,

136
00:08:32,350 --> 00:08:35,770
and living in a barracks
with 40 other people.

137
00:08:35,770 --> 00:08:40,600
So it was hardly a
salubrious thing.

138
00:08:40,600 --> 00:08:47,103
Anyhow, then word came
from the main post.

139
00:08:47,103 --> 00:08:48,520
They were looking
for somebody who

140
00:08:48,520 --> 00:08:53,790
could type who could work
for the Army Emergency Relief

141
00:08:53,790 --> 00:08:58,150
in the Public Relations
Office of Fort Sill.

142
00:08:58,150 --> 00:09:00,730
And every time a
student graduated

143
00:09:00,730 --> 00:09:06,280
from one of the field
artillery classes,

144
00:09:06,280 --> 00:09:10,450
a little release was said
to at least two papers

145
00:09:10,450 --> 00:09:12,140
in a small town.

146
00:09:12,140 --> 00:09:15,130
And it was a perfunctory
kind of thing,

147
00:09:15,130 --> 00:09:18,210
it was a nice change, because
I moved to the main post.

148
00:09:18,210 --> 00:09:24,580
I was now in large
concrete barracks,

149
00:09:24,580 --> 00:09:27,790
which are quite comfortable,
and had more space.

150
00:09:27,790 --> 00:09:30,250
It was quieter, a
little [INAUDIBLE]..

151
00:09:30,250 --> 00:09:38,320
And I was with a group of much
more agreeable individuals.

152
00:09:38,320 --> 00:09:40,270
They were all college men.

153
00:09:40,270 --> 00:09:43,780
We had our first lieutenant who
was in charge of our group, who

154
00:09:43,780 --> 00:09:46,810
was a former newspaper man.

155
00:09:46,810 --> 00:09:50,110
So it was a highly
professional program.

156
00:09:50,110 --> 00:09:54,370
Then some months later,
a short time later,

157
00:09:54,370 --> 00:09:57,760
one of these corporals, who
was in charge of Army Emergency

158
00:09:57,760 --> 00:10:03,350
Relief, couldn't keep
his record straight,

159
00:10:03,350 --> 00:10:05,200
and so I was asked
to take over it.

160
00:10:05,200 --> 00:10:08,650
Immediately I was
promoted to be a corporal.

161

00:10:08,650 --> 00:10:10,870

One of the things

I did immediately

162

00:10:10,870 --> 00:10:15,430

is to meet-- one of the

problems, of course,

163

00:10:15,430 --> 00:10:18,790

there are many,

many young couples

164

00:10:18,790 --> 00:10:23,410

who had difficulty getting

along on the Army salaries.

165

00:10:23,410 --> 00:10:26,790

And wives were stranded

at home or they

166

00:10:26,790 --> 00:10:30,690

were stranded in nearby town.

167

00:10:30,690 --> 00:10:36,940

The costs were very,

very high for people

168

00:10:36,940 --> 00:10:38,530

who were listed personnel.

169

00:10:38,530 --> 00:10:41,650

170

00:10:41,650 --> 00:10:43,360

For the ranks, it was

pretty tough going.

171

00:10:43,360 --> 00:10:46,400

172

00:10:46,400 --> 00:10:49,960

Well, I immediately

contacted the Red Cross

173
00:10:49,960 --> 00:10:52,840
and I asked them
to investigate some

174
00:10:52,840 --> 00:10:57,520
of these claims of difficulties
at home, and so forth,

175
00:10:57,520 --> 00:11:01,060
or whether there was an
emergency, a matter which

176
00:11:01,060 --> 00:11:05,130
required the soldier to be
able to go home, and so forth.

177
00:11:05,130 --> 00:11:06,720
And that worked very well.

178
00:11:06,720 --> 00:11:10,270
The Red Cross did that, and
everybody was satisfied.

179
00:11:10,270 --> 00:11:12,220
The Army was satisfied.

180
00:11:12,220 --> 00:11:14,650
The commanders of
the various units

181
00:11:14,650 --> 00:11:17,260
were satisfied, because
there was no longer--

182
00:11:17,260 --> 00:11:19,240
usually what
happened in the past,

183
00:11:19,240 --> 00:11:22,420
a soldier would gamble
and lose a lot of money

184
00:11:22,420 --> 00:11:25,730
and then apply for
Army Emergency Relief.

185
00:11:25,730 --> 00:11:28,330
So this thing was removed.

186
00:11:28,330 --> 00:11:33,250
And one time, a colonel
from Dallas, the Regional

187
00:11:33,250 --> 00:11:35,560
Office of the Army, came down.

188
00:11:35,560 --> 00:11:38,560
And he tried to persuade
me to stay there.

189
00:11:38,560 --> 00:11:40,360
That's when he
heard I got a notice

190
00:11:40,360 --> 00:11:42,820
to go to Officer
Candidate School.

191
00:11:42,820 --> 00:11:46,150
They tried to
persuade me to stay.

192
00:11:46,150 --> 00:11:48,130
And I said, well,
I'll stay, provided

193
00:11:48,130 --> 00:11:50,620
you guarantee I'll never
get shipped out of here.

194
00:11:50,620 --> 00:11:52,330
Well, he couldn't
guarantee that,

195

00:11:52,330 --> 00:11:55,060

so I went to Officer
Candidate School,

196

00:11:55,060 --> 00:12:02,050

which was at Camp Lee, Virginia,
a quartermaster training

197

00:12:02,050 --> 00:12:02,615

program.

198

00:12:02,615 --> 00:12:04,990

And I went through there and
went through other programs.

199

00:12:04,990 --> 00:12:06,700

Did your wife come with you?

200

00:12:06,700 --> 00:12:12,230

Oh, yeah, she moved and she
lived in a nearby community,

201

00:12:12,230 --> 00:12:13,410

and so on.

202

00:12:13,410 --> 00:12:16,250

Well, I was there probably--

203

00:12:16,250 --> 00:12:18,430

OCS, what was that,
three months, and then

204

00:12:18,430 --> 00:12:21,520

I was there for
another three months.

205

00:12:21,520 --> 00:12:26,140

I was slated to go overseas
as some quartermaster depot.

206

00:12:26,140 --> 00:12:27,970

They lost my records.

207
00:12:27,970 --> 00:12:30,220
And finally, when I
said, what's happening,

208
00:12:30,220 --> 00:12:36,400
they immediately picked me
up and I found my way into--

209
00:12:36,400 --> 00:12:39,370
I was with a unit, the
Salvage Collecting Company

210
00:12:39,370 --> 00:12:41,620
and Tennessee Maneuvers.

211
00:12:41,620 --> 00:12:45,450
And my wife chased around
with me and saw it.

212
00:12:45,450 --> 00:12:48,740

213
00:12:48,740 --> 00:12:53,980
Another fellow and I,
I was out in the field

214
00:12:53,980 --> 00:12:58,690
for three or four
days and nights,

215
00:12:58,690 --> 00:13:01,720
working with two platoons.

216
00:13:01,720 --> 00:13:05,560
And another young officer, who
was a graduate of University

217
00:13:05,560 --> 00:13:14,590
of Virginia, had been reading
the various news regulations

218

00:13:14,590 --> 00:13:15,940
from the Army.

219
00:13:15,940 --> 00:13:19,390
Found out they were opening up
a school for military government

220
00:13:19,390 --> 00:13:21,940
for junior officers.

221
00:13:21,940 --> 00:13:31,290
The previous one in
Charlotte, Charlottesville,

222
00:13:31,290 --> 00:13:34,410
was only for majors
and higher, what's

223
00:13:34,410 --> 00:13:36,390
called field grade personnel.

224
00:13:36,390 --> 00:13:37,980
So both of us applied.

225
00:13:37,980 --> 00:13:40,430
I was accepted, he wasn't.

226
00:13:40,430 --> 00:13:45,780
Well, then we were then
ordered to Tullahoma

227
00:13:45,780 --> 00:13:48,870
to prepare for
overseas departure.

228
00:13:48,870 --> 00:13:52,390
And I was told I was
frozen and I couldn't move.

229
00:13:52,390 --> 00:13:55,950
I couldn't be released from this
particular company, the Salvage

230

00:13:55,950 --> 00:13:57,520
Collection Company.

231

00:13:57,520 --> 00:14:00,150
Well, I had read regulations
pretty carefully,

232

00:14:00,150 --> 00:14:06,930
and I found that any order
from General Marshal,

233

00:14:06,930 --> 00:14:10,350
who was the chief
of staff of Army,

234

00:14:10,350 --> 00:14:13,540
superseded all other orders.

235

00:14:13,540 --> 00:14:16,110
And finally, I
waved this in front

236

00:14:16,110 --> 00:14:18,070
of the colonel who wasn't
going to let me go,

237

00:14:18,070 --> 00:14:20,460
and I was off to school
in military government

238

00:14:20,460 --> 00:14:22,080
in Fort Custer.

239

00:14:22,080 --> 00:14:24,930
We spent a month
there, and then we

240

00:14:24,930 --> 00:14:29,640
went to Western Reserve
University in Cleveland.

241

00:14:29,640 --> 00:14:32,460

Meantime, we all got alerted because there

242
00:14:32,460 --> 00:14:36,540
was a feeling that the military government situation would

243
00:14:36,540 --> 00:14:37,830
change drastically.

244
00:14:37,830 --> 00:14:40,800

245
00:14:40,800 --> 00:14:46,170
I think they had a feeling Hitler would be either

246
00:14:46,170 --> 00:14:53,100
overthrown or there'd be some event

247
00:14:53,100 --> 00:14:55,230
which would liberate Norway.

248
00:14:55,230 --> 00:14:59,030
And we would immediately be thrust into the job.

249
00:14:59,030 --> 00:15:04,860
Well, military government was a group of individuals

250
00:15:04,860 --> 00:15:10,020
who were officers, and who some had been commissioned directly

251
00:15:10,020 --> 00:15:13,440
from the civilian service.

252
00:15:13,440 --> 00:15:16,260
And there were lawyers.

253

00:15:16,260 --> 00:15:19,590
There were engineers.

254
00:15:19,590 --> 00:15:22,560
There were fine arts
and monuments people

255
00:15:22,560 --> 00:15:25,890
who came from various museums.

256
00:15:25,890 --> 00:15:28,290
And there were technicians.

257
00:15:28,290 --> 00:15:30,780
There were young
men who were experts

258
00:15:30,780 --> 00:15:36,600
on banking, fiscal
matters, and medicine,

259
00:15:36,600 --> 00:15:41,830
cars, public health, safety,
and so on and so forth.

260
00:15:41,830 --> 00:15:44,910
And these individuals
were available to move

261
00:15:44,910 --> 00:15:52,200
into a community to
help get things moving

262
00:15:52,200 --> 00:15:56,220
and to get the economy
moving, to weed out

263
00:15:56,220 --> 00:16:02,700
those who were SS individuals
or high-ranking people,

264
00:16:02,700 --> 00:16:05,130
people who were doing

a good deal of mischief

265
00:16:05,130 --> 00:16:06,450
in the community.

266
00:16:06,450 --> 00:16:08,940
Was there a conscious
effort to make

267
00:16:08,940 --> 00:16:11,760
the team that would go in
very, very diverse, as far as

268
00:16:11,760 --> 00:16:13,650
bankers, lawyers, architects?

269
00:16:13,650 --> 00:16:15,270
Well, yes.

270
00:16:15,270 --> 00:16:17,610
The big cities, of
course, had a very--

271
00:16:17,610 --> 00:16:22,830
for example, I was I was
with a group of officers

272
00:16:22,830 --> 00:16:25,395
of various ranks,
and we were situated

273
00:16:25,395 --> 00:16:29,490
in a little town of
Wilton, England, which

274
00:16:29,490 --> 00:16:32,280
is about five miles
from Salisbury.

275
00:16:32,280 --> 00:16:40,460
And we were there was a
company of enlisted personnel

276

00:16:40,460 --> 00:16:44,670

that provided us with
transportation, food, took

277

00:16:44,670 --> 00:16:46,920

care of the housekeeping
duties, and so on.

278

00:16:46,920 --> 00:16:49,830

Well, there was fine
arts and monuments.

279

00:16:49,830 --> 00:16:53,730

There was a British older
man, a British architect,

280

00:16:53,730 --> 00:17:00,150

who was a builder with
construction of all sorts,

281

00:17:00,150 --> 00:17:02,940

particularly like
cathedrals and things.

282

00:17:02,940 --> 00:17:08,640

Then there was a young man,
a younger man, captain,

283

00:17:08,640 --> 00:17:12,190

who worked at the fog
museum at Harvard.

284

00:17:12,190 --> 00:17:18,240

And there was a major who was
a member of the Fabergé family,

285

00:17:18,240 --> 00:17:19,680

working in the perfume industry.

286

00:17:19,680 --> 00:17:23,180

His job was to go into Paris
and help get the perfume

287

00:17:23,180 --> 00:17:26,460
industry going again.

288

00:17:26,460 --> 00:17:28,290
And we had a lot
of lawyers who were

289

00:17:28,290 --> 00:17:32,910
going to be involved in the
whole question of setting up

290

00:17:32,910 --> 00:17:35,910
legal structures, and
so forth and so on.

291

00:17:35,910 --> 00:17:40,380
So engineers, former
politicians, and so on.

292

00:17:40,380 --> 00:17:42,120
They were quite a diverse group.

293

00:17:42,120 --> 00:17:44,660

294

00:17:44,660 --> 00:17:48,080
It was kind of like
a pool of officers,

295

00:17:48,080 --> 00:17:51,210
and we were scattered
all over England,

296

00:17:51,210 --> 00:17:56,460
waiting for the D-Day,
which would then, of course,

297

00:17:56,460 --> 00:17:59,250
open up the coast of France.

298

00:17:59,250 --> 00:18:01,630
When did you go to England?

299
00:18:01,630 --> 00:18:03,390
What year?

300
00:18:03,390 --> 00:18:04,750
We moved to England--

301
00:18:04,750 --> 00:18:09,090

302
00:18:09,090 --> 00:18:12,660
it was interesting.

303
00:18:12,660 --> 00:18:13,895
We left Boston.

304
00:18:13,895 --> 00:18:15,880
It was one of the
largest convoys.

305
00:18:15,880 --> 00:18:18,570
That was on the
Empress of Australia.

306
00:18:18,570 --> 00:18:23,760
We left on Lincoln's birthday
and we arrived in England

307
00:18:23,760 --> 00:18:31,140
on Washington's birthday,
and this was in 1944.

308
00:18:31,140 --> 00:18:34,492
So between the time as we
came to Virginia and the time

309
00:18:34,492 --> 00:18:36,450
that you left from Boston,
what were you doing?

310
00:18:36,450 --> 00:18:39,110

311
00:18:39,110 --> 00:18:44,250
You came to Virginia to
go to officers trainings.

312
00:18:44,250 --> 00:18:46,723
No.

313
00:18:46,723 --> 00:18:48,140
Oh, officers
trainings, excuse me.

314
00:18:48,140 --> 00:18:52,120

315
00:18:52,120 --> 00:18:59,880
By the end of the year, the year
I went to Tennessee Maneuvers,

316
00:18:59,880 --> 00:19:05,510
I wound up in Fort Custer,
where we had a month training

317
00:19:05,510 --> 00:19:06,808
in military government.

318
00:19:06,808 --> 00:19:08,600
And then we moved out
into Western Reserve.

319
00:19:08,600 --> 00:19:12,200
We were supposed to spend
another month there learning

320
00:19:12,200 --> 00:19:16,160
languages and other problems.

321
00:19:16,160 --> 00:19:19,040
However, after two
weeks, we were alerted,

322
00:19:19,040 --> 00:19:21,470

and we wound up in Pennsylvania.

323

00:19:21,470 --> 00:19:26,820

Then we moved on to Boston
for the port of embarkation,

324

00:19:26,820 --> 00:19:30,200

and we sailed across.

325

00:19:30,200 --> 00:19:40,430

When we landed in England,
we then moved into Wiltshire,

326

00:19:40,430 --> 00:19:43,070

between Swinden and Oxford.

327

00:19:43,070 --> 00:19:48,590

And we were there in a
British War College that

328

00:19:48,590 --> 00:19:50,330

was turned over
to the Americans,

329

00:19:50,330 --> 00:19:52,820

and we were probably
a few hundred

330

00:19:52,820 --> 00:19:55,190

officers who were in there.

331

00:19:55,190 --> 00:19:57,930

Some were taken Russia, some
were taken to France, some

332

00:19:57,930 --> 00:19:58,430

to Germany.

333

00:19:58,430 --> 00:20:00,800

Some were taken to politics.

334

00:20:00,800 --> 00:20:03,980

Some were running around
the country, sight

335
00:20:03,980 --> 00:20:07,820
seeing that nobody knew about.

336
00:20:07,820 --> 00:20:09,060
So that's where we were.

337
00:20:09,060 --> 00:20:12,790

338
00:20:12,790 --> 00:20:16,410
I remember, particularly,
it was cold and damp

339
00:20:16,410 --> 00:20:19,820
and the meals were
very monotonous.

340
00:20:19,820 --> 00:20:22,010
Fortunately, I like
Brussels sprouts

341
00:20:22,010 --> 00:20:24,970
and lamb, roast, and mutton.

342
00:20:24,970 --> 00:20:26,140
Most people didn't.

343
00:20:26,140 --> 00:20:30,260

344
00:20:30,260 --> 00:20:37,070
Every weekend I took
off to go to London

345
00:20:37,070 --> 00:20:41,120
or Oxford or Cambridge
or some other site.

346
00:20:41,120 --> 00:20:45,530

Interestingly, one
time I was in Oxford.

347
00:20:45,530 --> 00:20:49,160
And enlisted men
went to the Red Cross

348
00:20:49,160 --> 00:20:51,980
to find a place
to stay overnight.

349
00:20:51,980 --> 00:20:55,880
Officers went to the
English-speaking union.

350
00:20:55,880 --> 00:21:01,910
And I did, and I was
told that, well, we

351
00:21:01,910 --> 00:21:04,790
have no room at the
moment, but drop in later.

352
00:21:04,790 --> 00:21:07,370

353
00:21:07,370 --> 00:21:11,490
I found that meantime,
I'd been invited

354
00:21:11,490 --> 00:21:19,970
to be a guest of the wife of
the warden of All Souls College.

355
00:21:19,970 --> 00:21:21,470
Well, I knocked on the door.

356
00:21:21,470 --> 00:21:23,690
At the time, I was admitted.

357
00:21:23,690 --> 00:21:26,510
And of course, I didn't
know what a warden was.

358
00:21:26,510 --> 00:21:35,070
I was thinking in terms of the
police of jails, and so on.

359
00:21:35,070 --> 00:21:38,560
I didn't have the slightest
idea what I was getting into.

360
00:21:38,560 --> 00:21:41,990
And I was invited in.

361
00:21:41,990 --> 00:21:44,970
The wife was a very
distinguished-looking lady,

362
00:21:44,970 --> 00:21:46,620
older lady.

363
00:21:46,620 --> 00:21:48,180
And I met the warden.

364
00:21:48,180 --> 00:21:50,430
He was talking to
another man and I

365
00:21:50,430 --> 00:21:53,400
was invited to sit in
and have tea with them.

366
00:21:53,400 --> 00:21:55,650
And it dawned on
me that here was

367
00:21:55,650 --> 00:22:01,710
the President of the
Graduate School of Oxford

368
00:22:01,710 --> 00:22:04,710
and he was talking to the
person who was in charge

369

00:22:04,710 --> 00:22:07,770
of rationing in England.

370
00:22:07,770 --> 00:22:10,890
This was indeed very
exalted company.

371
00:22:10,890 --> 00:22:13,980

372
00:22:13,980 --> 00:22:18,540
I stayed overnight
in a huge bedroom

373
00:22:18,540 --> 00:22:23,600
that probably existed since
Christopher Columbus's day.

374
00:22:23,600 --> 00:22:27,090

375
00:22:27,090 --> 00:22:30,180
I went to the cathedral in
the morning with the family,

376
00:22:30,180 --> 00:22:33,870
and then they took me
on a tour, showing me

377
00:22:33,870 --> 00:22:38,360
some of the hidden treasures
of All Souls College, which

378
00:22:38,360 --> 00:22:41,040
was a very beautiful college.

379
00:22:41,040 --> 00:22:42,750
And they invited me back again.

380
00:22:42,750 --> 00:22:45,090
I came back again.

381

00:22:45,090 --> 00:22:48,240

He was very injured by
training, because while I

382

00:22:48,240 --> 00:22:52,170

was at a non-sectarian
community organization program,

383

00:22:52,170 --> 00:22:55,800

I had been selected
of one of 10 persons

384

00:22:55,800 --> 00:23:01,470

to have a scholarship
in going to Ohio State

385

00:23:01,470 --> 00:23:05,850

University and the School of
Public Administration, Social

386

00:23:05,850 --> 00:23:07,270

Administration.

387

00:23:07,270 --> 00:23:09,810

So that was another
interesting experience I had.

388

00:23:09,810 --> 00:23:22,620

389

00:23:22,620 --> 00:23:25,710

I recall, we knew
that D-Day started,

390

00:23:25,710 --> 00:23:31,182

because we heard all that
night bombarding taking place.

391

00:23:31,182 --> 00:23:34,440

Did the officers who were
at that training school

392

00:23:34,440 --> 00:23:39,420

with you, learning
languages and geopolitics,

393
00:23:39,420 --> 00:23:43,410
were you all aware of what
you would be going into,

394
00:23:43,410 --> 00:23:46,950
or did you have
somewhat of an idea?

395
00:23:46,950 --> 00:23:48,840
Well, I knew, but we all knew.

396
00:23:48,840 --> 00:23:50,640
We all knew that
we were going to be

397
00:23:50,640 --> 00:23:54,750
working in our specialty, our
background in some aspect.

398
00:23:54,750 --> 00:24:00,180
We were going into a community
that was completely destroyed

399
00:24:00,180 --> 00:24:02,550
and wasn't functioning,
and our role

400
00:24:02,550 --> 00:24:07,410
was to help pull the town
and community together.

401
00:24:07,410 --> 00:24:12,510
And this was going to
be anywhere from rural

402
00:24:12,510 --> 00:24:16,250
to large urban centers,
as the case may be.

403
00:24:16,250 --> 00:24:18,300

Yeah, we knew that.

404

00:24:18,300 --> 00:24:22,800
A few of the officers who were
political appointees, and so

405

00:24:22,800 --> 00:24:24,300
had a lot of
political power, they

406

00:24:24,300 --> 00:24:33,000
got bored sitting in this place
and shivering in this building.

407

00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:39,210
So apparently, they contacted
members of congress, and so on.

408

00:24:39,210 --> 00:24:43,080
So Eisenhower came
out, and he gathers us

409

00:24:43,080 --> 00:24:46,320
around a tree, a big tree.

410

00:24:46,320 --> 00:24:47,700
Oh, it must've
been a few hundred

411

00:24:47,700 --> 00:24:48,450
Of us.

412

00:24:48,450 --> 00:24:49,710
And he smoked with us.

413

00:24:49,710 --> 00:24:54,540
He said, well-- he
said, I can assure you,

414

00:24:54,540 --> 00:24:58,650
from seeing what some of
your fellow civil affairs

415

00:24:58,650 --> 00:25:03,690
officers did in Italy, they
were working day and night

416

00:25:03,690 --> 00:25:06,450
and accomplished a
great deal there.

417

00:25:06,450 --> 00:25:10,350
And he said, take advantage
of the time you have here

418

00:25:10,350 --> 00:25:12,900
to rest up, because when
you are going to be busy,

419

00:25:12,900 --> 00:25:14,910
you're going to be
very busy indeed.

420

00:25:14,910 --> 00:25:17,340
And that took out
some of the heat.

421

00:25:17,340 --> 00:25:24,612
And of course, the effect
of this man's personality,

422

00:25:24,612 --> 00:25:28,740
calling it such, that he
just charmed all of us,

423

00:25:28,740 --> 00:25:32,400
and the malcontents
quieted down and we waited.

424

00:25:32,400 --> 00:25:35,820

425

00:25:35,820 --> 00:25:39,510
And then shortly thereafter,
we were broken up

426

00:25:39,510 --> 00:25:46,710

into probably 30, 40, 50
different groups scattered

427

00:25:46,710 --> 00:25:48,130

throughout England.

428

00:25:48,130 --> 00:25:51,750

And we were all in a
little holding areas,

429

00:25:51,750 --> 00:25:54,960

being taken care of, as we
were, by a little company,

430

00:25:54,960 --> 00:25:59,270

and provided three meals a
day and all the other things.

431

00:25:59,270 --> 00:26:01,410

And that's what happened.

432

00:26:01,410 --> 00:26:06,000

Well, when D-Day
arrived, we knew about it

433

00:26:06,000 --> 00:26:10,830

because we heard the
thundering of the vessels,

434

00:26:10,830 --> 00:26:13,370

battleships firing
in England, bombing.

435

00:26:13,370 --> 00:26:16,770

What city were you in on D-Day?

436

00:26:16,770 --> 00:26:20,570

We were five miles from
Salisbury, England.

437

00:26:20,570 --> 00:26:27,650

438

00:26:27,650 --> 00:26:29,540

We were alerted, of course.

439

00:26:29,540 --> 00:26:31,940

Well, we were always alerted.

440

00:26:31,940 --> 00:26:36,100

But we were told that
sometime we'd be called.

441

00:26:36,100 --> 00:26:37,100

Oh, we were slated.

442

00:26:37,100 --> 00:26:41,690

Our group initially was
slated to go in, oh, probably

443

00:26:41,690 --> 00:26:43,790

the first week after D-Day.

444

00:26:43,790 --> 00:26:46,190

But the weather
was so unpleasant

445

00:26:46,190 --> 00:26:48,860

and the perimeter that the
Americans and the British

446

00:26:48,860 --> 00:26:52,370

had liberated was
such a narrow area,

447

00:26:52,370 --> 00:26:54,800

there wasn't much
for anybody to do.

448

00:26:54,800 --> 00:26:57,320

And it was much more
important to bring ammunition

449

00:26:57,320 --> 00:27:02,210
and fighting men
across than having

450
00:27:02,210 --> 00:27:05,240
a bunch of civil
affairs officers

451
00:27:05,240 --> 00:27:07,430
cluttering up the countryside.

452
00:27:07,430 --> 00:27:10,310
So we got in.

453
00:27:10,310 --> 00:27:13,070

454
00:27:13,070 --> 00:27:22,730
We went over a landing craft,
and I recall arriving at night.

455
00:27:22,730 --> 00:27:25,580
It was the evening
of 4th of July

456
00:27:25,580 --> 00:27:27,800
and there were
fireworks going on.

457
00:27:27,800 --> 00:27:32,870
Some of it was military, some
of it was fireworks display.

458
00:27:32,870 --> 00:27:34,910
And we moved inland.

459
00:27:34,910 --> 00:27:36,230
Where did you land?

460
00:27:36,230 --> 00:27:42,890
We land at, I think
it was Omaha Beach,

461

00:27:42,890 --> 00:27:49,210

right near the town of Isigny
in the area of Normandy.

462

00:27:49,210 --> 00:27:51,620

Things were quiet,
although the Germans would

463

00:27:51,620 --> 00:27:52,910

run some planes overnight.

464

00:27:52,910 --> 00:27:55,570

But the Americans had
command of the air.

465

00:27:55,570 --> 00:27:58,920

Daytime, it was perfectly safe.

466

00:27:58,920 --> 00:28:00,500

There were a lot
of scares, and so

467

00:28:00,500 --> 00:28:07,695

on, some false alarms on gas
attacks, and things like that.

468

00:28:07,695 --> 00:28:09,320

So finally, we were
moved in the middle

469

00:28:09,320 --> 00:28:15,140

of a field, a typical field
with the hedgerows, and so on.

470

00:28:15,140 --> 00:28:17,750

471

00:28:17,750 --> 00:28:21,210

Each officer had a pup tent,
and so on and so forth.

472

00:28:21,210 --> 00:28:29,210

And we were in a pool of
officers, two for First Army.

473
00:28:29,210 --> 00:28:34,780

474
00:28:34,780 --> 00:28:39,930
Oh, I gathered there may
be around 50 officers.

475
00:28:39,930 --> 00:28:42,640
And interestingly,
Senator Strom Thurmond,

476
00:28:42,640 --> 00:28:45,010
who was a judge
from South Carolina,

477
00:28:45,010 --> 00:28:52,990
had been a volunteer
in the glider.

478
00:28:52,990 --> 00:28:54,630
And he landed in the glider.

479
00:28:54,630 --> 00:28:56,770
These gliders would
just sort of crash.

480
00:28:56,770 --> 00:29:00,890
He broke his arm, and he was
wandering around with his arm

481
00:29:00,890 --> 00:29:01,570
in a cast.

482
00:29:01,570 --> 00:29:05,260

483
00:29:05,260 --> 00:29:06,370
So that's where we were.

484

00:29:06,370 --> 00:29:13,540
Then, apparently,
First Army G5, which

485
00:29:13,540 --> 00:29:17,680
was military government
of civil affairs unit,

486
00:29:17,680 --> 00:29:21,880
requested me,
probably because I was

487
00:29:21,880 --> 00:29:25,030
available second
lieutenant, to do

488
00:29:25,030 --> 00:29:27,760
some running around for them.

489
00:29:27,760 --> 00:29:30,280
They were particularly
interested in getting

490
00:29:30,280 --> 00:29:34,105
some medical supplies that
were being thrown on the beach.

491
00:29:34,105 --> 00:29:39,250
In other words, as the
stuff came off of ships--

492
00:29:39,250 --> 00:29:40,960
it wasn't particularly
well-classified,

493
00:29:40,960 --> 00:29:43,930
except for munitions,
which had its own place--

494
00:29:43,930 --> 00:29:48,940
but all the
non-military equipment

495

00:29:48,940 --> 00:29:52,750
was scattered around a
perimeter, maybe a 10-acre lot.

496
00:29:52,750 --> 00:29:55,510
And the only way to
find out what there was

497
00:29:55,510 --> 00:29:58,060
is to walk around and see it.

498
00:29:58,060 --> 00:30:00,880
So my job was to
find anything that

499
00:30:00,880 --> 00:30:03,560
could be used by civil
affairs, military government,

500
00:30:03,560 --> 00:30:04,360
and hospitals.

501
00:30:04,360 --> 00:30:06,580
So you'd walk up and down
the beach, looking for--

502
00:30:06,580 --> 00:30:08,770
No, no, no.

503
00:30:08,770 --> 00:30:10,880
They would give me
a Jeep and a driver,

504
00:30:10,880 --> 00:30:15,310
and I'd drive around and
just drive slowly, go around,

505
00:30:15,310 --> 00:30:18,760
and indicate where there
were cots, where there

506
00:30:18,760 --> 00:30:21,070
was some medicine, where

are some bandages, where

507

00:30:21,070 --> 00:30:22,238

are some other things.

508

00:30:22,238 --> 00:30:23,780

Would you collect

them or would you--

509

00:30:23,780 --> 00:30:24,280

No, no.

510

00:30:24,280 --> 00:30:27,700

I would just identify

them, and then they

511

00:30:27,700 --> 00:30:29,950

would know where

to go and get them.

512

00:30:29,950 --> 00:30:33,840

Well, that was very good

and everybody was pleased.

513

00:30:33,840 --> 00:30:39,140

Then there appeared to be

a shortage of water cans.

514

00:30:39,140 --> 00:30:43,400

Normally, in a company, a

company would have about two-

515

00:30:43,400 --> 00:30:44,920

to five-gallon water cans.

516

00:30:44,920 --> 00:30:48,490

You can have a lot of

gasoline, but the water cans

517

00:30:48,490 --> 00:30:51,550

were hard to get.

518

00:30:51,550 --> 00:30:54,790

And when they set up a
number of these refugee

519

00:30:54,790 --> 00:30:57,430

centers, displaced
persons centers,

520

00:30:57,430 --> 00:30:59,830

one of the big
problems was a lack

521

00:30:59,830 --> 00:31:04,180

of water cars, a lack of
cooking equipment, and so on.

522

00:31:04,180 --> 00:31:10,570

And so I went into a
number of German dumps,

523

00:31:10,570 --> 00:31:12,250

where they had ammunitions.

524

00:31:12,250 --> 00:31:15,560

525

00:31:15,560 --> 00:31:17,588

For example, one
area I ran into had--

526

00:31:17,588 --> 00:31:19,130

I was looking for
anything that could

527

00:31:19,130 --> 00:31:21,150

be used by a displaced persons.

528

00:31:21,150 --> 00:31:23,960

Well one aspect I
found that I could

529

00:31:23,960 --> 00:31:27,500

make use of, a marine

shell container that held

530
00:31:27,500 --> 00:31:31,370
four shells, and it had a ga--

531
00:31:31,370 --> 00:31:39,110

532
00:31:39,110 --> 00:31:44,420
This is Tape 1, Side B.
Interview with Milton Surr.

533
00:31:44,420 --> 00:31:49,040

534
00:31:49,040 --> 00:31:54,800
Well, by providing displaced
persons with a screwdriver,

535
00:31:54,800 --> 00:31:59,440
we could get any number of
these water cans some aid.

536
00:31:59,440 --> 00:32:01,580
And that was a big
coup and everybody

537
00:32:01,580 --> 00:32:03,440
was very happy with it.

538
00:32:03,440 --> 00:32:10,130
Well, then I noticed
that the German troops

539
00:32:10,130 --> 00:32:16,160
used a lot of
two-wheeled carts, which

540
00:32:16,160 --> 00:32:22,010
had sort of a cooker, a
pressure cooker, on it.

541

00:32:22,010 --> 00:32:29,060

These probably would hold maybe
50 to 100 gallons of liquid.

542

00:32:29,060 --> 00:32:33,800

And they would start a fire
with coal or wood, or something,

543

00:32:33,800 --> 00:32:37,700

in these two-wheeled
carts, and they'd

544

00:32:37,700 --> 00:32:40,680

cook soup, which was
very, very common.

545

00:32:40,680 --> 00:32:42,830

Now, you were going
around to dumps in France

546

00:32:42,830 --> 00:32:43,610

looking for this?

547

00:32:43,610 --> 00:32:44,970

Yeah, sure.

548

00:32:44,970 --> 00:32:47,120

And so I would run
into these things.

549

00:32:47,120 --> 00:32:50,780

550

00:32:50,780 --> 00:32:54,890

I then would drive
over to an ordinance

551

00:32:54,890 --> 00:33:01,010

depot, an ordinance shop, and
try to persuade the captain

552

00:33:01,010 --> 00:33:04,040

to give me a driver and a hoist.

553
00:33:04,040 --> 00:33:06,320
And then we would
hoist two or three

554
00:33:06,320 --> 00:33:12,013
of these things, two-wheeled
carts, cooking carts,

555
00:33:12,013 --> 00:33:14,180
and take them to where there
were some of the camps.

556
00:33:14,180 --> 00:33:16,310
Well, apparently,
the Army engineers

557
00:33:16,310 --> 00:33:17,850
were doing the same thing.

558
00:33:17,850 --> 00:33:19,850
They were heating
up tar for roads,

559
00:33:19,850 --> 00:33:21,410
so they had their own equipment.

560
00:33:21,410 --> 00:33:24,900
So I was at a great
disadvantage, but I succeeded.

561
00:33:24,900 --> 00:33:29,060
And I found food,
found other things.

562
00:33:29,060 --> 00:33:33,470
Well, the Army,
the First Army G5,

563
00:33:33,470 --> 00:33:35,140
decided I was using too much--

564

00:33:35,140 --> 00:33:39,649

565

00:33:39,649 --> 00:33:42,820

they could get rid of the Jeep
driver by giving me a car.

566

00:33:42,820 --> 00:33:45,598

So they gave me a
captured German Volkswagen

567

00:33:45,598 --> 00:33:46,640

that looked like a sieve.

568

00:33:46,640 --> 00:33:51,190

It had been strafed, had
no windshield on top.

569

00:33:51,190 --> 00:33:52,540

But it did go.

570

00:33:52,540 --> 00:33:59,110

And so I continued my search
for food and objects, and so on.

571

00:33:59,110 --> 00:34:03,370

And obviously, my work
was well-regarded,

572

00:34:03,370 --> 00:34:06,790

but I lived in the field.

573

00:34:06,790 --> 00:34:11,320

I would shave with cold
water, and so forth and so on.

574

00:34:11,320 --> 00:34:17,960

Occasionally, do a sponge
bath or go to a field, a bath

575

00:34:17,960 --> 00:34:21,290

program, and so on.

576

00:34:21,290 --> 00:34:31,050
And then after the
breakthrough by General Patton,

577

00:34:31,050 --> 00:34:33,350
we then moved out into France.

578

00:34:33,350 --> 00:34:38,620
And there, I used to run across
various displaced persons.

579

00:34:38,620 --> 00:34:41,590
Well, about that time,
before we broke out--

580

00:34:41,590 --> 00:34:47,350
How long were you near Omaha
Beach looking for supplies?

581

00:34:47,350 --> 00:34:50,530
Well, that was in July.

582

00:34:50,530 --> 00:34:55,020
Breakout was in
August, or late July.

583

00:34:55,020 --> 00:34:58,590
Well, during that
time, something

584

00:34:58,590 --> 00:35:02,250
happened with the command
of a small displaced persons

585

00:35:02,250 --> 00:35:07,620
camp that was located in a
chateau on the edge of Normandy

586

00:35:07,620 --> 00:35:12,360
Coast, right near the
invasion on Omaha Beach.

587

00:35:12,360 --> 00:35:19,300
And so another sergeant,
who was a refugee

588
00:35:19,300 --> 00:35:21,150
and could speak
several languages,

589
00:35:21,150 --> 00:35:24,810
he and I were detailed to go
out there and take charge.

590
00:35:24,810 --> 00:35:27,750
So there were about
200 women or so

591
00:35:27,750 --> 00:35:30,630
in the chateau and
the outlying grounds.

592
00:35:30,630 --> 00:35:36,360
And so I got some 10:1 rations,
and so forth, and turned them

593
00:35:36,360 --> 00:35:38,630
over to a French cook
and [? we asked ?]

594
00:35:38,630 --> 00:35:42,630
to take care of us, and he did.

595
00:35:42,630 --> 00:35:47,310
So we were there for a few
weeks, and then we moved out.

596
00:35:47,310 --> 00:35:51,820
And at that point in time,
we were following the Army.

597
00:35:51,820 --> 00:35:56,160
It was very
fast-moving, changing.

598

00:35:56,160 --> 00:36:00,060
The Germans are being chased
to one place or another.

599
00:36:00,060 --> 00:36:06,590
And finally, the first
RV moved through Paris.

600
00:36:06,590 --> 00:36:13,190

601
00:36:13,190 --> 00:36:19,880
The G5 Second were camped
in the Versailles grounds.

602
00:36:19,880 --> 00:36:23,870
And I recall, I
had my tent pitched

603
00:36:23,870 --> 00:36:26,100
in front of the Petit Trianon.

604
00:36:26,100 --> 00:36:27,390
It was a beautiful thing.

605
00:36:27,390 --> 00:36:32,390
And I got to drive my Volkswagen
into Paris the next day,

606
00:36:32,390 --> 00:36:37,790
and had a nice tour of Paris
for one day, and then came back.

607
00:36:37,790 --> 00:36:39,830
Meantime, we moved on out.

608
00:36:39,830 --> 00:36:41,690
Did anybody ever
think it was strange,

609
00:36:41,690 --> 00:36:44,850
you driving around in this
Volkswagen, a German--

610

00:36:44,850 --> 00:36:49,820

Well, it was sprayed OD and had a star on it and an ordinance.

611

00:36:49,820 --> 00:36:51,980

No.

612

00:36:51,980 --> 00:36:56,630

Although there were a number of times when I was

613

00:36:56,630 --> 00:37:00,010

strafed and had to jump into a ditch,

614

00:37:00,010 --> 00:37:01,670

and I never knew whether they were

615

00:37:01,670 --> 00:37:03,800

Germans or American planes.

616

00:37:03,800 --> 00:37:06,080

But it was identified as American.

617

00:37:06,080 --> 00:37:07,300

It had a star on it and OD.

618

00:37:07,300 --> 00:37:10,460

619

00:37:10,460 --> 00:37:14,330

So this continued, and we then moved up.

620

00:37:14,330 --> 00:37:20,000

First army moved up into northern Belgium.

621

00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:23,840

And it was an interesting
experience during that time

622
00:37:23,840 --> 00:37:26,390
prior to that.

623
00:37:26,390 --> 00:37:32,570
I was asked by the G5
section of First Army

624
00:37:32,570 --> 00:37:35,270
to meet with a colonel
who was in charge

625
00:37:35,270 --> 00:37:39,080
of a military government
team that was slated to go

626
00:37:39,080 --> 00:37:42,350
into the Luxembourg capital.

627
00:37:42,350 --> 00:37:45,410
And he was particularly
anxious to have

628
00:37:45,410 --> 00:37:50,920
the crown prince
and the premiere

629
00:37:50,920 --> 00:37:55,760
and some of the several
outfitted American uniforms

630
00:37:55,760 --> 00:38:00,040
of American guns, and
so forth and so on.

631
00:38:00,040 --> 00:38:03,970
And so apparently,
there was nothing

632
00:38:03,970 --> 00:38:08,230
in the regulations that permits

this in the American Army.

633

00:38:08,230 --> 00:38:10,390

But they wanted it
done, and since I

634

00:38:10,390 --> 00:38:13,570

had been so ingenious in
doing so many other things,

635

00:38:13,570 --> 00:38:17,000

they said, we'll
see what you can do.

636

00:38:17,000 --> 00:38:22,600

So I visited with the group
in Paris and figured out what

637

00:38:22,600 --> 00:38:31,780

sizes they would wear, so I
got the first army to sign off

638

00:38:31,780 --> 00:38:41,770

on the requisition I had a {?
light ton ?] one and a half ton

639

00:38:41,770 --> 00:38:46,290

truck with a driver, and we
picked up a lot of gasoline.

640

00:38:46,290 --> 00:38:49,890

We were out in Normandy
to the various depots.

641

00:38:49,890 --> 00:38:51,410

Well, before we
got to Normandy, I

642

00:38:51,410 --> 00:38:54,760

had to have this
countersigned by the 12th Army

643

00:38:54,760 --> 00:38:58,450

Group, which superseded
the First Army, Third Army,

644
00:38:58,450 --> 00:38:59,650
and so on.

645
00:38:59,650 --> 00:39:03,550
And the American in
charge was a colonel.

646
00:39:03,550 --> 00:39:06,650
He said, there's no
way this can be done.

647
00:39:06,650 --> 00:39:10,100
We don't have any regulations
and I'm not going to do it.

648
00:39:10,100 --> 00:39:14,380
And finally, I was
pretty desperate.

649
00:39:14,380 --> 00:39:20,020
I said, oh, well, you aren't
going to let those limies put

650
00:39:20,020 --> 00:39:21,250
something over on us.

651
00:39:21,250 --> 00:39:24,160
They want to put these
people in British uniforms.

652
00:39:24,160 --> 00:39:27,760
Well, the British
officers were usually

653
00:39:27,760 --> 00:39:33,870
so unpleasant to us Americans
that this thing really worked.

654
00:39:33,870 --> 00:39:38,170
And he finally signed off,

and I was off to Normandy

655

00:39:38,170 --> 00:39:44,555
and picked up all of the various
uniforms, 45s, 10s, equipment,

656

00:39:44,555 --> 00:39:46,480
and so on and so forth.

657

00:39:46,480 --> 00:39:54,400
Then I was back to Paris, and
we were looking for this outfit.

658

00:39:54,400 --> 00:39:58,600

659

00:39:58,600 --> 00:40:02,390
They were up in northern
Belgium at this time.

660

00:40:02,390 --> 00:40:04,450
And when I got to the town--

661

00:40:04,450 --> 00:40:06,682
I think it was Charleroi.

662

00:40:06,682 --> 00:40:08,500
It was Charleroi.

663

00:40:08,500 --> 00:40:11,830
And nobody would tell
me where this unit went.

664

00:40:11,830 --> 00:40:15,850
Fortunately, one of the
officers had been with me

665

00:40:15,850 --> 00:40:22,868
in this particular British
army college, and so he knew me

666

00:40:22,868 --> 00:40:24,160

and he told me where they went.

667

00:40:24,160 --> 00:40:25,180

It was a big secret.

668

00:40:25,180 --> 00:40:30,010

They were on the way
to Luxembourg City.

669

00:40:30,010 --> 00:40:36,700

So the little GI and I in
this captured a Ford truck,

670

00:40:36,700 --> 00:40:41,590

loaded with
equipment, are trying

671

00:40:41,590 --> 00:40:43,780

to find our way to Luxembourg.

672

00:40:43,780 --> 00:40:44,920

There are no signs.

673

00:40:44,920 --> 00:40:46,630

Nobody had any maps.

674

00:40:46,630 --> 00:40:52,570

And so frequently, I would ask
the direction from some farmer,

675

00:40:52,570 --> 00:40:57,760

not knowing whether he was
oriented to Germany or France.

676

00:40:57,760 --> 00:40:59,170

Did you speak French or Belgium?

677

00:40:59,170 --> 00:41:02,560

I spoke a little French.

678

00:41:02,560 --> 00:41:05,720

By that time, I was

getting fairly fluent.

679

00:41:05,720 --> 00:41:08,500

I wasn't fluent, but I
could think myself it.

680

00:41:08,500 --> 00:41:13,060

And I'd have my 45
just below the window

681

00:41:13,060 --> 00:41:15,520

in case he turned
out to be hostile.

682

00:41:15,520 --> 00:41:17,020

We ran into no
problems, and we were

683

00:41:17,020 --> 00:41:18,390

directed to Luxembourg City.

684

00:41:18,390 --> 00:41:21,130

We arrived in Luxembourg
City, and it was just

685

00:41:21,130 --> 00:41:25,360

like being in Paris the
day after the liberation.

686

00:41:25,360 --> 00:41:27,130

Everybody was excited.

687

00:41:27,130 --> 00:41:30,200

People were pressing
souvenirs on us, and so forth.

688

00:41:30,200 --> 00:41:32,950

We finally found
our way to the hotel

689

00:41:32,950 --> 00:41:34,930

and we delivered the goods.

690

00:41:34,930 --> 00:41:37,900

Obviously, the American
colonel was very happy

691

00:41:37,900 --> 00:41:40,330

about the whole thing
and wanted to know

692

00:41:40,330 --> 00:41:42,130

what he could do for me.

693

00:41:42,130 --> 00:41:47,250

So I said, well, I said, I've
been trying to get a promotion.

694

00:41:47,250 --> 00:41:50,920

Well, he said, anything
we can do will help.

695

00:41:50,920 --> 00:41:52,560

Actually, he wanted
me to stay there.

696

00:41:52,560 --> 00:41:57,190

Of course, I had no way of
doing that, which would have

697

00:41:57,190 --> 00:41:59,800

been a very interesting spot.

698

00:41:59,800 --> 00:42:03,340

So we went back to
Paris and I went back.

699

00:42:03,340 --> 00:42:06,310

700

00:42:06,310 --> 00:42:08,470

I found my way
back and went back.

701

00:42:08,470 --> 00:42:13,510

I picked up my Volkswagen, went
back up to northern France.

702
00:42:13,510 --> 00:42:15,400
It was northern Belgian, really.

703
00:42:15,400 --> 00:42:19,030

704
00:42:19,030 --> 00:42:21,940
Obviously, the G5
section First Army

705
00:42:21,940 --> 00:42:24,837
was very pleased
with what I did.

706
00:42:24,837 --> 00:42:26,920
And they wanted to know
what they could do for me,

707
00:42:26,920 --> 00:42:28,320
so I said, I'd like a promotion.

708
00:42:28,320 --> 00:42:30,070
Well, you can't be
promoted because you're

709
00:42:30,070 --> 00:42:31,870
attached to First Army.

710
00:42:31,870 --> 00:42:34,600
So I said, well,
the next thing is,

711
00:42:34,600 --> 00:42:38,260
since I've been in the field
of public welfare community

712
00:42:38,260 --> 00:42:40,660
organization, I'd like
to get some experience

713
00:42:40,660 --> 00:42:43,030
in a displaced persons camp.

714
00:42:43,030 --> 00:42:47,020
So they sent me to a camp,
which had lost its officer.

715
00:42:47,020 --> 00:42:51,120
They gave some
peccadillo of some kind.

716
00:42:51,120 --> 00:42:55,670
So here I arrive, a
second lieutenant,

717
00:42:55,670 --> 00:43:05,970
finding some British captains
of majors, a French whack team,

718
00:43:05,970 --> 00:43:13,280
some enlisted
personnel, and a group

719
00:43:13,280 --> 00:43:20,060
of probably about 400 refugees
in a Belgium convent school.

720
00:43:20,060 --> 00:43:21,230
Where was this?

721
00:43:21,230 --> 00:43:22,220
In Belgium.

722
00:43:22,220 --> 00:43:26,540
It's the town of
Verviers, V-E-R-V-I-E-R-S,

723
00:43:26,540 --> 00:43:32,780
which was probably about,
oh, 15 kilometers from Liege,

724
00:43:32,780 --> 00:43:34,700

which is a big industrial city.

725

00:43:34,700 --> 00:43:40,670

And we were probably about
seven or eight kilometers

726

00:43:40,670 --> 00:43:45,240

to Malmedy, which
you'll hear about later.

727

00:43:45,240 --> 00:43:47,860

And so I took charge.

728

00:43:47,860 --> 00:43:51,290

One thing I found,
of course, was

729

00:43:51,290 --> 00:43:56,810

that meal time, all of the
Allied displaced persons

730

00:43:56,810 --> 00:44:01,160

people, or Allied countries,
would be in line first

731

00:44:01,160 --> 00:44:04,020

to receive their meal.

732

00:44:04,020 --> 00:44:08,300

And I said, this is the way
that we do things in America.

733

00:44:08,300 --> 00:44:10,270

And I said, people
are going to be served

734

00:44:10,270 --> 00:44:12,230

in the order they appear.

735

00:44:12,230 --> 00:44:18,340

But this is what the French
backs and the British had done.

736
00:44:18,340 --> 00:44:20,840
And we got along very well.

737
00:44:20,840 --> 00:44:26,595
One time during this
particular period,

738
00:44:26,595 --> 00:44:33,150
as the sisters had run out of
coal, and it was in November

739
00:44:33,150 --> 00:44:34,610
it was pretty cold.

740
00:44:34,610 --> 00:44:38,870
Meantime, the
Americans, the troops,

741
00:44:38,870 --> 00:44:42,860
had opened up a little
appendix of Maastricht, which

742
00:44:42,860 --> 00:44:45,380
is stuck down into Belgium.

743
00:44:45,380 --> 00:44:48,350
And they opened up
some mines and coal was

744
00:44:48,350 --> 00:44:50,390
being delivered to the city.

745
00:44:50,390 --> 00:44:55,730
So I took one of the
corporals of our unit,

746
00:44:55,730 --> 00:44:56,660
enlisted personnel.

747
00:44:56,660 --> 00:44:59,660
We had a wonderful group
of enlisted personnel.

748
00:44:59,660 --> 00:45:01,880
They were all college people.

749
00:45:01,880 --> 00:45:07,460
This young fellow spoke French,
and so he was my interpreter.

750
00:45:07,460 --> 00:45:09,410
Using an interpreter
gave me twice as much

751
00:45:09,410 --> 00:45:13,820
time to think of an answer
or correspond to the mayor.

752
00:45:13,820 --> 00:45:17,840
So we met with the burgermeister
and told him our problem.

753
00:45:17,840 --> 00:45:20,600
We had to have coal
and lye and so on.

754
00:45:20,600 --> 00:45:21,230
No way.

755
00:45:21,230 --> 00:45:21,830
No way.

756
00:45:21,830 --> 00:45:22,340
No way.

757
00:45:22,340 --> 00:45:25,700

758
00:45:25,700 --> 00:45:28,160
Again, it was one of those
desperate situations.

759
00:45:28,160 --> 00:45:31,910
And I recall, I was on

a track team in college.

760
00:45:31,910 --> 00:45:36,890
And the coach, at one time,
trying to dramatize a point,

761
00:45:36,890 --> 00:45:39,680
slams his just starter
pistol on the table,

762
00:45:39,680 --> 00:45:42,050
and everybody jumped a mile.

763
00:45:42,050 --> 00:45:44,420
So I took out my 45.

764
00:45:44,420 --> 00:45:46,460
I slammed it on the table.

765
00:45:46,460 --> 00:45:49,770
And I thought the burgermeister
would go through the roof,

766
00:45:49,770 --> 00:45:52,880
but we got our coal.

767
00:45:52,880 --> 00:45:54,680
Then we were bombed.

768
00:45:54,680 --> 00:45:58,620

769
00:45:58,620 --> 00:46:03,150
We don't know if they
were bombed by a shell.

770
00:46:03,150 --> 00:46:08,180
This was during the period
of the Malmedy Bulge.

771
00:46:08,180 --> 00:46:11,920

772
00:46:11,920 --> 00:46:18,140
So we really had to
dig latrines, trenches.

773
00:46:18,140 --> 00:46:20,270
Our group went into
an ordinance outfit

774
00:46:20,270 --> 00:46:25,010
and brought back a two-wheel
cart with about, I think,

775
00:46:25,010 --> 00:46:28,110
a 200-gallon water container.

776
00:46:28,110 --> 00:46:30,440
And so we did the
all those things.

777
00:46:30,440 --> 00:46:32,560
So the convent was bombed?

778
00:46:32,560 --> 00:46:34,110
Yeah.

779
00:46:34,110 --> 00:46:38,060
In fact, I was in the courtyard
and a piece of shrapnel

780
00:46:38,060 --> 00:46:42,500
came within probably a
foot and a half from me,

781
00:46:42,500 --> 00:46:47,280
cut through a tree, and
went into the windows of one

782
00:46:47,280 --> 00:46:49,250
of the school
buildings, and just

783

00:46:49,250 --> 00:46:52,640
mowed down the
whole row of things.

784
00:46:52,640 --> 00:46:56,780
And I wasn't frightened until
after the event, a really close

785
00:46:56,780 --> 00:46:58,010
call.

786
00:46:58,010 --> 00:46:59,090
But we got through it.

787
00:46:59,090 --> 00:47:00,197
It was very interesting.

788
00:47:00,197 --> 00:47:02,030
We were ordered to stay
there no matter what

789
00:47:02,030 --> 00:47:03,660
happened in this Malmedy thing.

790
00:47:03,660 --> 00:47:11,090
And it was, to put it mildly,
we were very uncomfortable.

791
00:47:11,090 --> 00:47:13,050
[PHONE RINGING]

792
00:47:13,050 --> 00:47:15,240

793
00:47:15,240 --> 00:47:19,590
So we experienced, went through
that Malmedy, the Bulge,

794
00:47:19,590 --> 00:47:23,320
and it was very,
very interesting.

795

00:47:23,320 --> 00:47:28,780
The day before the Germans
came through, I went with--

796
00:47:28,780 --> 00:47:32,900

797
00:47:32,900 --> 00:47:34,400
well, just back up a second.

798
00:47:34,400 --> 00:47:41,955
We used to go for supplies,
food and supplies, into Liege.

799
00:47:41,955 --> 00:47:43,760
And in the meantime,
Liege was being

800
00:47:43,760 --> 00:47:46,880
bombarded by the flying bombs.

801
00:47:46,880 --> 00:47:50,810
And so I would go with
a different driver

802
00:47:50,810 --> 00:47:55,940
every time, because I felt
it was one way of spreading

803
00:47:55,940 --> 00:47:59,535
the risk among the people.

804
00:47:59,535 --> 00:48:02,570
And yes, we did it.

805
00:48:02,570 --> 00:48:05,810
People were living in cellars.

806
00:48:05,810 --> 00:48:08,870
Everyone was frightened
because you'd hear, suddenly,

807

00:48:08,870 --> 00:48:10,070
buzz, buzz, buzz.

808
00:48:10,070 --> 00:48:14,900
And then suddenly it would
stop and the thing would crash.

809
00:48:14,900 --> 00:48:18,610
Some landed where we
were living, and so on.

810
00:48:18,610 --> 00:48:21,020
But that was that.

811
00:48:21,020 --> 00:48:23,360
Well, during the Bulge,
of course everybody

812
00:48:23,360 --> 00:48:26,600
was frightened because
of what was happening.

813
00:48:26,600 --> 00:48:27,650
And we were close.

814
00:48:27,650 --> 00:48:34,510
The day before, we
had a little van

815
00:48:34,510 --> 00:48:36,770
we had picked up
from the ordinance.

816
00:48:36,770 --> 00:48:44,200
And we moved about three
or four French officers

817
00:48:44,200 --> 00:48:46,050
to various little towns--

818
00:48:46,050 --> 00:48:49,780
Malmedy, Saint Vith, and
some of the other places.

819
00:48:49,780 --> 00:48:51,835
And it was interesting.

820
00:48:51,835 --> 00:48:56,782

821
00:48:56,782 --> 00:48:59,020
One German, or
otherwise, told us

822
00:48:59,020 --> 00:49:01,630
that they had heard
that the Germans were

823
00:49:01,630 --> 00:49:05,690
supposed to be coming through,
going to invade the next day.

824
00:49:05,690 --> 00:49:07,540
So I passed the
word on to a friend

825
00:49:07,540 --> 00:49:12,580
of mine, who was a military
police officer in another town,

826
00:49:12,580 --> 00:49:14,480
to pass the word along.

827
00:49:14,480 --> 00:49:17,140
But this was a period when
there was all kinds of rumors,

828
00:49:17,140 --> 00:49:20,980
and so on, and the line
was very thinly held.

829
00:49:20,980 --> 00:49:24,100
Well, the Germans came through.

830
00:49:24,100 --> 00:49:31,750

And at one time, we
were practically almost

831
00:49:31,750 --> 00:49:35,740
in the combat zone.

832
00:49:35,740 --> 00:49:37,420
We'd heard small arms fire.

833
00:49:37,420 --> 00:49:39,610
It was that close
to the situation.

834
00:49:39,610 --> 00:49:41,050
But nothing got any worse.

835
00:49:41,050 --> 00:49:48,820
Of course, Third Army
made a big [? in run ?]

836
00:49:48,820 --> 00:49:53,740
They came through our town
of Vervier with these tanks.

837
00:49:53,740 --> 00:49:58,180
All night long, these tanks
were arriving, coming through.

838
00:49:58,180 --> 00:50:01,120
And the British,
apparently, were

839
00:50:01,120 --> 00:50:06,820
unable to hold the Germans
back, and the whole object.

840
00:50:06,820 --> 00:50:10,690
Well, the tide turned
on Christmas Day,

841
00:50:10,690 --> 00:50:14,380
which was the first clear day.

842

00:50:14,380 --> 00:50:15,910

All the other days
were overcast.

843

00:50:15,910 --> 00:50:19,210

The Germans took advantage of it
because the Americans couldn't

844

00:50:19,210 --> 00:50:22,000

provide any air protection.

845

00:50:22,000 --> 00:50:25,510

So that's what happened.

846

00:50:25,510 --> 00:50:29,210

And after that, we recovered.

847

00:50:29,210 --> 00:50:32,320

848

00:50:32,320 --> 00:50:38,910

Shortly after New Year's Day, I
picked up a case of hepatitis.

849

00:50:38,910 --> 00:50:40,850

It was very, very painful.

850

00:50:40,850 --> 00:50:43,120

They sent me to Paris.

851

00:50:43,120 --> 00:50:47,990

And then, because they expected
a lot of American casualties

852

00:50:47,990 --> 00:50:50,720

to be sent into the
Parisian hospitals,

853

00:50:50,720 --> 00:50:53,360

I was shipped to England.

854

00:50:53,360 --> 00:50:55,880
And I was in the hospital there.

855
00:50:55,880 --> 00:51:01,190
And here I was lying
in officers' quarters

856
00:51:01,190 --> 00:51:07,410
with a big ward, with
wounded officers who

857
00:51:07,410 --> 00:51:09,740
all had been in combat
of one sort or another,

858
00:51:09,740 --> 00:51:13,250
and here I was sick
with hepatitis.

859
00:51:13,250 --> 00:51:16,880
So after a couple of
months, I recovered.

860
00:51:16,880 --> 00:51:21,170
And they used to give me
little errands to keep me busy,

861
00:51:21,170 --> 00:51:23,840
carrying orders from
one city to another,

862
00:51:23,840 --> 00:51:31,530
and it was a way of building
up my resistance, or whatever,

863
00:51:31,530 --> 00:51:32,855
to activity.

864
00:51:32,855 --> 00:51:40,370
And finally, I got shipped
back on a landing ship,

865
00:51:40,370 --> 00:51:48,920

back to Rome and Paris, and then
going through various stages

866
00:51:48,920 --> 00:51:50,060
to rejoin my unit.

867
00:51:50,060 --> 00:51:52,610

868
00:51:52,610 --> 00:51:55,040
I wound up in Germany.

869
00:51:55,040 --> 00:51:58,395
Meantime, they'd gone
out to Luxembourg.

870
00:51:58,395 --> 00:51:59,845
My unit had gone
out to Luxembourg

871
00:51:59,845 --> 00:52:02,180
and various other places.

872
00:52:02,180 --> 00:52:07,430
And I finally caught up with our
group in at Wetzlar, Germany.

873
00:52:07,430 --> 00:52:10,850
In Wetzlar, which is
where they make Leicas,

874
00:52:10,850 --> 00:52:13,190
they were in charge of a
large displaced persons

875
00:52:13,190 --> 00:52:17,330
camp at a big former
military barracks.

876
00:52:17,330 --> 00:52:20,460
But the group had gone
that day and morning.

877

00:52:20,460 --> 00:52:22,910

What had happened, they'd
been alerted and sent

878

00:52:22,910 --> 00:52:25,050

to the Buchwald
concentration camp.

879

00:52:25,050 --> 00:52:27,980

This was about the
middle of April.

880

00:52:27,980 --> 00:52:32,630

And so I had to wait for
a Jeep and a driver that

881

00:52:32,630 --> 00:52:35,030

drove me into Buchwald.

882

00:52:35,030 --> 00:52:38,700

And we got there.

883

00:52:38,700 --> 00:52:40,690

Buchwald is a beach force.

884

00:52:40,690 --> 00:52:44,580

It's right outside the
lovely town of Weimar,

885

00:52:44,580 --> 00:52:47,370

which was virtually untouched.

886

00:52:47,370 --> 00:52:51,810

And here he arrived
at this camp,

887

00:52:51,810 --> 00:52:53,265

which looked like all camps.

888

00:52:53,265 --> 00:52:58,070

The German camps
have had a front gate

889
00:52:58,070 --> 00:53:04,410
with a tower and little offices
on each side of the gate.

890
00:53:04,410 --> 00:53:08,322

891
00:53:08,322 --> 00:53:09,780
What's the first
thing you remember

892
00:53:09,780 --> 00:53:12,330
seeing when you arrived?

893
00:53:12,330 --> 00:53:17,250
Well, there was just
almost chaos there.

894
00:53:17,250 --> 00:53:19,290
Third Army had captured
the place the day

895
00:53:19,290 --> 00:53:22,963
before, day or two before.

896
00:53:22,963 --> 00:53:24,630
The officer, and
enlisted men, were just

897
00:53:24,630 --> 00:53:31,020
picking up everything they could
get their hands on, looting,

898
00:53:31,020 --> 00:53:32,630
souvenir hunting.

899
00:53:32,630 --> 00:53:34,660
And there were binoculars there.

900
00:53:34,660 --> 00:53:36,800
There was small arms.

901
00:53:36,800 --> 00:53:39,300
There was one thing or another.

902
00:53:39,300 --> 00:53:45,780
And among the things, being the
junior officer in the outfit,

903
00:53:45,780 --> 00:53:50,680
the captain had told me
to pull the duty officer,

904
00:53:50,680 --> 00:53:55,440
and so I was sat in a little
office at the entrance.

905
00:53:55,440 --> 00:54:01,265
And that first night, things
were very, very confused.

906
00:54:01,265 --> 00:54:04,040

907
00:54:04,040 --> 00:54:07,760
Bodies, I think,
had been first--

908
00:54:07,760 --> 00:54:08,672
they ran out of coal.

909
00:54:08,672 --> 00:54:10,130
That's why the
bodies [INAUDIBLE]..

910
00:54:10,130 --> 00:54:13,410
Of course you had all of
this terrible-looking things.

911
00:54:13,410 --> 00:54:20,490
It was just chaos, confusion,
and everything else.

912

00:54:20,490 --> 00:54:25,220
I then heard from
everybody that everybody

913
00:54:25,220 --> 00:54:33,260
all the enlisted personnel were
grabbing the lampshades, which

914
00:54:33,260 --> 00:54:39,410
were made out a parchment
from human skin, that

915
00:54:39,410 --> 00:54:41,830
had interesting tattoos.

916
00:54:41,830 --> 00:54:48,860
Hilda Koch who was the wife
of the adjutant to Buchenwald,

917
00:54:48,860 --> 00:54:52,070
she would ride out
to the various onyx

918
00:54:52,070 --> 00:54:56,630
quarries that were nearby
that the prisoners worked.

919
00:54:56,630 --> 00:54:58,700
And she'd see an
interesting tattoo.

920
00:54:58,700 --> 00:55:03,110
She'd have the man seized
and killed and skinned,

921
00:55:03,110 --> 00:55:08,540
and she would then use the
skin to make these parchments,

922
00:55:08,540 --> 00:55:10,100
human parchment lamps.

923
00:55:10,100 --> 00:55:11,860

You found these in her quarters?

924

00:55:11,860 --> 00:55:12,360

No.

925

00:55:12,360 --> 00:55:14,870

926

00:55:14,870 --> 00:55:16,340

Everybody was looking for them.

927

00:55:16,340 --> 00:55:20,450

These lampshades were all
over in the offices of the SS,

928

00:55:20,450 --> 00:55:22,100

and so on.

929

00:55:22,100 --> 00:55:28,760

And apparently, I found a couple
of pieces in this desk drawer

930

00:55:28,760 --> 00:55:31,260

that somebody had stashed away.

931

00:55:31,260 --> 00:55:35,030

So I immediately
felt, instinctively,

932

00:55:35,030 --> 00:55:37,250

that these would
be of some value

933

00:55:37,250 --> 00:55:40,010

to a future investigating group.

934

00:55:40,010 --> 00:55:43,690

So I took two or three and
locked them up in a drawer

935

00:55:43,690 --> 00:55:44,576

immediately.

936
00:55:44,576 --> 00:55:51,870

937
00:55:51,870 --> 00:55:53,560
Well, that was pretty
much the thing.

938
00:55:53,560 --> 00:55:57,720
I spent the whole
night in this thing,

939
00:55:57,720 --> 00:55:59,670
and there was people
coming in and going out,

940
00:55:59,670 --> 00:56:03,150
mostly Third Army
officers and so forth,

941
00:56:03,150 --> 00:56:06,990
picking up their
goodies, and so on.

942
00:56:06,990 --> 00:56:14,860
And the next
morning, as I recall,

943
00:56:14,860 --> 00:56:20,710
the Germans used to appoint
a so-called kapo, or chief,

944
00:56:20,710 --> 00:56:24,240
of each ethnic group, and they
would have a whole barracks

945
00:56:24,240 --> 00:56:25,540
to themselves, and so forth.

946
00:56:25,540 --> 00:56:28,310

947

00:56:28,310 --> 00:56:34,240
And of course, after
the liberation,

948
00:56:34,240 --> 00:56:35,530
they had a new kapos.

949
00:56:35,530 --> 00:56:41,410
Anyway, I called all
the kapos into my office

950
00:56:41,410 --> 00:56:43,360
and say, what are
some of the problems?

951
00:56:43,360 --> 00:56:47,530
The biggest first problem
was food and adequate water.

952
00:56:47,530 --> 00:56:50,820
There was some food
left, but that was

953
00:56:50,820 --> 00:56:53,200
getting to be a real problem.

954
00:56:53,200 --> 00:56:59,920
Well, some of the prisoners
were physically strong enough

955
00:56:59,920 --> 00:57:03,610
to use a motorcycle,
or a little car,

956
00:57:03,610 --> 00:57:05,560
or whatever they could steal.

957
00:57:05,560 --> 00:57:08,530
Obviously, they'd
gone into Weimar

958
00:57:08,530 --> 00:57:11,780
and got what they

were looking for.

959

00:57:11,780 --> 00:57:16,330

And so they were telling me
the problems, what's going on.

960

00:57:16,330 --> 00:57:23,410

And some said, well, we here in
such a such a village, there's

961

00:57:23,410 --> 00:57:27,820

a lot of wheat, a lot of
flour, a lot of clothing,

962

00:57:27,820 --> 00:57:29,050

a lot of whatever.

963

00:57:29,050 --> 00:57:34,790

And I had a staff marked
Military Government.

964

00:57:34,790 --> 00:57:38,470

And we had the highest
priority, after the US Army,

965

00:57:38,470 --> 00:57:44,490

to levy seizures of
goods, food, and so on.

966

00:57:44,490 --> 00:57:49,870

Well, in the meantime, our
very sophisticated enlisted

967

00:57:49,870 --> 00:57:55,560

personnel had taken
over the so-called motor

968

00:57:55,560 --> 00:57:59,610

pool, or garage,
that the SS used,

969

00:57:59,610 --> 00:58:03,645

and they had acquired

some olive drab paint.

970

00:58:03,645 --> 00:58:07,386

971

00:58:07,386 --> 00:58:10,800

They went out into
Weimar, picked up

972

00:58:10,800 --> 00:58:15,870

two five-ton German
diesel trucks,

973

00:58:15,870 --> 00:58:19,380

and other vehicles
that they needed.

974

00:58:19,380 --> 00:58:27,090

And our transportation equipment
consisted of two Jeeps and two

975

00:58:27,090 --> 00:58:28,800

trailers for this elite unit.

976

00:58:28,800 --> 00:58:33,270

So suddenly, we're
in the big time.

977

00:58:33,270 --> 00:58:40,340

From the experience we've had,
we were looking for anything

978

00:58:40,340 --> 00:58:44,600

that we could use for money.

979

00:58:44,600 --> 00:58:50,123

And so I requisitioned a
ton of German cigarettes.

980

00:58:50,123 --> 00:58:51,290

They were church cigarettes.

981

00:58:51,290 --> 00:58:53,870
I got them, locked them up.

982
00:58:53,870 --> 00:59:00,350
And we used about 40
liberated Polish prisoners

983
00:59:00,350 --> 00:59:04,370
as a work team, and they
were paid in cigarettes.

984
00:59:04,370 --> 00:59:10,550
And we used a young Czech
fella, who spoke many languages,

985
00:59:10,550 --> 00:59:12,110
as the interpreter.

986
00:59:12,110 --> 00:59:14,030
And so that was our work group.

987
00:59:14,030 --> 00:59:17,450
The sergeant and I would
go out of his car or Jeep,

988
00:59:17,450 --> 00:59:20,090
or he had a little
pickup or a Jeep,

989
00:59:20,090 --> 00:59:22,310
and we would go
into a town and we

990
00:59:22,310 --> 00:59:28,280
would look at SS headquarters or
look at a warehouse, and so on.

991
00:59:28,280 --> 00:59:30,530
If we thought we
could use it, we

992
00:59:30,530 --> 00:59:35,580
would then have our trucks

come in and unload, and so on.

993

00:59:35,580 --> 00:59:37,580

And when the trucks were
on the way out of town,

994

00:59:37,580 --> 00:59:41,540

I'd present the
requisition to the head

995

00:59:41,540 --> 00:59:43,820

of military government,
or the burgermeister,

996

00:59:43,820 --> 00:59:45,170

as the case may be.

997

00:59:45,170 --> 00:59:48,830

And of course, they'd all
screen to high heaven.

998

00:59:48,830 --> 00:59:51,240

But that's what we did.

999

00:59:51,240 --> 00:59:53,940

And we were there
for 2 and 1/2 months,

1000

00:59:53,940 --> 00:59:59,720

so for a two-month period,
we could pretty much

1001

00:59:59,720 --> 01:00:04,800

hustle between any place between
Leipzig and southern Riviera.

1002

01:00:04,800 --> 01:00:08,630

There wasn't a town that we
didn't get clothing, food,

1003

01:00:08,630 --> 01:00:10,280

or whatever.

1004

01:00:10,280 --> 01:00:15,110

Somebody told us of
a barn full of shoes.

1005

01:00:15,110 --> 01:00:16,460

So sergeant and I went there.

1006

01:00:16,460 --> 01:00:20,840

The barn was nailed shut, so we
pulled a couple of planks out

1007

01:00:20,840 --> 01:00:23,720

and went into to look in.

1008

01:00:23,720 --> 01:00:26,000

There were men's shoes,
but women's, too.

1009

01:00:26,000 --> 01:00:28,490

We had only men at Buchenwald.

1010

01:00:28,490 --> 01:00:30,860

But I had a feeling,
somehow or other,

1011

01:00:30,860 --> 01:00:35,512

that we might have a
transfer of populations,

1012

01:00:35,512 --> 01:00:36,470

which is what happened.

1013

01:00:36,470 --> 01:00:38,450

So we took the women's shoes.

1014

01:00:38,450 --> 01:00:42,280

In the meantime, the
owner of the shoes,

1015

01:00:42,280 --> 01:00:46,100

who had stocked them up
for to make a killing--

1016
01:00:46,100 --> 01:00:48,890
Where did he get the shoes from?

1017
01:00:48,890 --> 01:00:50,230
Well, he had acquired them.

1018
01:00:50,230 --> 01:00:53,000
These shoes he came
from all over Europe--

1019
01:00:53,000 --> 01:00:55,340
Romania, Italy,
all those things.

1020
01:00:55,340 --> 01:00:56,840
Same thing with foodstuffs.

1021
01:00:56,840 --> 01:01:02,070
The Germans really scoured
Europe to supply themselves.

1022
01:01:02,070 --> 01:01:03,380
And so he wanted the shoes.

1023
01:01:03,380 --> 01:01:05,693
And I said, I'm sorry.

1024
01:01:05,693 --> 01:01:06,860
He wanted the women's shoes.

1025
01:01:06,860 --> 01:01:11,180
I said, we may need them, and
anyway, you can't have them.

1026
01:01:11,180 --> 01:01:13,820
And later on, we did have it.

1027
01:01:13,820 --> 01:01:17,892
We had Poles, Poles and
Russians, displaced persons,

1028

01:01:17,892 --> 01:01:19,850

who were going to return
to their own countries

1029

01:01:19,850 --> 01:01:20,510

or coming back.

1030

01:01:20,510 --> 01:01:24,110

1031

01:01:24,110 --> 01:01:26,900

So that's pretty much it.

1032

01:01:26,900 --> 01:01:30,170

For example, somebody
had discovered

1033

01:01:30,170 --> 01:01:37,840

that the SS had a
frozen food, had

1034

01:01:37,840 --> 01:01:42,870

had a lot of venison stocked
in some frozen food place.

1035

01:01:42,870 --> 01:01:48,190

So that was liberated for
the benefit of the personnel.

1036

01:01:48,190 --> 01:01:52,110

And so I had a whole
building to myself.

1037

01:01:52,110 --> 01:01:56,641

There were three SS,
beautiful stone--

1038

01:01:56,641 --> 01:02:01,710

[PHONE RINGING] and
scoured the countryside.

1039

01:02:01,710 --> 01:02:08,220

And of course, the
place ran itself.

1040
01:02:08,220 --> 01:02:10,680
Apparently, anybody
working in the food area

1041
01:02:10,680 --> 01:02:13,320
at all, that was one of
the ways you could survive.

1042
01:02:13,320 --> 01:02:17,220
You'd be able to steal
enough to get by.

1043
01:02:17,220 --> 01:02:21,915
Did you have much interaction
with the kapos or the DPs?

1044
01:02:21,915 --> 01:02:24,570

1045
01:02:24,570 --> 01:02:27,480
I had a lot of interaction
with the kapos.

1046
01:02:27,480 --> 01:02:29,630
That was my counsel
I met with every day.

1047
01:02:29,630 --> 01:02:33,450
They informed me what was
going around, in terms

1048
01:02:33,450 --> 01:02:37,320
of the food supply, problems.

1049
01:02:37,320 --> 01:02:40,430
For example, one day,
they came in very excited.

1050
01:02:40,430 --> 01:02:45,120
The communists had gotten

a hold of some of the keys

1051

01:02:45,120 --> 01:02:57,090
and broke into the locked areas
where valuables were collected

1052

01:02:57,090 --> 01:03:01,400
from the prisoners, and they
had looted a lot of the stuff.

1053

01:03:01,400 --> 01:03:04,620
So what could I do?

1054

01:03:04,620 --> 01:03:05,620
You couldn't shoot them.

1055

01:03:05,620 --> 01:03:07,750
You didn't know who they were.

1056

01:03:07,750 --> 01:03:11,580
And so I picked up the
rest of the stuff, which

1057

01:03:11,580 --> 01:03:15,670
consisted mostly of watches,
a few rings, and things

1058

01:03:15,670 --> 01:03:16,170
like that.

1059

01:03:16,170 --> 01:03:20,970

1060

01:03:20,970 --> 01:03:24,000
One situation, we sent them
to the Office of Military

1061

01:03:24,000 --> 01:03:25,990
Government, and so forth.

1062

01:03:25,990 --> 01:03:28,700
But I didn't have time to do it.

Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection