

This is tape 2, side A of the USHMM interview with Milton Shurr.

So what I did in that situation is just put all the watches and objects on a table, and I called in the heads of all the ethnic groups except the Russians, who I felt had already had their share. And we just divided it up like a pie in various pieces and each kapo took a group, because I figured that these watches and jewels and whatnot would be a means of enabling some of these poor souls to sort of buy a stake in wherever they were going. And that just solved that in a practical, realistic way.

There were times when-- well, these were some interesting things. One of my fellow officers who was senior to me spoke excellent German, and all the refugees were talking to him. You know, we wanted to go here. We wanted to go there. But we heard that I may have relatives still surviving in such a camp and so on. And he was absolutely bedeviled by these people, and in the course of a week, he finally became mentally disturbed and had to be sent away to treatment.

And they would talk to me, and I would refuse to talk to them. I said, there's nothing I can do. I said, you'll have to wait until the Red Cross or somebody else comes in to help you. I said, there's nothing I can do. And I refused. I mean, I felt sorry for the people. It was nothing-- it's just a matter of reality. My job was to provide food and supplies for 15,000 survivors.

Initially, people were dying in the rate of 300 a day from malnutrition and typhus. Some of the attempts when the Third Army came in, they brought in a sanitation crew which sprayed everybody with DDT, and that put a stop to the typhus epidemic. But some of the people were dying simply because they couldn't even inject any fluids or nutrition into their veins. They were just so depleted. They just stopped.

So the death rate was about 300 a day, and it gradually tapered off. And meantime, all the people from the Allied countries, displaced persons like us, immediately were sent back. English, there were even some American officers who had been there, flyers who had been at [PLACE NAME] and were arrested and thrown in a concentration camp because they weren't in uniform.

And then one day, in comes in two Red Cross personnel, a man and a woman, and they wanted to know what they could do. Meantime, we had acquired a lot of typewriters and so on, and so we found an office for the Red Cross people. And we told them, here's this horrible job of trying to relocate people. That was just made for Red Cross, and they were delighted. I never saw them again.

Then another couple came in and they were from the Joint Distribution Committee. Well, what could we do? We want to do something. I said, fine. I said, I understand there are about 2000 young boys in the regular barracks, not the wooden things but the regular barracks. And I said, all I know is that we're taking care of them in terms of food and so on, but they really need somebody to work with them to find out their relatives. You know, it's a terrible situation.

So I never saw these 2,000 boys. And they went over there. Again, I gave them an office, gave equipments. And off they ran, and they took care of the 2,000 Jewish boys who were five to 12 years of age.

I only learned probably a few months ago that Eli Wiesel is one of those survivors, which made me feel good. At least something I did was important. But that's pretty much how it ran.

Buchenwald was basically a concentration camp for political prisoners. Leon Blum for example, was there at one time, plus a lot of other Allied personnel. And it had a lot of some convicts there, German convicts, plus displaced persons, plus refugees of various camps.

There was some unnecessary medical experiments. Dumping people in frozen water to see how long they could survive.

Did you know about that while you at them?

Yeah. I mean the prisoners would tell me these things. Injections of phenol, carbolic acid, into the spinal cord to see

what would happen. And so on and so forth. That was going on.

I had some pictures taken, and the museum has them. And they had about three or four ovens, and when someone died or was murdered they were cremated. The ashes were used for fertilizer. The teeth, if they had gold in their teeth, it was knocked out. And again, and so forth, like had.

And the reason the bodies piled up is they ran out of coal. That was the reason the bodies piled up. And of course, in the early days the army had the Burgermeister of Weimar. And a lot of citizens come in and help bury the people. And it was that kind of situation.

So the people in the surrounding areas knew what was going on?

Well, they claimed they didn't know anything, but they knew after they'd walk through there. And of course, a lot of Americans and diplomatic people went through there. And I took a few of them around. I remember Jimmy Doolittle. Very impressive man. I took him around, and I took a few other officers and some diplomatic personnel that came through and so on.

One time, some American soldiers who had made a tour of the camp, told me, oh well we're having a great time. We saw a Polish SS soldier being beaten up. And I said, what? So I immediately made sure that the MPs were notified. They liberated this poor SS soul who was being beaten up periodically for the edification of the American soldiers' visitors, and so on. But that was a rare thing.

What I understood was that the-- apparently there was some kind of an uprising there, but I suspect when the SS heard the Americans were coming down the pike, they took off. And so the uprising I'm sure wasn't a pitched battle by any accounts. But the prisoners did, they caught the dogs. As many dogs as they could. They'd just strangle them. They just hated the dogs.

There was a lot of terrible instances. Somebody would throw a-- a prisoner I was asked to throw his hat towards the barbed wires, the double fence of barbed wire. And as they went to the fence to recoup his hat, that they shoot him. It was that kind of society. Life was cheap. The thing that impressed me over and beyond the cruelty of the situation-- skinning of people, maltreatment, and so on-- was the cheapness of life. Life didn't mean anything to the Germans. It was just people who you wasted away for no good reason. That was the thing that was the biggest thing that affected me.

There was a ante-room in that just area right near the crematorium. And there were a couple of meat hooks, and they would take and tie the hands of a prisoner behind him and hang him on the meat hooks. And you could see the deep furrows in this stuccoed wall where people in their agony were scratching the wall.

Those are the kinds of things that are indelible. There were probably many other things that happened there.

You mentioned that you were collecting things like the lampshades.

I collected just a couple of pieces, which I turned over. And again, about a month after the capture or liberation, we had a war crimes group come in and turned things over to them.

Right, so they came in and they took photographs of the furrows in the wall.

I was too busy. I couldn't handle all these things. And what I did-- maybe this is because I was, one, mature, one, had a lot of experience in community organizations. And I worked through my delegation of authority and so on and made use of the camp personnel where we could and our own soldiers. But our soldiers were engaged pretty much in the whole question of providing us with equipment, and so forth and so on, and picking up the food and the clothing.

And we had a warehouse where we keep things locked up and so on. And finally, we'd gone as far north as Leipzig and way down into Bavaria to pick up clothing and food. Anywhere we heard if there was an SS barracks, we'd go in. I

remember one place, we picked up loads of cloth. Fine worsted cloth, which we brought back to the tailors. There were tailors at the camp, and they made clothing for themselves.

So anything the sergeant and I thought was useful, could be useful, we just picked up and brought back to the camp. And we were really-- I made a rough estimate that we had about 15,000 survivors maybe. And it was fluctuating because newcomers came in as the people went west, some were preparing to go east, and we picked them up.

And I estimated at \$1 a day food, which is very conservative, that I probably saved the United States government \$1 million running around.

How long, how many months were you in Buchenwald?

We were there for two and a half months. From about April 15 to July 1st, the area was turned over to the Russians. That was part of a agreed-upon thing.

Now in that time, could you see the prisoners gaining weight?

Oh yes. Oh yeah. Oh sure. Matter of fact, our camp Buchenwald was so efficient in cooking and baking and so on, that some camps that ran out of food would come to Buchenwald to get loaves of bread for them. I don't know if we-- I don't think we got anything from the troops. And we should have been provided rations, but we just got into this cycle of looting to find food for the camp that we just kept going.

And finally, at about-- so we were there half of April and May and maybe about the middle of June, beginning of June, middle of June, it was getting pretty difficult to find food. We'd pretty much cleaned out the various warehouses, and the Germans were also protesting. We were taking any greenery that we could get. Green stuffs.

And the captain told me, you've got to stop this. And I'd say, yes captain. Then we kept going, because I felt in my mind, these prisoners had a priority. They had suffered long enough.

What was the makeup of the prisoners? You said they were mostly political prisoners, but were they a lot of Poles, Germans?

Well, they were political prisoners, and there were some criminals, German criminals. The others were political prisoners and Jews and gypsies and Seventh Day Adventists and so on. And they were from Poland, Russia, Yugoslavia, wherever. And there were some Germans. There were some Allied personnel in there. Anybody caught out of uniform could be thrown in the concentration camp.

And so there were people-- of course, everybody wore a patch. If you're a homosexual, you had a pink patch. If you're a Jew, you had a yellow star. If you're somebody else, you had-- and I turned over to Buchenwald, I had some clean patches. And I had some clean camp money, paper money, that I turned over to them. And they have a little plaque, about 20, 30 names of people who were donors. And I was one of the donors.

In fact, over the years, a lot of the stuff got thrown away as I moved from job to job. But they still had a few things. I turned things over to the museum.

So the people continued to wear their patches while they in the DP camps?

Oh yeah, sure.

Why?

And uniforms.

Why did they continue to wear their patches, do you think?

Well for one, they had no other clothing. That was number one. And they were proud of being Jews, or proud of being Czechs or Yugoslavs or whatever. We did try to get clothing for them, and we did get some clothing for a good many of them. We had shoes and so on.

We even acquired some-- for those who were going back to their respective countries eventually, we provided paper suitcases for them. Anything that we could use, we picked up. And I think people were-- I think the prisoners themselves were satisfied.

Well, our Czech interpreter was the son of an owner of one of the large Czech steel mills in Pilsen. And he was half Jewish. His father was part of the Czech government and exiled in London. His mother, brother, and sister were murdered, sent to a concentration camp. And he was thrown into Buchenwald. And the only reason he survived he says, was that he was befriended by the communists, and he was able to eat enough potato peelings while he was peeling potatoes to survive.

And so finally, I would say end of June, middle of June and so on, he wanted to go back to Prague to see if any of his friends were alive. So I asked the captain if I could go, and so I outfitted him up, dressed him up as a sergeant with .45, and wrote out orders saying I was supposed to go to Prague to arrange for the repatriation of the Czechs. They had gone on previously a week. But that was the excuse then.

So we got a Jeep, and we drove to Pilsen. And we had our orders signed by the Soviet liaison officer. And we then drove between Pilsen and Prague, and every couple of miles we were stopped by a Russian, some who couldn't even read. They would turn this thing, our orders, upside down. Soon as they saw the hammer and sickle, they waved us on.

We got into Prague, and we drove into a courtyard of an apartment house. Took the four wheels off the Jeep, hid them because the Russians had a great fondness for Jeeps. And so the next few days, I was the PX officer. I never smoked, so I had extra cartons of cigarettes and liquor and whatnot. I used to have to lay out my money and go and order the things. And the enlisted men, during the whole period that I was PX officer, always drew a full ration of liquor and everything else.

Because if the French liaison people didn't pay for things and show up, they didn't get to draw their rations. So I had some extra cigarettes and liquor or so on. I turned it over to this fellow to give to his friends. Well we got into Prague. One of the former prisoners was very emphatic. He wanted me to come to his house, and he wanted to do anything possible for me.

So I visited him, and I said, well I'd appreciate a typical Czech meal. So his mother cooked me a typical Czech meal. And it was interesting. I was contemplating here, I was being befriended by an ex-prisoner, who not many days ago was living in the camp. And his other friends he had, they brought me souvenirs. I had a couple of cameras, a violin, because they heard I played the violin and so on.

But they were so overjoyed, you know? So there was appreciation of what the Americans did too. There's no question about it. The Czechs bitterly hated the Russians. The Russians would stop people in the streets, strip them of watches, jewelry, anything they had. If you were driving a car, they stopped the car, and take the car. And so on and so forth.

So it was interesting. Prague was an incredibly beautiful city. It was virtually untouched, and these Czech people just drove me around and I saw the sights. It really was quite remarkable. And then we drove back to camp a couple days later.

And then on July 4th, the camp was-- meantime, there was a constant change of personnel. The Poles had the option of going to England or back to Poland. The Russians didn't have any option. And so you gradually the moving out of many of the men, going back to the west. The Poles being the last to leave.

And then a new influx of women, mostly Poles and Russians, some with children, but mostly single persons. And they were waiting for the agreement for the Russians to take over. And some were going. Some were debarking by train to go

back to Poland or Russia. And some were just staying in the camp and so forth.

I was tempted a couple of times to burn the place. It just stank to high heaven. It permeated. There was a smell about these camps, these barracks, that permeated everything. The people would-- they had no medicines, although there were physicians, dentists, other health personnel in the camps as prisoners. But there was nothing for them to heal anybody with. So the death rate was high, no question about it. And the accommodations were pretty miserable.

Latrine, for example, is a huge, huge room. You had a couple of poles, and you sat on a pole with a pit underneath there for the fecal matter, other matters to drop off. And it was just pretty primitive society.

Cooking was done in four or five huge kettles. They were like pressure cookers. I don't know how many gallons of food, soup they would produce, but they would just throw everything into there and make soup. And that's how they fed people. And I guess people must have taken containers back to the barracks, and then dishes out to the various individuals.

I never got into that, because I was too busy getting supplies and sort of taking charge of that end of the picture. And presumably, our other officers were doing something. Although the captain of our unit, he had procured one of two Mercedes-Benz sport cars that were made back in 1936 or so. And I rode in one of these things. Ran like on the Autobahn. It went up to about 100 miles an hour and rode like a-- didn't have any springs in it. It's just like a truck.

And he was he was trying to arrange to have this driven to Paris and so he would have it. And so I don't know what the other officers did. They didn't do-- far as I-- the one that became mentally disturbed, he came back for a short time and couldn't make it. And he eventually was sent back to the States. Meantime, the Red Cross, JDC were doing their job. And I never saw them again.

And this is how things were at the time. All the officers had to be got a medical examination to-- this was after the war was over, the German war was over. We were all got a medical examination to see where we fit for the reassignment to Japan, Japanese, eastern.

At that time, because of the pressure of work I was doing, I had developed high blood pressure, which is perfectly understandable. And I know how it affected whether I had gone overseas or not. But things had settled down a little. We got to about June, I wasn't running every day to look for food.

And finally, about some time in the beginning of June, we just couldn't find any more food. We'd cleaned out everything. And so I went to the first army headquarters, which was outside of Weimar, and called on the colonel in charge of supply and told him we had to have food brought to the camp. I think at that time, we might have had about 10,000 people, maybe more or less. And he was very he was very unresponsive.

Well, he said, I'll give you a crying towel. I said, listen. I was by now a first lieutenant. I said, I don't care if you send me back to the States in chains. I said, I've had enough of this. I've been working day and night for months, and I've had it. And I said, if you don't provide us with food, rations for this camp, I'm going to open up the gates tell people to go into Weimar and help themselves. And I said, you are going to be responsible for whatever civil disorders are going to take place as a result of this.

And he got the message. We got the food. But you know, there were a number of times in my army career where really I had to take really a hard attitude, which was contrary to my normal behavior. I'm rather a timid guy. But when I'm operating on behalf of somebody else, I felt a great deal of concern about it. And had the courage or whatever to fight on people's behalf.

And we heard some terrible things. As soon as the Russians and Poles were going back to Poland and Russia, and particularly they grabbed all of the Russians, took all the clothing and stuff we gave them, stripped them and put them in uniform and sent them to Siberia. The allegation was that they were actually, by contact with the Americans, they were spoiled and they were no longer reliable Russians.

To emphasize that point still further, during the time we were in Belgium and Verviers, we had a lot of Russians, Soviet people there. And so a Russian officer, who had been captured and was a slave laborer-- he wasn't in uniform-- he came through and so our captain made him a liaison officer to the Russians. Our liaison officer to deal with the Russians. Did a very nice job.

And well, while he was in Buchenwald, he was ordered back by the Russians to Paris. He got to Paris. They raised hell with him. How come you're working with the Americans? You're a traitor. You're this, you're that. And so, he had to save his life literally, he had to confess that he was coerced to working with the Americans, and that he repents this and so forth.

And so then they allowed him to regain his rank as a captain, and he came back in full military uniform with this decorations, his epaulets. And then he begged us to do anything possible to take him back to the United States. But this is the attitude.

Another time when we were in Verviers, one of the Russian prisoners, displaced persons, got out of camp and robbed a Belgian couple. Shot them, killed them. And so the Belgian authorities got a hold him. We threw him into the local bastille. And it really was a bastille. I visited to see whether he was all right. And you went into these huge, steel doors, which clanked as they shut, with thick walls and so forth. It was a real jail.

Well then the Russian liaison officers came, and they were very concerned with us. Why weren't we distributing cigarettes to the Russian nationals? The Polish nationals were getting it. The Belgian nationals were getting it. These persons were getting it. I said well, the British army is providing these people with cigarettes, and I said, all we do is distribute it to them. And I said, the rest of us, the Americans, we buy our cigarettes.

And I said, if you will provide cigarettes, I'll see that the Russian nationals get it. And that was his concern. So I asked him, what do we do about this criminal, Russian criminal, who-- Oh, he said, we have a lot of crime in Russia, and we deal very harshly with them. And he said, you should shoot him. Well obviously, I wasn't about to shoot any Russians or anybody else. And so I guess the poor guy is still, if he's still alive, he's still in the local lockup.

That was their attitude. They were more concerned with the distribution of cigarettes to their nationals than with their welfare really. And so that's a little side issue about them. And it's amazing how much underground knowledge you got. Almost shortly after these fellows were on a train, stripped-- [NO AUDIO]

This is the USHMM oral history interview with Milton Sure. This is tape two, side B.

You were talking about toward the end of your time at Buchenwald.

Yeah, end of the time at Buchenwald. It was interesting. I had a chance to go to Jena, which was less than 10 miles away and where the great Zeiss Works was located and also where the so-called Schott Glass Works. One of the things about the optical instruments and cameras that the Zeiss people made, could never have been possible if they didn't have the superlative glass that was produced by the Schott Works.

It was interesting that Jena as a city was almost obliterated. The workers' housing was literally blown apart. And that the Zeiss Works were almost intact. Now whether they had a wonderful camouflage that protected them or whether there was a gentleman's agreement not to bomb it, I'll never know. But it was untouched.

I did have a chance, I visited a couple of scientists that they had. In the original house of one of the founders, they set up a research laboratory by two scientists. One was a physician. One was a PhD. And I was interested what they were doing.

One of the men was working with a lot of different fungus colonies, and he was trying to develop the equivalent of streptomycin and other things. The other fellow was working on the effect of trace elements on the body. And that was quite [INAUDIBLE]. And both of them had some papers published in English which they gave me. And they were very concerned about wanting to leave there to go to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, trying to get out with their families and

their instruments and some of their cultures, other things.

And the only thing I suggested to them, was that I said, I couldn't do that as a member of the army. But I said, I would suggest that you try to get in touch with the Red Cross people. Maybe they would provide you with a couple of trucks to move their equipment out. They gave me-- they didn't have any cameras, so they gave me a microscope. And there was a microscope that had a phase contrast device on it, so they could do black field and illuminations, things like that. It was very advanced, much more than American microscopes.

And I had a good friend, a Belgian pediatrician. And so when our Belgian liaison officer went back to Belgium, I gave him the microscope to pass on to my friend. The thing that was very, very hard to see was in the days before, two or three days before the Russians were going to take over that part of Thuringia-- including Weimar, Buchenwald-- you'd see people lined up on the road with buggies, carts, one-horse vehicles, and so on, loaded with their few possessions, marching on the side of the road.

It was reminiscent of some of the movies we saw of the movement of populations during the invasion of France and Poland during the days. Very pathetic seeing that. But this is how people felt about the Russians. And obviously, I think their fears were well-founded.

Well, what else can we say?

Can you describe leaving Buchenwald?

Well, the one thing I wanted to mention is that Buchenwald-- and I don't know about other concentration camps, because I had never visited any other but Buchenwald. Didn't have time to. But it had a number of little industries there. They assembled pistols. They assembled binoculars. They had some other small parts, different things they were doing. And of course they were mining onyx. They were making these tremendous desk sets out of onyx. They were really beautiful. Obviously they went to the Nazis and so on.

While we were looking for equipment, I recall we ran into a huge barn a good ways from Buchenwald. We were looking for objects there. We found pistols. We found rifles. They found some clothing and things that we-- and apparently this barn was used to as a little sub-warehouse. They used to assemble military equipment in outlying areas, because of the bombing that took place. This was going on all over Germany.

The Sergeant and I would look over things, and anything we saw that we thought we could use, we took. And if it was from a governmental unit, we gave them a requisition order from the military government, signed by me. And that's pretty much what we did.

Things quieted down a little because the new group was moving in. The army was not providing the food, so we didn't have to chase around. So we had a little more time to ourselves to relax a bit. And meantime, our staff sort of melted away. I don't know where they went.

Our enlisted personnel, who I said were very ingenious, they had acquired some olive drab paint and stencils. And so, for example, they stole these two and a half ton diesel trucks. They were sprayed with olive drab paint, and they put fake ordnance numbers on them. And they'd be off and running. And they wanted to give me a Mercedes. I refused to take large cars, because being a first lieutenant, somebody would outrank me and take it away from me.

So I took a small little car. It was intact. It practically had new tires on it. And it didn't have much of a motor going down the autobahn. I had to go to Munich a few times to consult with people. I used to have to either go up in 2nd or speed it up to 50 miles an hour in order to get over the hill. But nobody around me, and I used that as a personal car for the rest of the time I was in Germany.

And so itself we were then left. I had orders to report to some outfit which was in a regular military government unit. And I was classified as a health and welfare officer. And other people went wherever. I don't know. I don't know what happened to the captain. I don't know what happened to the enlisted personnel. Never saw them again. We all had our

different orders.

But it was a very hectic experience. I was a lot-- but I've paid. I paid. My immune system is very much compromised by the stress I had during this whole period. And I've developed arthritis. I had uveitis, which is a eye condition, a retinal problem, based on the immune system. But that's it. Otherwise, however, I've survived.

So you said it was in July that you left Buchenwald.

Yeah, it was turned over-- the Russian zone was enlarged to include the whole province of Thuringia, which included Weimar, Jena, and so on. And then the Americans were deployed. Principally, the British got the territory up around the northern part. The French got the area around Stuttgart, I believe. And the Americans got Bavaria.

When you left Buchenwald, where did you go?

I joined the unit-- I had orders to join a unit which moved down in the southern part of Bavaria. And it was supposed to be in charge of a town there. And we were there for probably two or three weeks, and then they moved us to the center of Bavaria.

Apparently there was a military government team at the little rural town of Kempten, which was probably a little city or village of about 5,000 people or less. County seat in a rural county. There was very little industry there. I think they manufactured silverware. And there was a brewery. And there was some other-- two or three other kinds of things.

Apparently some military government unit-- not a military government unit-- probably a rifle company or somebody went in there. These were combat troops, went in there. And put in charge, and they did nothing. They just drank. Far as we could see, they drank up all the liquor and probably seduced all the girls. But there was nothing. Schools were closed. Industry closed. Banks were closed. It was just-- and this thing had languished for a couple of months now.

So we removed in, and we had to work day and night to get things moving, which we did.

Were you still doing the same type of job that you had at Buchenwald where you were searching for supplies?

No, my job there-- we didn't have supplies because we were drawing army rations. We were a regular unit. My job was to work at getting the schools open, hospital open. So it was health, welfare. It was fine arts, monuments.

As different officers left to go back to the States, I would take on another thing. And at one time I had to open up the banks. I opened up the hospitals. The schools had to be-- the personnel had to be denazified. A Nazi was anybody who-- anybody who did anything had to be a member of the Nazi party. However, if you were a sergeant or higher, you were deemed to be a Nazi, a professed Nazi. And so you were ineligible to hold public office.

So had opened up our school, we couldn't find teachers who qualified. But it happened there were a number of nuns, some of whom were teachers. Good many of them were teachers. And so we were able to hire them and open up the school system.

There was a young physician in town, and for some reason he wasn't a Nazi. And so we made him health officer, and he also was in charge of opening up the little hospital they had there. We talked to the bank people, and we said, well the bank's got to open.

And you'd talk to the people, and you couldn't develop any consensus with them. You could not talk to them and come to a conclusion which they would participate in. They just weren't-- the Germans couldn't function unless they had a direct order. And finally I had to say, after hours of discussion, well next Thursday at 9:00 in the morning, you will open the bank. Javal, javal. They did it, did it well. And this was true of everything.

Somebody, one of the officers, got the silver factory open. Somebody else got the brewery up and functioning. And there were a lot of silly things going on. For example, one time I had an order to find out how much the Catholic church



was collecting in funds. So I called on the chief religious person, who was the most senior. And I told him I had this order, and I was passing it on to him. And it was up to him to comply as he wished. And I never heard anything about it from anybody.

But that's kind of silly season stuff that went on. I had the responsibility for the largest Catholic institution in that area. It was an order of nuns that ran a 2,000-bed facility for retarded children, retarded persons. And one time, and I used to use as an interpreter when I had to go down there and approve certain things they were doing, which was no problem, these nuns would tell me about what was going on, what had happened.

At one time, Hitler proposed doing away with all the retarded persons, because they were not contributing to society. The public reaction in Bavaria, which was Catholic, almost 100% Catholic, was such that they just had to desist.

And so, when people say that if there wasn't for the general anti-Semitism in Germany that they wouldn't be able to kill Jews as they did, I believe it. Because here was an example of people trying to slay retarded children, and the public opinion wouldn't permit it. And I think this was true, what happened.

As another officer left, I became in charge of the fine arts and monuments. There was a large castle, wooden castle, nearby in which the art collections of several small cities were up there. So I visited to make sure it was well protected. And so there was a elderly gentleman with a huge Belgian German shepherd, and all the art was on the attic's floor, piled up. And he brought several around, and I had a camera. And I took pictures of these different things.

It wasn't a great collection, but there were some interesting pieces. A lot of Rubens, a lot of the German school, Belgian school materials. It wasn't looted material. These were really collections of some of the smaller cities in that general area. Well that's it.

Finally, I moved from that little team into Munich, and I was placed in charge. And this is when I was on the way to go home. I had had five battle stars, which gave me some points so I was able to qualify for returning back to the States. And so I was sent to join a field artillery battalion that was going back. And so I went along with them. Went back again through England on an aircraft carrier to the United States.

When I came back from Buchenwald, I ran into a good friend of mine who had been in the Civil Affairs unit of Brussels. And I had visited him a couple of times when I had business, like I was bringing in various displaced persons camp to Russians. We had to bring Russians to rejoin their Russian unit.

There were two young Jewish boys that these sisters in the convent had taken over, kept them during the duration of the war, and they passed as Catholics. And the mother superior one day called me and said, I have these two boys who really should go back to their parents. And she gave me their address, and so when I had business to go into Brussels, I drove these two young lads and went to the door and took them in. They took them in, as you can imagine. But there were a lot of little examples of that kind of stuff going on.

And finally, the last few weeks while I was in Germany, I was in charge of all the displaced persons camps in Germany. I visited a good many of them. And this was entirely different, because these were really temporary shelters for a lot of Poles, Russians, Eastern Europeans, who didn't want to go back to their country.

These were DP camps, not at former concentration camps?

No, they were in barracks. But they were more decent accommodations, but it was very crowded. And of course families would be separated by blankets and ropes and so on. Privacy was at a premium there. But they were not happy, but they were getting food. They were getting some medical care and waiting for such a time.

But the Eastern Europeans, mostly the Poles and others who were going back into Soviet-dominated governments, they were very unhappy about going back. They didn't want to go back.

I saw one situation which probably occurred many, many times. I was called by somebody, one of the displaced

persons, called me and said, why don't you go to so-and-so. So I drove up, and here was a farmer, a German farmer, who was being placed in a truck with all of his belongings, and they were kicking him out of his farm. The neighbors were doing it. They wanted to take over his farm.

This man and his family had been in Germany some 300 years. They had originally been some Ukrainians or some sort of Russian group that had emigrated to Germany to work in Bavaria. And there was a lot of it that went the other way, Germans that went to Russia. And the neighbors, just because of his Russian origins, many centuries earlier, had taken the excuse to throw him out of the country. And of course I stopped that, but what happened after I left?

We were told to officiate at some of the elections. Different officers went out to officiate at some of the elections in the land areas. So here was a little community, and a little local burgermeister of this village went up to the wall, school board. It was at the schoolhouse, and he wrote down five names. Those were the nominations. They didn't come from the public. That was his nominations. And the people were supposed to vote on it.

There was a complete lack of the democratic process. It had been ground out of the people during this Nazi regime. And I always felt I had a responsibility as an American to demonstrate our belief in democracy. In the main, I've been pleased with what Germany has done over the years, in terms from that. But they had been completely unable.

Not only that, but some of our orders were stupid. For example, we were told that we couldn't hold any conversations with the politicians who were social democrats. The social democrats in Germany were no different from the New Deal or Democrats in America. But this was the kind of stupid-- just like finding out how much the Catholic hierarchy was raking in. Just stupid ideas that people had, who were uninformed and so on.

But in the main, I think things worked out.

How many months were you away from home?

I was overseas just about two years.

During that time, you wrote to your wife?

Oh yeah. Sure.

What were you writing to her about? What were you telling her?

Mostly what I was doing, except I never got into any military discussions. But generally, what I was doing, if I was visiting any place or seeing anything interesting and so forth. I frequently sent her pictures or postcards from places, particularly when I was in England. But that was pretty much-- I corresponded, made use of the-- what is it-- VE mail or whatever it was called. V mail.

When I was in England and France, I would frequently buy some China or silver or something and send it back. All of which arrived.

And her mail arrived to you?

Oh yeah. Sure. Well, frequently you'd get three or four letters at a time. That happened, but no generally, the post office service was very good. Very good.

So when did you arrive back in America?

Well I arrived back in America in 1946. And her parents lived in New York City, in Manhattan. And apparently, somebody, some Red Cross staffer or somebody, called my wife and told her that she saw me at the boat. And they must have gotten her address and telephone from me. And they said, he looks fine. He's just fat, that's all. And he'll be coming home soon.

Well they demobilized us, and we wound up in New Jersey at Fort Dix. And took us a few days to get examined and so forth. So that's where we were.

While I was speaking about Brussels, this friend of mine who was another lieutenant who went through the same thing with me, I saw him at Fort Custer and his wife was with him. And so the girls became very friendly. And he got a job at SHAEF, in the military government headquarters in Kensington, up around that Albert Hall area. That's where he was.

I called him a few times. I visited him a few times when I visited London. And he was telling me about the buzz bombs landing in London. And well he got in touch with me when I arrived back in New York, and I was staying with my in-laws.

Oh, and he worked in the Brussels military government unit, the civil affairs unit in Brussels with Edward M.M. Warburg, who came from this illustrious family. His father had been a great head of fundraising for Jewish causes, and so was Edward Warburg. It was a banking family.

And one time, Mr. Warburg asked me if I wanted to go back to Europe. And I said no. I said I hadn't seen my wife for a couple of years, and I wasn't about to do that. But they wanted somebody to join the Jewish group to [INAUDIBLE]. And I would have been a good candidate, except I'd had two years of strenuous work.

And meantime, among the stuff I brought back was a six foot whip. At the handle end, it was about an inch square, practically an inch square, and tapered down to a fine point. And so he wanted to borrow it, so-called borrow it, and give it to Edward Warburg. So that when they made their appeals for fundraising, he could demonstrate the problems of people in concentration camps.

So that was one item that really got away. I've told people that they ought to look around in New York and some of the museums for it, because it belonged to-- so whether anybody does anything about it, I don't know.

Then in the meantime, in order to find a job, I could have gone back to Oklahoma City. They were willing to offer me a job, and I couldn't see kicking somebody else out of a job. And so in the meantime, I got a temporary job working for the United Jewish Appeal, and three of us were loaned-- two young men were loaned to Detroit to help out their campaign. So I got reintegrated in working in fundraising for the United Jewish Appeal in Detroit. We were there for a little over a month or so.

In the meantime, I decided I wanted to go back into a non-sectarian field, because there wasn't anything opening up in the Jewish field that appealed to me. And so I took a job in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was a job half time with the health department, and half time with the council social agencies. And I was to be in health planning.

I spent about six or seven months there, and the director of that agency and I just didn't see eye to eye. And I was trying to do a community planning job, and he only was interested in my working a very narrow corners. And finally I told him, just I said, I just can't continue here, and I'm going to start looking for another job.

So meantime, I saw a notice in the American Journal of Public Health that some large city was looking for an assistant in health planning. And so I responded. I was given an interview and learned it was in Chicago. And I was interviewed and offered the job. And I stayed there for five years in health planning, community.

I would have gone back into the Jewish field, but just there weren't any jobs at the time that seemed to be worthwhile.