

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,860

2

00:00:05,860 --> 00:00:08,680

This is a United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:08,680 --> 00:00:11,110

interview with Edward
Novakoff, conducted

4

00:00:11,110 --> 00:00:17,140

by Gail Schwartz on September
22, 1996 in Washington, DC.

5

00:00:17,140 --> 00:00:21,100

This is tape number
two, side A. And we

6

00:00:21,100 --> 00:00:26,260

were talking about your guarding
the prisoners at Nuremberg.

7

00:00:26,260 --> 00:00:30,300

What can you tell me, in
addition, about Rudolf Hess?

8

00:00:30,300 --> 00:00:31,960

Well, Hess, I remember
taking him over

9

00:00:31,960 --> 00:00:37,470

for interrogation to the
tribunal, wherever that was.

10

00:00:37,470 --> 00:00:39,100

And I heard him say to them--

11

00:00:39,100 --> 00:00:41,980

I was sitting behind them--

12

00:00:41,980 --> 00:00:45,040
something about-- they
asked him about the Jews

13
00:00:45,040 --> 00:00:46,810
and what happened and so forth.

14
00:00:46,810 --> 00:00:50,830
And they asked him, I believe,
the question was would you

15
00:00:50,830 --> 00:00:53,680
like a Jewish defense council?

16
00:00:53,680 --> 00:00:55,985
And I believe-- you know,
it's hard for me to remember.

17
00:00:55,985 --> 00:00:56,860
This is 50 years ago.

18
00:00:56,860 --> 00:00:58,450
But I believe his
answer was, no,

19
00:00:58,450 --> 00:01:01,750
not because I understand
what we did to the Jews,

20
00:01:01,750 --> 00:01:03,320
it may not be a good idea.

21
00:01:03,320 --> 00:01:04,750
Or something to that effect.

22
00:01:04,750 --> 00:01:07,120
Because he was speaking
in German and I don't--

23
00:01:07,120 --> 00:01:09,400
but it was that kind of an--

24

00:01:09,400 --> 00:01:13,270
so it was my belief that
he had amnesia to a point.

25
00:01:13,270 --> 00:01:15,940

26
00:01:15,940 --> 00:01:18,238
Also, I want to correct one
thing that I said earlier.

27
00:01:18,238 --> 00:01:20,530
I'm not sure whether it was
Raeder or DÄ¶nitz that tried

28
00:01:20,530 --> 00:01:22,000
to break my leg as I
went through a gate,

29
00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:22,958
but it was one of them.

30
00:01:22,958 --> 00:01:24,960
They both looked sort of alike.

31
00:01:24,960 --> 00:01:28,510
They were little short guys.

32
00:01:28,510 --> 00:01:31,862
So you did not stay--

33
00:01:31,862 --> 00:01:33,820
you were not there when
the formal beginnings--

34
00:01:33,820 --> 00:01:39,250
Yeah, what happened
was some time in,

35
00:01:39,250 --> 00:01:42,940
I believe it was
October or November,

36

00:01:42,940 --> 00:01:45,380

I'd had enough of this.

37

00:01:45,380 --> 00:01:47,110

I had enough of this.

38

00:01:47,110 --> 00:01:49,550

And the fellow that--

39

00:01:49,550 --> 00:01:51,840

this lieutenant who
was then working out

40

00:01:51,840 --> 00:01:54,520

of what they call a motor pool
company, I said call them.

41

00:01:54,520 --> 00:01:57,040

I says, wouldn't you
like a full time driver?

42

00:01:57,040 --> 00:01:59,740

So I got out of the
jailhouse probably

43

00:01:59,740 --> 00:02:04,870

a month or two before the
trials actually began.

44

00:02:04,870 --> 00:02:07,210

And then I'd lost
contact, because his job

45

00:02:07,210 --> 00:02:09,340

was a lovely job.

46

00:02:09,340 --> 00:02:14,320

He was the go-between between
all the legations with the US

47

00:02:14,320 --> 00:02:16,810

Army Quartermaster Corps.

48
00:02:16,810 --> 00:02:20,200
So we got them their bread and
their wine, their gasoline.

49
00:02:20,200 --> 00:02:22,270
And whatever they wanted,
they would ask him

50
00:02:22,270 --> 00:02:23,523
and he'd get it for them.

51
00:02:23,523 --> 00:02:24,940
OK, we'll get to
that in a minute.

52
00:02:24,940 --> 00:02:27,280
Anything else that you have
to say about other people?

53
00:02:27,280 --> 00:02:29,470
What about Field
Marshal Kesselring?

54
00:02:29,470 --> 00:02:33,310
Yeah, Kesselring, I really
never had much conversation.

55
00:02:33,310 --> 00:02:34,630
He was still in uniform.

56
00:02:34,630 --> 00:02:37,600
The generals and the admirals
were still in the uniform,

57
00:02:37,600 --> 00:02:39,070
at least when I was there.

58
00:02:39,070 --> 00:02:42,490
And Kesselring would just
walk up and down the corridor

59

00:02:42,490 --> 00:02:46,060
with his big chest sticking
out whenever he could,

60
00:02:46,060 --> 00:02:49,120
or in the yard,
wherever we took him.

61
00:02:49,120 --> 00:02:52,320
He really didn't have
much to say, Kesselring.

62
00:02:52,320 --> 00:02:56,470
And what about anything else to
say about Field Marshal Keitel?

63
00:02:56,470 --> 00:02:58,780
The same thing goes
true with him too.

64
00:02:58,780 --> 00:03:05,580
These were Prussian
officers, and we were scum.

65
00:03:05,580 --> 00:03:06,790
I mean, who are we?

66
00:03:06,790 --> 00:03:08,650
I was a private in the army.

67
00:03:08,650 --> 00:03:12,220
And whether it was the German
army or American army, I mean,

68
00:03:12,220 --> 00:03:18,370
they really considered
themselves above everybody.

69
00:03:18,370 --> 00:03:19,300
You know, status-wise.

70
00:03:19,300 --> 00:03:22,000
So they didn't-- you couldn't

talk to them as much as you

71

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:24,140
could to the others.

72

00:03:24,140 --> 00:03:26,890
Did you talk, again, to
the other American soldiers

73

00:03:26,890 --> 00:03:28,390
about who these
people were and what

74

00:03:28,390 --> 00:03:29,740
they had done during the war?

75

00:03:29,740 --> 00:03:33,880
No, I didn't get too much
chance, because once I got in--

76

00:03:33,880 --> 00:03:37,655
when I got transferred
out of the jail,

77

00:03:37,655 --> 00:03:39,530
I was too busy with this
lieutenant going out

78

00:03:39,530 --> 00:03:40,180
having a good time.

79

00:03:40,180 --> 00:03:42,070
No, I'm talking about while
you were at Nuremberg.

80

00:03:42,070 --> 00:03:42,850
No, not really.

81

00:03:42,850 --> 00:03:47,660
There was very little
discussion about who they are,

82

00:03:47,660 --> 00:03:48,700
what they are.

83
00:03:48,700 --> 00:03:50,992
Because don't forget, most
of them were like me, maybe,

84
00:03:50,992 --> 00:03:52,280
but they weren't Jewish.

85
00:03:52,280 --> 00:03:56,430
They were young men,
18, 19 years old,

86
00:03:56,430 --> 00:04:00,160
20 maybe, who came
from the United States,

87
00:04:00,160 --> 00:04:01,450
were in the army.

88
00:04:01,450 --> 00:04:04,440
They were out of contact
with the real world.

89
00:04:04,440 --> 00:04:07,980
From the time you landed
in France, so to speak,

90
00:04:07,980 --> 00:04:10,330
to the time you
arrived in Nuremberg,

91
00:04:10,330 --> 00:04:12,190
you really didn't know
what was going on.

92
00:04:12,190 --> 00:04:13,690
The United States
could've blown up.

93
00:04:13,690 --> 00:04:15,970
You wouldn't know.

94
00:04:15,970 --> 00:04:18,820
So I don't think they had much--

95
00:04:18,820 --> 00:04:23,740
some of them, as I say, there
were staff offices around,

96
00:04:23,740 --> 00:04:31,240
government mages and captains
who were part of the American

97
00:04:31,240 --> 00:04:34,870
Army who were going into--

98
00:04:34,870 --> 00:04:37,420
running cities and towns.

99
00:04:37,420 --> 00:04:39,990
I forget what they
call the group.

100
00:04:39,990 --> 00:04:43,270
But, you know, to
rebuild Germany.

101
00:04:43,270 --> 00:04:47,890
And manage their
municipal people.

102
00:04:47,890 --> 00:04:50,680
And we didn't have
any contact with them,

103
00:04:50,680 --> 00:04:52,150
either, because
we were isolated.

104
00:04:52,150 --> 00:04:56,350
So I really left Nuremberg,
I'll be honest with you,

105

00:04:56,350 --> 00:04:57,290
outside of my--

106
00:04:57,290 --> 00:05:01,370
of meeting these, and seeing
all of this, I really didn't--

107
00:05:01,370 --> 00:05:03,540
I still didn't
comprehend what I saw.

108
00:05:03,540 --> 00:05:05,850
Three months later,
I didn't understand.

109
00:05:05,850 --> 00:05:07,440
And maybe two
years later I still

110
00:05:07,440 --> 00:05:11,700
didn't understand that I had
arrived in a place in history

111
00:05:11,700 --> 00:05:19,260
and saw 23 and more of the
worst killers in the world

112
00:05:19,260 --> 00:05:20,760
up to date.

113
00:05:20,760 --> 00:05:22,800
I never realized it.

114
00:05:22,800 --> 00:05:23,730
I do now.

115
00:05:23,730 --> 00:05:24,780
But I still don't know.

116
00:05:24,780 --> 00:05:25,890
How did I get there?

117

00:05:25,890 --> 00:05:27,610
Why was I there?

118
00:05:27,610 --> 00:05:29,440
How did I get there?

119
00:05:29,440 --> 00:05:30,420
Did God send me there?

120
00:05:30,420 --> 00:05:32,190
I mean, what was it all about?

121
00:05:32,190 --> 00:05:34,290
I never understood it at all.

122
00:05:34,290 --> 00:05:34,860
Never will.

123
00:05:34,860 --> 00:05:37,530

124
00:05:37,530 --> 00:05:40,020
It's hard to explain to
my family, believe me.

125
00:05:40,020 --> 00:05:42,750
They have no comprehension.

126
00:05:42,750 --> 00:05:43,250
Go ahead.

127
00:05:43,250 --> 00:05:44,280
You were going to say?

128
00:05:44,280 --> 00:05:49,620
Did-- your military
superiors at Nuremberg,

129
00:05:49,620 --> 00:05:53,130
were they sensitive to the
fact that you were Jewish?

130

00:05:53,130 --> 00:05:54,540

If they were, I wouldn't--

131

00:05:54,540 --> 00:05:55,260

I didn't know.

132

00:05:55,260 --> 00:05:57,802

I mean, they didn't treat me
any different than anybody else.

133

00:05:57,802 --> 00:06:00,340

I mean, I was just a
private first class.

134

00:06:00,340 --> 00:06:01,220

This is your duty.

135

00:06:01,220 --> 00:06:02,680

You're on the roster, you go.

136

00:06:02,680 --> 00:06:06,330

I mean, I don't think in the
jailhouse crowd itself there

137

00:06:06,330 --> 00:06:08,680

was much antisemitism.

138

00:06:08,680 --> 00:06:12,000

There wasn't-- I don't think the
Jewish question, so to speak,

139

00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:13,488

arose at all.

140

00:06:13,488 --> 00:06:14,280

So what did you do?

141

00:06:14,280 --> 00:06:16,350

You took these people out
in the courtyard for a walk.

142

00:06:16,350 --> 00:06:16,800
What else?

143
00:06:16,800 --> 00:06:18,050
What are the other activities?

144
00:06:18,050 --> 00:06:21,800
[INAUDIBLE] and we
brought them over to the--

145
00:06:21,800 --> 00:06:26,612
for interrogations when we were
asked to bring somebody over.

146
00:06:26,612 --> 00:06:27,570
Essentially, that's it.

147
00:06:27,570 --> 00:06:30,120
Because they wouldn't-- they
didn't do much except walk

148
00:06:30,120 --> 00:06:31,390
around.

149
00:06:31,390 --> 00:06:34,080
They would have meetings
with their defense counsel.

150
00:06:34,080 --> 00:06:38,040

151
00:06:38,040 --> 00:06:39,540
They went to the bathroom.

152
00:06:39,540 --> 00:06:42,140
I had to watch them go to the
bathroom, because they were--

153
00:06:42,140 --> 00:06:43,682
it was an open, you
know, it was just

154

00:06:43,682 --> 00:06:45,938
a pot in the middle of the cell.

155
00:06:45,938 --> 00:06:47,230
No, they didn't really do much.

156
00:06:47,230 --> 00:06:49,013
Some of them read books.

157
00:06:49,013 --> 00:06:50,430
Some of them did
a lot of reading.

158
00:06:50,430 --> 00:06:52,842
Some of them-- so we
would get them things,

159
00:06:52,842 --> 00:06:54,300
somebody would send
it over, and we

160
00:06:54,300 --> 00:06:59,700
would bring it into the cell;
reading materials, newspapers.

161
00:06:59,700 --> 00:07:02,490
I mean, we were sort of like,
you know, you go to a hotel,

162
00:07:02,490 --> 00:07:03,810
you get room service.

163
00:07:03,810 --> 00:07:07,410
And they were
getting room service.

164
00:07:07,410 --> 00:07:09,990
Did they have any
contact with each other?

165
00:07:09,990 --> 00:07:12,750
Very little.

166

00:07:12,750 --> 00:07:15,300

Certainly the only time
they even saw each other

167

00:07:15,300 --> 00:07:17,860

was when they were
walking around the yard.

168

00:07:17,860 --> 00:07:20,800

They didn't have any contact
physically with them.

169

00:07:20,800 --> 00:07:24,450

And I doubt very much if
they could talk to each other

170

00:07:24,450 --> 00:07:25,115

either.

171

00:07:25,115 --> 00:07:26,490

They'd just walk
around the yard.

172

00:07:26,490 --> 00:07:29,020

And they'd say-- they'd talk
to each other a little bit.

173

00:07:29,020 --> 00:07:32,580

But there was no formal
conversations of any kind.

174

00:07:32,580 --> 00:07:34,050

And each cell was separate.

175

00:07:34,050 --> 00:07:37,720

There was no contact
between the cells.

176

00:07:37,720 --> 00:07:40,170

So I don't think they talked
to each other too much.

177

00:07:40,170 --> 00:07:43,180
Maybe later when
the trial started

178
00:07:43,180 --> 00:07:46,230
they may have had conferences
with their defense counsels.

179
00:07:46,230 --> 00:07:48,660
Don't forget, this was all at
the beginning, before they--

180
00:07:48,660 --> 00:07:50,760
some of them may not have
been assigned counsel

181
00:07:50,760 --> 00:07:54,150
yet or whatever,
however the process

182
00:07:54,150 --> 00:07:56,860
of getting them their defense.

183
00:07:56,860 --> 00:07:58,920
So I think probably
after I left,

184
00:07:58,920 --> 00:08:00,960
they probably had more
contact with each other.

185
00:08:00,960 --> 00:08:04,440
Certainly they were all sitting
in the same prisoner's box

186
00:08:04,440 --> 00:08:05,520
at the trial.

187
00:08:05,520 --> 00:08:07,700
I mean, so then they did.

188
00:08:07,700 --> 00:08:10,050
But my knowledge

in the jailhouse,

189
00:08:10,050 --> 00:08:11,290
they had very little.

190
00:08:11,290 --> 00:08:12,390
But they were out in
the yard together.

191
00:08:12,390 --> 00:08:13,640
Yeah, they were out-- oh yeah.

192
00:08:13,640 --> 00:08:14,970
They saw each other, oh yeah.

193
00:08:14,970 --> 00:08:17,320
I mean, and they were in
the corridors, you know.

194
00:08:17,320 --> 00:08:23,130
But the prisoners we
would keep moving around.

195
00:08:23,130 --> 00:08:24,720
They couldn't really
talk to anybody.

196
00:08:24,720 --> 00:08:28,290
Why did you want
to leave Nuremberg?

197
00:08:28,290 --> 00:08:31,330
Well, I'm 18 years
old, 19 years old,

198
00:08:31,330 --> 00:08:33,870
and this isn't
exactly what I wanted

199
00:08:33,870 --> 00:08:39,120
to do in life, work in a hotel.

200

00:08:39,120 --> 00:08:40,890
And that's what the job was.

201
00:08:40,890 --> 00:08:42,840
So I ended up with this fellow.

202
00:08:42,840 --> 00:08:43,919
And then--

203
00:08:43,919 --> 00:08:45,670
So you asked
permission to leave?

204
00:08:45,670 --> 00:08:46,170
Yeah.

205
00:08:46,170 --> 00:08:48,628
I asked to be transferred to
the-- what they call the motor

206
00:08:48,628 --> 00:08:49,560
pool company.

207
00:08:49,560 --> 00:08:51,810
And they did, because people
were leaving to go back

208
00:08:51,810 --> 00:08:53,340
to the United States.

209
00:08:53,340 --> 00:08:55,410
The reason I was there--

210
00:08:55,410 --> 00:08:56,040
excuse me.

211
00:08:56,040 --> 00:08:57,390
The reason I was there
in the first place

212
00:08:57,390 --> 00:08:58,980
is I didn't have

enough points to go

213

00:08:58,980 --> 00:09:01,690
right away when the war ended.

214

00:09:01,690 --> 00:09:02,940
There was a point system.

215

00:09:02,940 --> 00:09:04,870
I don't know whether
you understand.

216

00:09:04,870 --> 00:09:08,940
You got so much for each
medal, 5 points for a medal.

217

00:09:08,940 --> 00:09:11,340
And that was a points
system to go to the boats

218

00:09:11,340 --> 00:09:14,220
that-- you know, it's not
like in the world today.

219

00:09:14,220 --> 00:09:16,020
They put you on a
C30 and they fly you

220

00:09:16,020 --> 00:09:17,250
back to the United States.

221

00:09:17,250 --> 00:09:18,885
They make 10 trips
a day, you know?

222

00:09:18,885 --> 00:09:20,760
I mean, in those days
you had to wait for a--

223

00:09:20,760 --> 00:09:21,990
to get on a boat.

224

00:09:21,990 --> 00:09:23,730

So that was the reason
I was sent there,

225

00:09:23,730 --> 00:09:26,280

because I wasn't scheduled to
go back until like February

226

00:09:26,280 --> 00:09:27,105

or March of '46.

227

00:09:27,105 --> 00:09:31,980

228

00:09:31,980 --> 00:09:35,040

So when I got this job in
the M company, the motor pool

229

00:09:35,040 --> 00:09:36,970

company, I was living it up.

230

00:09:36,970 --> 00:09:38,970

What were your thoughts
about leaving Nuremberg?

231

00:09:38,970 --> 00:09:40,595

When you left, what
were your thoughts?

232

00:09:40,595 --> 00:09:44,580

My thoughts about
leaving Nuremberg?

233

00:09:44,580 --> 00:09:45,640

It's enough.

234

00:09:45,640 --> 00:09:46,720

I've had enough.

235

00:09:46,720 --> 00:09:48,310

What do I need it for?

236

00:09:48,310 --> 00:09:50,240
Let's move on to something else.

237
00:09:50,240 --> 00:09:51,490
That was probably my thoughts.

238
00:09:51,490 --> 00:09:52,438
I mean, you know.

239
00:09:52,438 --> 00:09:54,730
I don't think I had any
serious thoughts about anything

240
00:09:54,730 --> 00:09:55,365
in those days.

241
00:09:55,365 --> 00:09:56,365
I was looking for girls.

242
00:09:56,365 --> 00:09:59,485

243
00:09:59,485 --> 00:10:01,360
The only time, when I
got into the M company,

244
00:10:01,360 --> 00:10:04,150
I talked to a couple
of officers about going

245
00:10:04,150 --> 00:10:07,210
to see if I could get into
Poland to see what happened

246
00:10:07,210 --> 00:10:10,180
to my mother's family so that
when I got back to the United

247
00:10:10,180 --> 00:10:15,040
States I could tell
her what happened.

248

00:10:15,040 --> 00:10:18,550
And I had, because of
my position as a driver,

249
00:10:18,550 --> 00:10:20,740
I had a Jeep that said
International Military

250
00:10:20,740 --> 00:10:22,990
Police on the front of it.

251
00:10:22,990 --> 00:10:25,210
And I had what is called
an ETO trip ticket, which

252
00:10:25,210 --> 00:10:27,370
means I could get gas at
any American army base

253
00:10:27,370 --> 00:10:31,472
without question, food and gas.

254
00:10:31,472 --> 00:10:32,555
So I spoke to my superior.

255
00:10:32,555 --> 00:10:35,760
I says, on a weekend, do you
think I could drive into--

256
00:10:35,760 --> 00:10:41,080
to look for this EiÅ;iÅ;kÅ—s
And when I did, they told me,

257
00:10:41,080 --> 00:10:44,380
you know, you can get
in all right, Eddie,

258
00:10:44,380 --> 00:10:46,230
but you may not come out.

259
00:10:46,230 --> 00:10:49,360
You know, you're going to go
through the Russian lines.

260
00:10:49,360 --> 00:10:51,290
Nobody knew what was happening.

261
00:10:51,290 --> 00:10:53,040
This was in the fall of '45.

262
00:10:53,040 --> 00:10:56,337

263
00:10:56,337 --> 00:10:57,670
If I were you, I wouldn't do it.

264
00:10:57,670 --> 00:10:59,650
You may never get out of Russia.

265
00:10:59,650 --> 00:11:01,220
I mean, out of Poland.

266
00:11:01,220 --> 00:11:02,497
So I didn't go.

267
00:11:02,497 --> 00:11:03,580
And I'm sorry to this day.

268
00:11:03,580 --> 00:11:07,180
I should've taken the chance
and gone, but who knows.

269
00:11:07,180 --> 00:11:08,290
That's 50 years ago.

270
00:11:08,290 --> 00:11:11,550
But I just-- there was nobody
for me to talk to about it.

271
00:11:11,550 --> 00:11:13,300
Nobody knew what would
happen to me once I

272
00:11:13,300 --> 00:11:15,490

went through the Russian lines.

273

00:11:15,490 --> 00:11:17,620

I didn't have credentials.

274

00:11:17,620 --> 00:11:22,300

I couldn't get credentials
as part of the American army

275

00:11:22,300 --> 00:11:22,900

forces.

276

00:11:22,900 --> 00:11:26,050

I mean, I'd have to do it on
my own even though I had a--

277

00:11:26,050 --> 00:11:27,790

I could get gasoline
and everything,

278

00:11:27,790 --> 00:11:29,808

but there's no American
dumps in there either.

279

00:11:29,808 --> 00:11:31,600

So where would I get--
the Russians may not

280

00:11:31,600 --> 00:11:33,390

give me gasoline to get back.

281

00:11:33,390 --> 00:11:34,600

I mean, I just didn't--

282

00:11:34,600 --> 00:11:36,140

so I didn't do that.

283

00:11:36,140 --> 00:11:38,190

And then I was really
enjoying myself.

284

00:11:38,190 --> 00:11:39,280

I'll be honest with you.

285

00:11:39,280 --> 00:11:40,560

I was living it up.

286

00:11:40,560 --> 00:11:42,190

I moved to another
place in Nuremberg.

287

00:11:42,190 --> 00:11:45,250

I was living in a house
that was a former mansion.

288

00:11:45,250 --> 00:11:46,610

I was really enjoying it.

289

00:11:46,610 --> 00:11:50,020

And suddenly, one
day, I get a call

290

00:11:50,020 --> 00:11:52,570

to go to the company
clerk's office.

291

00:11:52,570 --> 00:11:54,520

And the company clerk
says you're going back

292

00:11:54,520 --> 00:11:57,421

to the United States tomorrow.

293

00:11:57,421 --> 00:11:59,860

And I says, how did that happen?

294

00:11:59,860 --> 00:12:03,340

He says, your brother
is getting married,

295

00:12:03,340 --> 00:12:06,130

and he made a special
request to the Red Cross,

296

00:12:06,130 --> 00:12:08,410
now that the war is over,
to give you a little--

297
00:12:08,410 --> 00:12:11,020
he wanted-- to let you go early.

298
00:12:11,020 --> 00:12:13,090
It was about two
months early, actually.

299
00:12:13,090 --> 00:12:17,650
And so I ended up the next day
heading for Le Havre on my own.

300
00:12:17,650 --> 00:12:20,220
I had [? separate ?]
travel documents

301
00:12:20,220 --> 00:12:21,290
to come back to Boston.

302
00:12:21,290 --> 00:12:23,533
My brother was getting
married December 30,

303
00:12:23,533 --> 00:12:24,700
so that was the end of that.

304
00:12:24,700 --> 00:12:27,760
That was my-- that's
my war history.

305
00:12:27,760 --> 00:12:28,780
Then you got back.

306
00:12:28,780 --> 00:12:32,240
And can you briefly summarize
what happened after that?

307
00:12:32,240 --> 00:12:34,210
Well, I got back,
and I went to my--

308
00:12:34,210 --> 00:12:37,090
I got-- I went to my--

309
00:12:37,090 --> 00:12:41,530
I was best man at my brother's
wedding, obviously, in Boston.

310
00:12:41,530 --> 00:12:43,420
Did you stay in the
Boston area after that?

311
00:12:43,420 --> 00:12:44,590
Yeah, well, it's my home.

312
00:12:44,590 --> 00:12:48,290
I mean, my folks
lived in Brooklyn.

313
00:12:48,290 --> 00:12:50,000
And what kind of
work did you do?

314
00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:51,520
Or do you do?

315
00:12:51,520 --> 00:12:53,095
What have I done since then?

316
00:12:53,095 --> 00:12:53,970
Yeah, just a summary.

317
00:12:53,970 --> 00:12:56,300
You got another hour?

318
00:12:56,300 --> 00:12:57,937
Just to summarize quickly.

319
00:12:57,937 --> 00:12:58,437
Yeah.

320

00:12:58,437 --> 00:13:01,480

321

00:13:01,480 --> 00:13:03,910

I went into business
with my brother,

322

00:13:03,910 --> 00:13:05,740

and I was the
largest manufacturer

323

00:13:05,740 --> 00:13:09,670

of Navy officers' uniforms
in the world for a while.

324

00:13:09,670 --> 00:13:14,080

And I helped Ralph
Lauren get into business.

325

00:13:14,080 --> 00:13:17,170

I mean, I-- and
then, at age 46, I

326

00:13:17,170 --> 00:13:19,270

got tired of the
clothing business,

327

00:13:19,270 --> 00:13:23,120

and I became President of
my temple in Brookline.

328

00:13:23,120 --> 00:13:24,470

I was President for eight years.

329

00:13:24,470 --> 00:13:27,610

I was an officer
for, like, 25 years.

330

00:13:27,610 --> 00:13:32,590

And then I ran-- in 1974, I
ran for the Board of Selectmen,

331

00:13:32,590 --> 00:13:36,820

which is similar to a
mayor as you'd know it.

332
00:13:36,820 --> 00:13:39,130
I was a Selectman for 12 years.

333
00:13:39,130 --> 00:13:42,310
During this period I was also
appointed to the Massachusetts

334
00:13:42,310 --> 00:13:45,880
Maritime Board of Trustees,
and I became the chairman

335
00:13:45,880 --> 00:13:47,890
for two years.

336
00:13:47,890 --> 00:13:52,985
After that, I went into the
investment banking business.

337
00:13:52,985 --> 00:13:54,860
And then I went into
the investment business.

338
00:13:54,860 --> 00:13:58,450
And I'm still in the
investment business.

339
00:13:58,450 --> 00:14:00,520
I'm still not really retired.

340
00:14:00,520 --> 00:14:03,430
And I built and created
the largest Jewish cemetery

341
00:14:03,430 --> 00:14:05,350
in the greater Boston--

342
00:14:05,350 --> 00:14:06,630
I still run that.

343

00:14:06,630 --> 00:14:07,400
I'm the treasurer.

344
00:14:07,400 --> 00:14:08,710
I don't-- you know.

345
00:14:08,710 --> 00:14:10,840
And I've had an
interesting life.

346
00:14:10,840 --> 00:14:13,120
I've done it all.

347
00:14:13,120 --> 00:14:15,870
I was awarded an
honorary degree,

348
00:14:15,870 --> 00:14:18,480
a doctorate in public
administration,

349
00:14:18,480 --> 00:14:21,220
for the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts.

350
00:14:21,220 --> 00:14:22,738
And I never went to college.

351
00:14:22,738 --> 00:14:24,370
Wonderful.

352
00:14:24,370 --> 00:14:29,030
Before we end, I just want to
ask you some of your feelings.

353
00:14:29,030 --> 00:14:31,450
What were your
thoughts when you heard

354
00:14:31,450 --> 00:14:34,235
that these prisoners were
sentenced to death, the men

355

00:14:34,235 --> 00:14:35,110
that you had guarded?

356

00:14:35,110 --> 00:14:36,040
Couldn't be better.

357

00:14:36,040 --> 00:14:38,110
Couldn't be better.

358

00:14:38,110 --> 00:14:39,610
Why did they let any of them go?

359

00:14:39,610 --> 00:14:41,645
I think some of them got away.

360

00:14:41,645 --> 00:14:43,020
They should have
killed them all.

361

00:14:43,020 --> 00:14:44,860
They were all
guilty of whatever.

362

00:14:44,860 --> 00:14:47,260
By association they were guilty.

363

00:14:47,260 --> 00:14:50,560
But I was tickled.

364

00:14:50,560 --> 00:14:51,700
I hope they dump them--

365

00:14:51,700 --> 00:14:53,367
do the same thing
they did with the Jews

366

00:14:53,367 --> 00:14:55,240
when they killed them,
dump them in a pit.

367

00:14:55,240 --> 00:14:56,865

But anyway, I don't
know what happened.

368
00:14:56,865 --> 00:14:58,820
I mean, I understand
they were hanged

369
00:14:58,820 --> 00:15:01,480
in the jail, Nuremberg
in that same yard

370
00:15:01,480 --> 00:15:03,077
that I used to walk around.

371
00:15:03,077 --> 00:15:04,660
What were your
thoughts when you heard

372
00:15:04,660 --> 00:15:07,000
that Goering committed suicide?

373
00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:08,380
Save the taxpayers money.

374
00:15:08,380 --> 00:15:12,260
Now I think, save
the taxpayers money.

375
00:15:12,260 --> 00:15:13,390
What do I think?

376
00:15:13,390 --> 00:15:15,163
I think-- I says,
you know that--

377
00:15:15,163 --> 00:15:16,580
all I could think
about, you know,

378
00:15:16,580 --> 00:15:18,610
he used to get doctor
visits all the time.

379

00:15:18,610 --> 00:15:20,960

I said, you know, that doctor
is going to get him out

380

00:15:20,960 --> 00:15:21,960

of it one of these days.

381

00:15:21,960 --> 00:15:26,940

I'll bet he does something so he
never has to go to the gallows.

382

00:15:26,940 --> 00:15:28,810

And that was my only
thought about it.

383

00:15:28,810 --> 00:15:30,940

You had said he had
been on drugs before?

384

00:15:30,940 --> 00:15:32,440

For what reason?

385

00:15:32,440 --> 00:15:33,428

Well, he was a--

386

00:15:33,428 --> 00:15:33,970

I don't know.

387

00:15:33,970 --> 00:15:37,220

He was a-- I think he
was a-- he had a habit.

388

00:15:37,220 --> 00:15:40,060

I think he had a habit.

389

00:15:40,060 --> 00:15:41,660

I don't know.

390

00:15:41,660 --> 00:15:44,410

Here, they must have archives
on their medical history

391

00:15:44,410 --> 00:15:45,250
somewhere.

392

00:15:45,250 --> 00:15:48,010
But I got a hunch he
was on-- he had a habit,

393

00:15:48,010 --> 00:15:50,080
and they dried him out.

394

00:15:50,080 --> 00:15:51,330
Is that the word?

395

00:15:51,330 --> 00:15:54,490

396

00:15:54,490 --> 00:15:58,900
When did your mother hear about
what happened in EiÅ;jiÅ;kÄ—s?

397

00:15:58,900 --> 00:16:02,020
Well, she must have heard
before I came home, certainly.

398

00:16:02,020 --> 00:16:02,980
I don't remember.

399

00:16:02,980 --> 00:16:04,990
I mean, I didn't get home
until the war was over

400

00:16:04,990 --> 00:16:07,020
for six months.

401

00:16:07,020 --> 00:16:08,080
She must have heard.

402

00:16:08,080 --> 00:16:10,810

403

00:16:10,810 --> 00:16:13,570

I mean, what are
you going to say?

404
00:16:13,570 --> 00:16:16,940
Later on, about
some years later,

405
00:16:16,940 --> 00:16:23,010
she found out she had a cousin
who had escaped to Israel.

406
00:16:23,010 --> 00:16:31,560
And I went on a trip with a
mission from Boston in 1957

407
00:16:31,560 --> 00:16:33,230
to Israel.

408
00:16:33,230 --> 00:16:36,040
It was the first combined
Jewish Philanthropies

409
00:16:36,040 --> 00:16:38,848
mission of any kind from any
place in the United States.

410
00:16:38,848 --> 00:16:40,390
I don't know how I
got onto that one.

411
00:16:40,390 --> 00:16:41,348
I was the youngest one.

412
00:16:41,348 --> 00:16:44,070

413
00:16:44,070 --> 00:16:48,100
And I found my
cousin, my whatever.

414
00:16:48,100 --> 00:16:50,740
And my mother had given
me some money, cash, which

415

00:16:50,740 --> 00:16:54,033

I gave to him to help him out.

416

00:16:54,033 --> 00:16:56,200

But that was-- and then I
left there, and that was--

417

00:16:56,200 --> 00:16:57,200

I lost contact with him.

418

00:16:57,200 --> 00:17:01,990

I haven't seen him
either for many years.

419

00:17:01,990 --> 00:17:04,930

Do you still think today
about your experiences

420

00:17:04,930 --> 00:17:07,920

of what you saw in Flossenburg?

421

00:17:07,920 --> 00:17:09,480

What thoughts come to your mind?

422

00:17:09,480 --> 00:17:11,849

The first night stays--

423

00:17:11,849 --> 00:17:15,060

I can still see that cell
block with the guys standing

424

00:17:15,060 --> 00:17:17,880

at each door with the names.

425

00:17:17,880 --> 00:17:21,338

It's always in my mind.

426

00:17:21,338 --> 00:17:22,005

And my thoughts?

427

00:17:22,005 --> 00:17:24,780

428

00:17:24,780 --> 00:17:26,220

Why didn't I do more about it?

429

00:17:26,220 --> 00:17:30,060

Why didn't I speak about it
and talk about it afterwards?

430

00:17:30,060 --> 00:17:34,170

Why didn't I verbalize
it to the press?

431

00:17:34,170 --> 00:17:37,110

Why didn't I you know
publicize all of this?

432

00:17:37,110 --> 00:17:41,290

But, you know, you get back,
and I had to make a living.

433

00:17:41,290 --> 00:17:44,490

I didn't have two
quarters to rub together.

434

00:17:44,490 --> 00:17:46,080

My brother and I
went into business.

435

00:17:46,080 --> 00:17:48,727

And, you know, you
forgot about it.

436

00:17:48,727 --> 00:17:49,310

Do you still--

437

00:17:49,310 --> 00:17:50,670

The human mind is great.

438

00:17:50,670 --> 00:17:52,170

Do you still think
about Flossenburg

439
00:17:52,170 --> 00:17:53,060
and what you saw there?

440
00:17:53,060 --> 00:17:54,185
Well, that I can still see.

441
00:17:54,185 --> 00:17:56,390
I have a picture
somewhere in my house

442
00:17:56,390 --> 00:18:01,800
that I took of an
oven with fire in it.

443
00:18:01,800 --> 00:18:04,470
It's a bad picture,
but I know what it is.

444
00:18:04,470 --> 00:18:07,620
And yeah, I mean, you know,
I still see all of that.

445
00:18:07,620 --> 00:18:09,270
I still see guys
lying in the snow

446
00:18:09,270 --> 00:18:10,920
during the Battle of the Bulge.

447
00:18:10,920 --> 00:18:12,810
I still have all
kinds of memories.

448
00:18:12,810 --> 00:18:15,210
But I was never really
psychologically affected

449
00:18:15,210 --> 00:18:16,200
by any of it.

450
00:18:16,200 --> 00:18:19,327

I mean, you remember they talked
about these returning soldiers,

451
00:18:19,327 --> 00:18:21,660
they're going to have all
kinds of psychiatric problems?

452
00:18:21,660 --> 00:18:22,770
I don't think I did.

453
00:18:22,770 --> 00:18:23,730
For whatever reason.

454
00:18:23,730 --> 00:18:26,130
Maybe I'm too dumb or something.

455
00:18:26,130 --> 00:18:30,880
But I never really had any
psychiatric problems with it.

456
00:18:30,880 --> 00:18:32,310
But I'll never forget it.

457
00:18:32,310 --> 00:18:34,410
I mean, how do you forget it?

458
00:18:34,410 --> 00:18:38,190
The first time you see a
guy with his chest blown

459
00:18:38,190 --> 00:18:41,550
open, blood all over
the place in the snow,

460
00:18:41,550 --> 00:18:43,590
I can still see that vision.

461
00:18:43,590 --> 00:18:45,180
I still have that vision.

462
00:18:45,180 --> 00:18:46,920
And I still have a

vision of these guys.

463

00:18:46,920 --> 00:18:52,920

But it doesn't--

it's 50 years later.

464

00:18:52,920 --> 00:18:56,580

I'd like to-- and I'm glad

that the Holocaust Museum was

465

00:18:56,580 --> 00:18:58,920

formed, so maybe

my grandchildren

466

00:18:58,920 --> 00:19:01,260

will come here

and visit someday.

467

00:19:01,260 --> 00:19:03,270

Maybe they'll hear this tape.

468

00:19:03,270 --> 00:19:06,270

Did you talk to your children?

469

00:19:06,270 --> 00:19:07,020

You have children?

470

00:19:07,020 --> 00:19:07,520

Oh, yeah.

471

00:19:07,520 --> 00:19:08,032

I do.

472

00:19:08,032 --> 00:19:12,210

I have two boys and two girls.

473

00:19:12,210 --> 00:19:15,810

Yeah, I've told them, and

I've made them watch the--

474

00:19:15,810 --> 00:19:18,478

I forced them the other night to

watch the Battle of the Bulge.

475

00:19:18,478 --> 00:19:20,770

Did you tell them about your
experience in Flossenburg?

476

00:19:20,770 --> 00:19:22,630

Oh, yeah, I've
told them all that.

477

00:19:22,630 --> 00:19:25,650

My daughter in law,
who you met earlier,

478

00:19:25,650 --> 00:19:27,583

she went through
this museum with me.

479

00:19:27,583 --> 00:19:30,000

I explained to her the pictures,
and especially at the end

480

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:33,150

where you come through the
trial portion of this museum.

481

00:19:33,150 --> 00:19:35,780

And I explained to her who--
what was this, and then-- yeah,

482

00:19:35,780 --> 00:19:36,960

I've tried to.

483

00:19:36,960 --> 00:19:43,660

But you can't describe what--

484

00:19:43,660 --> 00:19:46,710

Has it affected you and your
feelings of being Jewish?

485

00:19:46,710 --> 00:19:47,250

Oh, yeah.

486

00:19:47,250 --> 00:19:50,290

I mean, that's why

I'm very Jewish.

487

00:19:50,290 --> 00:19:52,520

Not very Jewish in

the orthodox sense.

488

00:19:52,520 --> 00:19:55,980

But I'm-- when I ran for office,

I made sure everybody knew that

489

00:19:55,980 --> 00:19:57,700

I was Jewish.

490

00:19:57,700 --> 00:20:01,620

And that I was not an observant

Jew to the extent of orthodoxy,

491

00:20:01,620 --> 00:20:05,160

but that I was a practicing Jew.

492

00:20:05,160 --> 00:20:07,950

When I was at the Maritime

Academy, I was chairman,

493

00:20:07,950 --> 00:20:10,740

and I was the only

Jew on the campus.

494

00:20:10,740 --> 00:20:12,720

I think.

495

00:20:12,720 --> 00:20:15,990

And I can't believe that they,

the non-Jewish [? world, ?]

496

00:20:15,990 --> 00:20:19,620

had elected me chairman of

the second largest Maritime

497

00:20:19,620 --> 00:20:22,440

training school in America.

498

00:20:22,440 --> 00:20:23,220

But I was an--

499

00:20:23,220 --> 00:20:25,770

I had become an

administrator by that time

500

00:20:25,770 --> 00:20:27,150

I knew how to run a government.

501

00:20:27,150 --> 00:20:28,050

I knew how to run--

502

00:20:28,050 --> 00:20:30,760

I'm an expert at

running public meetings.

503

00:20:30,760 --> 00:20:33,170

Have you ever seen the

town meeting that Clinton--

504

00:20:33,170 --> 00:20:33,690

no?

505

00:20:33,690 --> 00:20:35,232

Well, I know how to

run one of those.

506

00:20:35,232 --> 00:20:36,990

I've done hundreds of them.

507

00:20:36,990 --> 00:20:38,940

So they made me chairman.

508

00:20:38,940 --> 00:20:41,470

509

00:20:41,470 --> 00:20:41,970

But I

510

00:20:41,970 --> 00:20:44,820

Never made any excuses
for being Jewish.

511

00:20:44,820 --> 00:20:46,132

I'm proud of my heritage.

512

00:20:46,132 --> 00:20:47,340

I'm proud of the whole thing.

513

00:20:47,340 --> 00:20:51,960

514

00:20:51,960 --> 00:20:54,840

And my-- I have two daughter
in-laws who are wonderful

515

00:20:54,840 --> 00:20:57,690

and my two son in-laws
who are wonderful.

516

00:20:57,690 --> 00:20:59,130

I have no problems.

517

00:20:59,130 --> 00:21:02,140

I try to tell them everything,
but it's hard to describe.

518

00:21:02,140 --> 00:21:05,050

Is there anything you want to
add that we haven't covered?

519

00:21:05,050 --> 00:21:08,272

520

00:21:08,272 --> 00:21:09,480

Well, let me put it this way.

521

00:21:09,480 --> 00:21:11,790

I've had a long,
interesting life.

522

00:21:11,790 --> 00:21:14,340

I've done it all.

523

00:21:14,340 --> 00:21:15,270

I play golf now.

524

00:21:15,270 --> 00:21:17,640

Everybody says to me, you
know, you don't seem upset

525

00:21:17,640 --> 00:21:23,070

when you get a bad hit or--
and I says, it's not important.

526

00:21:23,070 --> 00:21:23,970

I've done it all.

527

00:21:23,970 --> 00:21:26,520

My ego has been satisfied.

528

00:21:26,520 --> 00:21:29,370

I got elected to office
four times in a row.

529

00:21:29,370 --> 00:21:32,280

My opposition was the Democratic
town committee in Brookline

530

00:21:32,280 --> 00:21:33,600

headed by Michael Dukakis.

531

00:21:33,600 --> 00:21:36,000

I don't know if you've
heard that name before.

532

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:37,890

They never could defeat me.

533

00:21:37,890 --> 00:21:39,242

I beat them every time.

534

00:21:39,242 --> 00:21:40,950

And I'm very friendly
with Michael today.

535

00:21:40,950 --> 00:21:43,033

As a matter of fact, he
was in my house in Florida

536

00:21:43,033 --> 00:21:46,810

recently, talking about things.

537

00:21:46,810 --> 00:21:51,730

And if I had to
do all over again,

538

00:21:51,730 --> 00:21:54,808

I probably wouldn't want
to do it over again,

539

00:21:54,808 --> 00:21:56,350

particularly the
Battle of the Bulge.

540

00:21:56,350 --> 00:21:57,260

That was terrible.

541

00:21:57,260 --> 00:21:57,960

That was hell.

542

00:21:57,960 --> 00:22:00,625

I mean, physical hell.

543

00:22:00,625 --> 00:22:03,680

If I had to do it all
over again, I don't know.

544

00:22:03,680 --> 00:22:06,490

But I'm glad to
have made this tape,

545

00:22:06,490 --> 00:22:08,470

because maybe one
of my grandchildren

546

00:22:08,470 --> 00:22:12,930

will come here someday
and listen to it.

547

00:22:12,930 --> 00:22:14,760

Well, that's a beautiful
note to end on.

548

00:22:14,760 --> 00:22:16,850

Thank you so much
for doing the tape.

549

00:22:16,850 --> 00:22:18,110

Thank you.

550

00:22:18,110 --> 00:22:22,060

This concludes the interview
of Edward Novakoff.

551

00:22:22,060 --> 00:22:24,000