

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,670

2  
00:00:01,670 --> 00:00:05,030  
This interview is being taped  
on behalf of the United States

3  
00:00:05,030 --> 00:00:07,400  
Holocaust Memorial Museum.

4  
00:00:07,400 --> 00:00:11,540  
The interview is with  
Jack Reuben, R-E-U-B-E-N.

5  
00:00:11,540 --> 00:00:14,240  
The interviewer is Nancy Alper.

6  
00:00:14,240 --> 00:00:18,740  
The date is February  
the 23, 1998.

7  
00:00:18,740 --> 00:00:26,050  
Tape number one, side A.

8  
00:00:26,050 --> 00:00:29,200  
Jack, could you please  
tell me your name

9  
00:00:29,200 --> 00:00:31,000  
at birth, including  
a Hebrew name

10  
00:00:31,000 --> 00:00:35,290  
if you had one, your date of  
birth, and place of birth?

11  
00:00:35,290 --> 00:00:37,870  
My name is Jack Reuben.

12  
00:00:37,870 --> 00:00:41,320  
On my birth certificate,

it shows Yaakov,

13

00:00:41,320 --> 00:00:44,690

but then it's crossed out  
and Jack is put in there.

14

00:00:44,690 --> 00:00:48,290

So that was my  
Jewish name at birth.

15

00:00:48,290 --> 00:00:55,840

I was born December 8,  
1921 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

16

00:00:55,840 --> 00:00:59,050

How long did you  
live in Cincinnati?

17

00:00:59,050 --> 00:01:01,840

We lived in  
Cincinnati six months,

18

00:01:01,840 --> 00:01:04,720

and then I was brought  
out to Los Angeles,

19

00:01:04,720 --> 00:01:08,320

and we lived originally  
in the Boyle Heights

20

00:01:08,320 --> 00:01:14,420

area of Los Angeles till I was  
about six or seven years old,

21

00:01:14,420 --> 00:01:15,340

something like that.

22

00:01:15,340 --> 00:01:20,740

I was in the first grade  
when we ceased living there.

23

00:01:20,740 --> 00:01:22,990

Did you have siblings

who were either

24  
00:01:22,990 --> 00:01:26,200  
born in Cincinnati  
before you were or after,

25  
00:01:26,200 --> 00:01:28,630  
or did you have  
other siblings born

26  
00:01:28,630 --> 00:01:31,000  
when you moved to Los Angeles?

27  
00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:33,650  
No, I was an only child.

28  
00:01:33,650 --> 00:01:37,570  
I was the only  
child in my family.

29  
00:01:37,570 --> 00:01:40,780  
Why did your parents  
leave Cincinnati?

30  
00:01:40,780 --> 00:01:43,540  
I have no reason why  
they left Cincinnati,

31  
00:01:43,540 --> 00:01:48,430  
except that I have an uncle,  
an uncle Joseph [? Kanter, ?]

32  
00:01:48,430 --> 00:01:52,540  
who had moved to Los  
Angeles prior to that time,

33  
00:01:52,540 --> 00:01:56,290  
and I believe they moved  
to Los Angeles to join him

34  
00:01:56,290 --> 00:01:59,470  
and his family in that area.

35

00:01:59,470 --> 00:02:03,220

Now, the area that you mentioned  
that you moved into it first,

36

00:02:03,220 --> 00:02:07,650

what was the reason for  
moving to that neighborhood?

37

00:02:07,650 --> 00:02:13,260

Gee, I really don't have any  
idea why they moved in there.

38

00:02:13,260 --> 00:02:16,650

That's all I know is that  
there was a rented unit.

39

00:02:16,650 --> 00:02:22,050

It was like a fourplex,  
two-story home,

40

00:02:22,050 --> 00:02:27,450

and we had one of the  
units on the bottom floor.

41

00:02:27,450 --> 00:02:30,630

We rented them on  
the bottom floor.

42

00:02:30,630 --> 00:02:32,970

But it wasn't a  
Jewish neighborhood.

43

00:02:32,970 --> 00:02:33,960

Oh, yes.

44

00:02:33,960 --> 00:02:38,710

This was the Jewish neighborhood  
at that time in Los Angeles.

45

00:02:38,710 --> 00:02:41,670

And it remained the  
Jewish neighborhood

46

00:02:41,670 --> 00:02:48,340

till about the  
1940s or '50s when

47

00:02:48,340 --> 00:02:52,390

it became a Spanish  
American neighborhood,

48

00:02:52,390 --> 00:02:57,940

and I think now it's mostly  
Spanish American neighborhood.

49

00:02:57,940 --> 00:03:00,730

What were the characteristics  
of that neighborhood

50

00:03:00,730 --> 00:03:05,170

that you remember that would  
have led somebody to know

51

00:03:05,170 --> 00:03:07,740

it was a Jewish neighborhood?

52

00:03:07,740 --> 00:03:11,740

I remember my mother taking  
me down Brooklyn Avenue,

53

00:03:11,740 --> 00:03:17,140

and on Brooklyn Avenue there  
were the poultry stores

54

00:03:17,140 --> 00:03:18,850

with the shkhite,  
and the shkhites

55

00:03:18,850 --> 00:03:22,390

would hang the chickens  
up and slit their throats

56

00:03:22,390 --> 00:03:24,940

and let the blood drain out.

57

00:03:24,940 --> 00:03:27,760  
And I also remember  
the big pickle barrels

58  
00:03:27,760 --> 00:03:30,640  
that used to line the  
streets, and you'd go along

59  
00:03:30,640 --> 00:03:33,400  
and you'd plunk your  
hand down into the brine

60  
00:03:33,400 --> 00:03:35,980  
in the pickle  
barrel and take out

61  
00:03:35,980 --> 00:03:38,480  
a pickle, which you got  
for a nickel, I think,

62  
00:03:38,480 --> 00:03:39,850  
or something like that.

63  
00:03:39,850 --> 00:03:46,150  
And that's what remains in my  
memory about the neighborhood.

64  
00:03:46,150 --> 00:03:50,450  
And my mother  
worked at that time.

65  
00:03:50,450 --> 00:04:02,005  
She was a garment worker, and  
I was at a child care center,

66  
00:04:02,005 --> 00:04:03,880  
and I stayed at this  
child care center, which

67  
00:04:03,880 --> 00:04:08,670  
was within a couple of  
blocks of where we lived.

68

00:04:08,670 --> 00:04:12,450

Was this a neighborhood  
that was mixed in the sense

69

00:04:12,450 --> 00:04:15,510

that there were observant  
shomer Shabbos Jews,

70

00:04:15,510 --> 00:04:18,450

as well as Jews of  
other persuasions?

71

00:04:18,450 --> 00:04:21,180

Yes, it was a very  
mixed neighborhood.

72

00:04:21,180 --> 00:04:27,690

There were synagogues there that  
were conservative synagogues

73

00:04:27,690 --> 00:04:30,990

and, along with the other  
end of the spectrum,

74

00:04:30,990 --> 00:04:34,230

the Jews who did not belong  
to any temple at all.

75

00:04:34,230 --> 00:04:37,500

And we were amongst that group.

76

00:04:37,500 --> 00:04:40,710

Why don't you describe  
what you would

77

00:04:40,710 --> 00:04:44,550

characterize as your parents'  
particular involvement

78

00:04:44,550 --> 00:04:46,770

in Judaism?

79

00:04:46,770 --> 00:04:50,760

My parents were active Jews.

80

00:04:50,760 --> 00:04:56,790

They did not prescribed to the Jewish religion in any degree.

81

00:04:56,790 --> 00:05:00,600

I don't remember attending any cheder or any shul

82

00:05:00,600 --> 00:05:04,540

or anything of that nature up to that point.

83

00:05:04,540 --> 00:05:11,730

And they were very much involved in the Workers Union

84

00:05:11,730 --> 00:05:13,410

in the Labor Movement.

85

00:05:13,410 --> 00:05:17,160

My mother was one of the original organizers

86

00:05:17,160 --> 00:05:20,220

of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union

87

00:05:20,220 --> 00:05:22,350

in the Los Angeles area.

88

00:05:22,350 --> 00:05:26,130

She worked down on 9th and Los Angeles Streets

89

00:05:26,130 --> 00:05:28,230

in a garment factory there.

90

00:05:28,230 --> 00:05:30,750

And I can remember her taking me down



91

00:05:30,750 --> 00:05:33,930  
and going inside the factory  
and meeting the people

92

00:05:33,930 --> 00:05:35,460  
and things like that.

93

00:05:35,460 --> 00:05:40,860  
She was very active in the union  
and a very strong union member.

94

00:05:40,860 --> 00:05:43,020  
What about your father?

95

00:05:43,020 --> 00:05:49,950  
My father originally sold  
fruits and vegetables

96

00:05:49,950 --> 00:05:54,000  
from a horse cart in the area.

97

00:05:54,000 --> 00:06:00,060  
I can remember going  
down to the stalls

98

00:06:00,060 --> 00:06:03,210  
and renting a cart  
with him and then

99

00:06:03,210 --> 00:06:06,900  
going up and down the  
streets, and he would first

100

00:06:06,900 --> 00:06:10,620  
go buy the fruits and  
vegetables wholesale

101

00:06:10,620 --> 00:06:16,200  
and then would try to sell  
them on the streets roughly

102

00:06:16,200 --> 00:06:21,250

around the Brooklyn area  
but in that neighborhood.

103  
00:06:21,250 --> 00:06:25,330  
Did your parents come  
from New York originally?

104  
00:06:25,330 --> 00:06:31,450  
My parents came from Russia, and  
my mother immigrated in 1907/

105  
00:06:31,450 --> 00:06:35,380  
and I'm not sure when my  
father immigrated here.

106  
00:06:35,380 --> 00:06:41,020  
My father left us when I  
was about six years old,

107  
00:06:41,020 --> 00:06:44,260  
so that would have  
been about 1927, 1928,

108  
00:06:44,260 --> 00:06:47,230  
and I lost track of him.

109  
00:06:47,230 --> 00:06:52,320  
I have no idea where he went  
or what happened to him.

110  
00:06:52,320 --> 00:06:54,550  
Did either of your parents--

111  
00:06:54,550 --> 00:06:56,950  
and you may not remember  
since you were so young when

112  
00:06:56,950 --> 00:06:59,350  
your father left, but did  
either of your parents

113  
00:06:59,350 --> 00:07:01,750  
speak of their

## Russian experiences

114  
00:07:01,750 --> 00:07:05,650  
or their immigration  
to the United States?

115  
00:07:05,650 --> 00:07:08,530  
They did amongst themselves.

116  
00:07:08,530 --> 00:07:12,550  
My mother and my uncle both  
came from the same area,

117  
00:07:12,550 --> 00:07:17,200  
[? Misto Slavo ?],,  
in Russia, and they

118  
00:07:17,200 --> 00:07:19,090  
would talk about these things.

119  
00:07:19,090 --> 00:07:22,510  
But I never got into many  
of those conversations.

120  
00:07:22,510 --> 00:07:27,580  
I did not learn much  
about them at all.

121  
00:07:27,580 --> 00:07:33,130  
What other sorts  
of Jewish knowledge

122  
00:07:33,130 --> 00:07:38,200  
or cultural affiliation  
did you have, for example,

123  
00:07:38,200 --> 00:07:40,780  
in learning Hebrew or Yiddish?

124  
00:07:40,780 --> 00:07:44,980  
I learned Yiddish  
because in our family,

125

00:07:44,980 --> 00:07:47,020

if it was all right for  
me to know something,

126

00:07:47,020 --> 00:07:49,600

they would speak Yiddish,  
and I learned Yiddish.

127

00:07:49,600 --> 00:07:51,760

But if they wanted  
to say something

128

00:07:51,760 --> 00:07:54,530

that they didn't want me to  
know, then they spoke Russian.

129

00:07:54,530 --> 00:07:58,150

And I never learned  
any Russian at all.

130

00:07:58,150 --> 00:08:02,530

And when we went back  
later on in the mid 1980s,

131

00:08:02,530 --> 00:08:05,380

I just found that I had no  
knowledge of the language

132

00:08:05,380 --> 00:08:07,670

at all.

133

00:08:07,670 --> 00:08:11,450

Did you even go to the  
so-called high holy day

134

00:08:11,450 --> 00:08:13,370

services each year?

135

00:08:13,370 --> 00:08:14,420

No, we did not.

136

00:08:14,420 --> 00:08:17,210

We did not go to any of  
the high holy day services.

137  
00:08:17,210 --> 00:08:22,070  
We did not join any temples,  
reformed or otherwise.

138  
00:08:22,070 --> 00:08:26,120  
I think if the reform  
movement had been in existence

139  
00:08:26,120 --> 00:08:28,970  
at that time, it would  
have been more compatible

140  
00:08:28,970 --> 00:08:30,920  
with my mother's ideals.

141  
00:08:30,920 --> 00:08:35,309  
But only having the  
conservative movement,

142  
00:08:35,309 --> 00:08:38,720  
this was not the  
way that she felt,

143  
00:08:38,720 --> 00:08:41,450  
and she didn't subscribe to it.

144  
00:08:41,450 --> 00:08:44,510  
Do you remember  
celebrating Passover?

145  
00:08:44,510 --> 00:08:47,420  
No, we did not  
celebrate Passover.

146  
00:08:47,420 --> 00:08:49,760  
We do now.

147  
00:08:49,760 --> 00:08:51,930  
One more question  
on that subject.

148  
00:08:51,930 --> 00:08:53,510  
Did you keep kosher?

149  
00:08:53,510 --> 00:08:57,860  
No, we didn't keep  
kosher at all.

150  
00:08:57,860 --> 00:09:00,930  
Why don't you describe  
to me your education,

151  
00:09:00,930 --> 00:09:03,800  
your early education,  
both in that neighborhood

152  
00:09:03,800 --> 00:09:08,370  
and where you  
moved subsequently?

153  
00:09:08,370 --> 00:09:10,620  
I started out at  
the Breed Street

154  
00:09:10,620 --> 00:09:16,110  
School, which is a school  
in the Boyle Heights area.

155  
00:09:16,110 --> 00:09:20,040  
I spent, I think, the first--

156  
00:09:20,040 --> 00:09:25,920  
my kindergarten and the  
first year of school there.

157  
00:09:25,920 --> 00:09:30,610  
At that time, I developed  
some kind of an eye problem.

158  
00:09:30,610 --> 00:09:32,910  
My eyes crusted over.

159

00:09:32,910 --> 00:09:36,990  
Looking back at it, I think  
what I had was an allergy,

160  
00:09:36,990 --> 00:09:39,690  
and my eyes crusted  
over to the point

161  
00:09:39,690 --> 00:09:42,690  
where I had to lie in bed.

162  
00:09:42,690 --> 00:09:46,410  
My mother soaked my  
eyes with boric acid

163  
00:09:46,410 --> 00:09:50,280  
and attempted to use that.

164  
00:09:50,280 --> 00:09:52,980  
And because of  
this, they sent me

165  
00:09:52,980 --> 00:09:58,230  
to a camp up in the mountains  
adjacent to Los Angeles,

166  
00:09:58,230 --> 00:10:01,180  
and I stayed up there  
for about a year.

167  
00:10:01,180 --> 00:10:04,350  
And by the time I got  
back, my father had left,

168  
00:10:04,350 --> 00:10:07,200  
and my mother  
didn't feel that she

169  
00:10:07,200 --> 00:10:10,150  
could give me the proper  
care that she needed.

170  
00:10:10,150 --> 00:10:18,340

So the Jewish organization  
for young children took me in,

171  
00:10:18,340 --> 00:10:23,220  
and I was placed  
in foster homes.

172  
00:10:23,220 --> 00:10:29,730  
And I spent all of my youth  
up until the 11th grade

173  
00:10:29,730 --> 00:10:33,720  
in the foster homes  
throughout different places

174  
00:10:33,720 --> 00:10:35,100  
in the Los Angeles community.

175  
00:10:35,100 --> 00:10:38,640  
But I spent my week  
there, then I'd go home,

176  
00:10:38,640 --> 00:10:42,100  
and I'd be with my  
mother on the weekends.

177  
00:10:42,100 --> 00:10:46,130  
And so I started originally  
at Breed Street School.

178  
00:10:46,130 --> 00:10:48,570  
Then I went up to this  
camp in the mountains,

179  
00:10:48,570 --> 00:10:50,940  
and I spent about a year there.

180  
00:10:50,940 --> 00:10:54,510  
Then I finally after living  
in Maywood for a year,

181  
00:10:54,510 --> 00:11:05,340  
I ended up going to school



in southwestern Los Angeles,

182  
00:11:05,340 --> 00:11:10,230  
and I completed my  
schooling there.

183  
00:11:10,230 --> 00:11:13,080  
And finally, I ended  
up with a family

184  
00:11:13,080 --> 00:11:16,710  
on 90th and Avalon  
Boulevard, and I

185  
00:11:16,710 --> 00:11:20,140  
went to junior high  
school in that area.

186  
00:11:20,140 --> 00:11:24,150  
And I went to Fremont  
High School for one year.

187  
00:11:24,150 --> 00:11:26,850  
At the end of that  
time, my mother

188  
00:11:26,850 --> 00:11:31,950  
rented an apartment near  
Broadway, 60th and Broadway.

189  
00:11:31,950 --> 00:11:37,500  
And I completed my education,  
my regular high school

190  
00:11:37,500 --> 00:11:43,050  
education at Fremont High School  
and graduated in summer '40.

191  
00:11:43,050 --> 00:11:48,960  
So you moved some four or five  
times during your childhood.

192  
00:11:48,960 --> 00:11:57,080

Yes, let's see, one, two,  
three, four, counting

193  
00:11:57,080 --> 00:12:01,460  
moving with my mother,  
I'd say five times.

194  
00:12:01,460 --> 00:12:06,860  
Were those difficult transitions  
for you to make as a child?

195  
00:12:06,860 --> 00:12:09,830  
Or what do you  
remember about them?

196  
00:12:09,830 --> 00:12:12,020  
The first three  
were not very nice.

197  
00:12:12,020 --> 00:12:13,760  
The first three were--

198  
00:12:13,760 --> 00:12:14,810  
there was nothing wrong.

199  
00:12:14,810 --> 00:12:16,190  
They didn't abuse me.

200  
00:12:16,190 --> 00:12:18,980  
I wasn't persecuted  
or anything like that,

201  
00:12:18,980 --> 00:12:23,000  
but it just wasn't  
the feeling of family.

202  
00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:27,560  
The last family that I stayed  
with that I joined them,

203  
00:12:27,560 --> 00:12:31,350  
I think I was in the fifth  
grade, yeah, fifth grade.

204

00:12:31,350 --> 00:12:36,050  
And I stayed with them through  
the first year of high school.

205

00:12:36,050 --> 00:12:38,730  
There was another boy who  
was about a year and a half,

206

00:12:38,730 --> 00:12:40,850  
two years older,  
than I and a younger

207

00:12:40,850 --> 00:12:44,510  
girl who was about two  
years younger than I was.

208

00:12:44,510 --> 00:12:46,820  
And they were a  
very nice family,

209

00:12:46,820 --> 00:12:53,540  
and I appreciated very much  
the help that I got from them.

210

00:12:53,540 --> 00:12:55,940  
Their name was Schneider.

211

00:12:55,940 --> 00:12:59,670  
Tell me your  
parents' full names.

212

00:12:59,670 --> 00:13:04,250  
My father's name  
was Joseph Reuben.

213

00:13:04,250 --> 00:13:10,530  
My mother's name was  
Sarah [? Bosha ?] Reuben.

214

00:13:10,530 --> 00:13:14,970  
Do you remember experiencing  
any anti-Semitism growing up

215  
00:13:14,970 --> 00:13:17,290  
in Los Angeles?

216  
00:13:17,290 --> 00:13:19,110  
Yes.

217  
00:13:19,110 --> 00:13:21,580  
When we were going to  
junior high school,

218  
00:13:21,580 --> 00:13:24,900  
I had a very close  
friend, and I still do.

219  
00:13:24,900 --> 00:13:28,950  
His name is Jack Siegel, and we  
attended Bret Harte Junior High

220  
00:13:28,950 --> 00:13:31,110  
School together.

221  
00:13:31,110 --> 00:13:33,540  
He was in the same  
grade that I was in.

222  
00:13:33,540 --> 00:13:37,530  
And one time he got into an  
argument with one of the guys

223  
00:13:37,530 --> 00:13:40,860  
at school over being Jewish.

224  
00:13:40,860 --> 00:13:42,580  
They were trying  
to push him around.

225  
00:13:42,580 --> 00:13:44,010  
He wouldn't take it.

226  
00:13:44,010 --> 00:13:47,520  
And one afternoon, they

arranged to have a fight,

227

00:13:47,520 --> 00:13:51,090  
and the whole school, all  
the boys in the school

228

00:13:51,090 --> 00:13:56,730  
circled around and made a ring,  
and Jack was in this fight.

229

00:13:56,730 --> 00:14:02,040  
And I can remember guys putting  
me down and saying things to me

230

00:14:02,040 --> 00:14:06,390  
that later on I found  
were very important,

231

00:14:06,390 --> 00:14:09,750  
but I didn't have enough sense  
at that time to know about it.

232

00:14:09,750 --> 00:14:12,120  
Do you remember what  
they were saying?

233

00:14:12,120 --> 00:14:14,340  
No, I don't.

234

00:14:14,340 --> 00:14:17,430  
I don't remember now at all.

235

00:14:17,430 --> 00:14:20,400  
What was the name of the  
Jewish social service

236

00:14:20,400 --> 00:14:24,660  
that helped your mother make  
these placements for you?

237

00:14:24,660 --> 00:14:25,980  
Do you remember?

238

00:14:25,980 --> 00:14:28,230

I can't remember right now.

239

00:14:28,230 --> 00:14:32,070

If it comes to me,  
I'll remember it.

240

00:14:32,070 --> 00:14:38,580

It was the one in Culver City  
that just escapes me right now.

241

00:14:38,580 --> 00:14:41,720

I just can't bring it up.

242

00:14:41,720 --> 00:14:43,700

Did you know that  
your mother always

243

00:14:43,700 --> 00:14:48,410

intended when her situation  
leveled off or got better

244

00:14:48,410 --> 00:14:52,340

to come and get you and  
make a home for you?

245

00:14:52,340 --> 00:14:53,930

No, I didn't.

246

00:14:53,930 --> 00:14:59,930

I think actually it was just  
circumstances happened that way

247

00:14:59,930 --> 00:15:02,900

that I was just growing  
up, and the family that I

248

00:15:02,900 --> 00:15:07,710

was with, I've been with  
them for three, four, five,

249

00:15:07,710 --> 00:15:10,100

six years, and they  
were in a position

250  
00:15:10,100 --> 00:15:15,800  
where they no longer wanted  
to have me with them.

251  
00:15:15,800 --> 00:15:18,770

252  
00:15:18,770 --> 00:15:23,350  
And that's all I  
remember about that.

253  
00:15:23,350 --> 00:15:27,700  
What was it like when you went  
back to live with your mother?

254  
00:15:27,700 --> 00:15:31,630  
I felt very independent.

255  
00:15:31,630 --> 00:15:33,940  
I was doing things on my own.

256  
00:15:33,940 --> 00:15:37,000  
I was going back and  
forth to school on my own,

257  
00:15:37,000 --> 00:15:39,950  
taking the bus to get to school.

258  
00:15:39,950 --> 00:15:43,480  
And my mother was working,  
and I'd come home,

259  
00:15:43,480 --> 00:15:45,130  
and the house would be empty.

260  
00:15:45,130 --> 00:15:49,185  
And I would be doing the things  
that I needed to do for myself.

261

00:15:49,185 --> 00:15:51,700

262

00:15:51,700 --> 00:15:54,190

When you graduated  
from high school,

263

00:15:54,190 --> 00:15:57,310

what did you then go into?

264

00:15:57,310 --> 00:16:03,700

I made an application  
to UCLA, and I joined--

265

00:16:03,700 --> 00:16:07,720

and I started school  
at UCLA in winter '40.

266

00:16:07,720 --> 00:16:11,740

And at that time, my  
major was economics,

267

00:16:11,740 --> 00:16:16,840

and I was planning on either  
becoming a member of some trade

268

00:16:16,840 --> 00:16:21,640

union in an executive  
position or teaching

269

00:16:21,640 --> 00:16:24,520

economics in high school or  
something of that nature.

270

00:16:24,520 --> 00:16:28,090

I hadn't quite decided  
what I was going to do.

271

00:16:28,090 --> 00:16:34,300

And I used to travel back and  
forth from 60th and Broadway

272

00:16:34,300 --> 00:16:39,470



to UCLA, which is a distance  
of a good 20 miles every day.

273

00:16:39,470 --> 00:16:43,030  
And I had different people, guys  
that I'd ride with and share

274

00:16:43,030 --> 00:16:45,990  
transportation with them.

275

00:16:45,990 --> 00:16:51,780  
And then about 1941, some  
place after going to UCLA

276

00:16:51,780 --> 00:16:55,440  
for about a year,  
I joined the co-op,

277

00:16:55,440 --> 00:16:58,410  
and I began to live  
close to campus

278

00:16:58,410 --> 00:17:04,500  
where I could walk to and from  
school in the co-op housing.

279

00:17:04,500 --> 00:17:07,470  
Were you working at that  
time in order to help

280

00:17:07,470 --> 00:17:09,810  
put yourself through college?

281

00:17:09,810 --> 00:17:10,829  
Yes.

282

00:17:10,829 --> 00:17:18,329  
I worked part time at a  
loan corporation near 9th

283

00:17:18,329 --> 00:17:21,030  
and Broadway in Los Angeles.

284

00:17:21,030 --> 00:17:26,700

And I would work there  
Friday night and Saturday

285

00:17:26,700 --> 00:17:28,170

when they would  
have nobody there.

286

00:17:28,170 --> 00:17:29,310

I did the books.

287

00:17:29,310 --> 00:17:35,400

I did some of the bookkeeping  
for them at that time.

288

00:17:35,400 --> 00:17:39,510

And how long were you in  
that position at UCLA?

289

00:17:39,510 --> 00:17:48,920

I was in that position  
until August of 1943.

290

00:17:48,920 --> 00:17:51,560

And then what happened?

291

00:17:51,560 --> 00:17:57,620

August of 1943, I  
originally wanted to fly,

292

00:17:57,620 --> 00:18:04,970

and I had gone to the Army, Air  
Corps, the Navy, the Marines,

293

00:18:04,970 --> 00:18:09,830

and I was unsuccessful in  
passing the Ishihara color

294

00:18:09,830 --> 00:18:10,790

test.

295

00:18:10,790 --> 00:18:15,170

And I was very, very angry  
because it was a Japanese color

296  
00:18:15,170 --> 00:18:16,160  
test.

297  
00:18:16,160 --> 00:18:19,550  
But I just couldn't  
read the letters--

298  
00:18:19,550 --> 00:18:20,930  
I mean, the numbers.

299  
00:18:20,930 --> 00:18:23,570  
In fact, I read some numbers,  
and the guys would look at me

300  
00:18:23,570 --> 00:18:25,820  
and say, where did you see that?

301  
00:18:25,820 --> 00:18:29,120  
They never heard anybody  
read the numbers before.

302  
00:18:29,120 --> 00:18:31,640  
And they wouldn't  
let me fly because I

303  
00:18:31,640 --> 00:18:34,430  
couldn't pass the color test.

304  
00:18:34,430 --> 00:18:37,160  
At that time, I  
was going to UCLA,

305  
00:18:37,160 --> 00:18:39,440  
and I was taking psych 1A.

306  
00:18:39,440 --> 00:18:43,940  
And my professor  
was experimenting

307

00:18:43,940 --> 00:18:50,000  
with color vision, and he  
had a set of 100 ribbons,

308  
00:18:50,000 --> 00:18:51,950  
50 sets of ribbons.

309  
00:18:51,950 --> 00:18:54,650  
And what he had to  
do was match them,

310  
00:18:54,650 --> 00:18:56,510  
and I matched these  
sets of ribbons

311  
00:18:56,510 --> 00:18:58,520  
perfectly without error.

312  
00:18:58,520 --> 00:19:00,620  
I matched every color perfectly.

313  
00:19:00,620 --> 00:19:03,950  
And I just never could  
understand why I never

314  
00:19:03,950 --> 00:19:05,750  
was able to read the letters.

315  
00:19:05,750 --> 00:19:06,710  
And I still can't.

316  
00:19:06,710 --> 00:19:09,980  
I just looked at a chart  
a couple of months ago,

317  
00:19:09,980 --> 00:19:11,750  
and I still can't  
read the letters,

318  
00:19:11,750 --> 00:19:15,180  
the numbers in the chart.

319

00:19:15,180 --> 00:19:18,120  
At that point, had you  
already volunteered

320  
00:19:18,120 --> 00:19:19,890  
to go into the Army?

321  
00:19:19,890 --> 00:19:21,240  
No, I hadn't.

322  
00:19:21,240 --> 00:19:27,780  
I was still looking to  
volunteer, and I was--

323  
00:19:27,780 --> 00:19:31,680  
my number was coming up, and  
I was about to be drafted.

324  
00:19:31,680 --> 00:19:36,030  
And I heard about this program  
called pre-meteorology.

325  
00:19:36,030 --> 00:19:39,450  
Actually, it was intended  
to develop people to become

326  
00:19:39,450 --> 00:19:41,700  
meteorological officers.

327  
00:19:41,700 --> 00:19:46,830  
So I then volunteered for  
that program in the Air Corps.

328  
00:19:46,830 --> 00:19:52,530  
This was in July  
or August of 1943.

329  
00:19:52,530 --> 00:19:56,100  
If you had been able  
to attain that position

330  
00:19:56,100 --> 00:20:00,630  
and attain it in the Air Corps,

what would you have been doing?

331

00:20:00,630 --> 00:20:03,990

I would have been predicting  
the weather at the bases,

332

00:20:03,990 --> 00:20:07,950

either in the United  
States or overseas,

333

00:20:07,950 --> 00:20:10,710

wherever we would  
have been stationed.

334

00:20:10,710 --> 00:20:15,790

So I volunteered  
for the Air Corps.

335

00:20:15,790 --> 00:20:18,000

I was accepted  
for the Air Corps,

336

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:25,290

and I was inducted in Fort  
MacArthur in Los Angeles

337

00:20:25,290 --> 00:20:29,520

and sent to Pomona College, and  
we started in Pomona College

338

00:20:29,520 --> 00:20:33,510

in the fall of 1943.

339

00:20:33,510 --> 00:20:37,660

And we stayed at Pomona  
College for nine months.

340

00:20:37,660 --> 00:20:41,460

And so we graduated  
from Pomona College

341

00:20:41,460 --> 00:20:51,580

sometime in the spring of 1944.

342  
00:20:51,580 --> 00:20:56,350  
Were you able to attain the  
position that you wanted to

343  
00:20:56,350 --> 00:21:02,530  
as a meteorological officer?

344  
00:21:02,530 --> 00:21:04,870  
No, I was not.

345  
00:21:04,870 --> 00:21:09,130  
The Air Corps graduated  
about 4,000 cadets,

346  
00:21:09,130 --> 00:21:15,590  
and they had about 200 openings  
at the UCLA and at Yale.

347  
00:21:15,590 --> 00:21:20,590  
And so the rest of us  
were not able to become

348  
00:21:20,590 --> 00:21:22,450  
meteorological officers.

349  
00:21:22,450 --> 00:21:28,570  
We were just set aside.

350  
00:21:28,570 --> 00:21:31,630  
They allowed us to  
volunteer as tail gunners

351  
00:21:31,630 --> 00:21:37,010  
or other hazardous occupations,  
but I didn't want to do that.

352  
00:21:37,010 --> 00:21:44,540  
And so I eventually  
wound up in the infantry.

353  
00:21:44,540 --> 00:21:48,790

I wound up in the 89th  
infantry division.

354  
00:21:48,790 --> 00:21:55,420  
If you had not volunteered, if  
you had waited to be drafted,

355  
00:21:55,420 --> 00:21:58,810  
would you have had less  
control, in theory anyway,

356  
00:21:58,810 --> 00:22:01,810  
over what you wanted to do?

357  
00:22:01,810 --> 00:22:04,240  
I think I'd have been  
about in the same place

358  
00:22:04,240 --> 00:22:08,140  
where I was after they  
dropped us out of the program.

359  
00:22:08,140 --> 00:22:11,710  
We were just wandering  
all over the place,

360  
00:22:11,710 --> 00:22:18,310  
and we wound up in a  
repple depple in Oregon.

361  
00:22:18,310 --> 00:22:21,920  
And then from there, I was  
assigned to the 89th infantry

362  
00:22:21,920 --> 00:22:22,420  
division.

363  
00:22:22,420 --> 00:22:25,890

364  
00:22:25,890 --> 00:22:32,910  
And what was your function and  
title and the parts of the army



365  
00:22:32,910 --> 00:22:35,940  
that you were affiliated  
with at that time when

366  
00:22:35,940 --> 00:22:38,670  
you had been rejected  
from the program

367  
00:22:38,670 --> 00:22:42,380  
at the end of the program  
at Pomona College?

368  
00:22:42,380 --> 00:22:45,570  
I eventually wound up in  
the headquarters company

369  
00:22:45,570 --> 00:22:49,710  
of the third battalion  
of the 355th infantry

370  
00:22:49,710 --> 00:22:53,670  
regiment of the 89th  
infantry division,

371  
00:22:53,670 --> 00:22:57,420  
and I was trained  
there as a code clerk.

372  
00:22:57,420 --> 00:23:00,960  
I learned to encode  
and decode messages,

373  
00:23:00,960 --> 00:23:06,480  
and I was the only person  
who dealt with coded messages

374  
00:23:06,480 --> 00:23:09,330  
in the battalion.

375  
00:23:09,330 --> 00:23:11,490  
Now, by coded  
messages, do you mean

376  
00:23:11,490 --> 00:23:15,810  
coded messages that would  
have come through in German

377  
00:23:15,810 --> 00:23:17,760  
that had to be--

378  
00:23:17,760 --> 00:23:22,590  
and in code and had to be  
both translated and decoded?

379  
00:23:22,590 --> 00:23:26,130  
No, these were just  
messages within the service,

380  
00:23:26,130 --> 00:23:28,020  
within the United  
States service.

381  
00:23:28,020 --> 00:23:30,090  
These were not foreign messages.

382  
00:23:30,090 --> 00:23:31,770  
These were just  
the United States.

383  
00:23:31,770 --> 00:23:36,030  
These were orders on  
how the battalion was

384  
00:23:36,030 --> 00:23:40,830  
to be used, where it was to go,  
what they were supposed to do,

385  
00:23:40,830 --> 00:23:45,790  
what support we were going to  
have and things of that nature.

386  
00:23:45,790 --> 00:23:48,660  
So that the enemy wouldn't  
know what was being planned,

387

00:23:48,660 --> 00:23:49,630  
is that correct?

388

00:23:49,630 --> 00:23:50,550  
That's correct.

389

00:23:50,550 --> 00:23:53,380  
Yeah.

390

00:23:53,380 --> 00:23:55,420  
You mentioned going to Oregon.

391

00:23:55,420 --> 00:23:57,760  
How long were you there?

392

00:23:57,760 --> 00:23:59,980  
Only for about a month or so.

393

00:23:59,980 --> 00:24:01,360  
There was just a repple depple.

394

00:24:01,360 --> 00:24:05,710  
They just took people in  
and then sent them out

395

00:24:05,710 --> 00:24:10,210  
where they were requested  
by the different units.

396

00:24:10,210 --> 00:24:15,930  
And then what was your  
next training location?

397

00:24:15,930 --> 00:24:19,440  
We were then sent to Camp  
Butner, North Carolina,

398

00:24:19,440 --> 00:24:24,150  
where we got our major  
part of our training

399

00:24:24,150 --> 00:24:30,840  
as an infantry regiment, and  
we did our live fire program

400  
00:24:30,840 --> 00:24:31,590  
there.

401  
00:24:31,590 --> 00:24:32,580  
We did our marches.

402  
00:24:32,580 --> 00:24:38,130  
We did all of our regular  
infantry training in that area.

403  
00:24:38,130 --> 00:24:43,890  
We went through the course  
where they fire live ammunition

404  
00:24:43,890 --> 00:24:46,800  
over your head,  
well, not so far.

405  
00:24:46,800 --> 00:24:50,400  
But we were under  
fire, so that we

406  
00:24:50,400 --> 00:24:52,290  
would know what  
it was like to be

407  
00:24:52,290 --> 00:24:55,410  
under that kind of condition.

408  
00:24:55,410 --> 00:24:58,800  
Before you went  
to North Carolina,

409  
00:24:58,800 --> 00:25:04,440  
were you at a different  
camp after being in Oregon?

410  
00:25:04,440 --> 00:25:07,560  
Yes, we were part

of Camp Roberts.

411  
00:25:07,560 --> 00:25:11,220

412  
00:25:11,220 --> 00:25:15,855  
And we were one of the outlying  
camps from Camp Roberts.

413  
00:25:15,855 --> 00:25:18,380

414  
00:25:18,380 --> 00:25:21,980  
Was that the Hunter  
Liggett reservation?

415  
00:25:21,980 --> 00:25:23,090  
That's correct.

416  
00:25:23,090 --> 00:25:24,500  
I couldn't remember that.

417  
00:25:24,500 --> 00:25:26,900  
It's Hunter Liggett  
military reservation,

418  
00:25:26,900 --> 00:25:31,160  
which is an outlying camp, which  
has no permanent facilities.

419  
00:25:31,160 --> 00:25:35,750  
It just was an area that  
the unit was located.

420  
00:25:35,750 --> 00:25:41,450  
What they did is they took all  
the corporals and below out

421  
00:25:41,450 --> 00:25:48,410  
of this unit, sent them overseas  
as a replacement in replacement

422

00:25:48,410 --> 00:25:49,220  
camps.

423  
00:25:49,220 --> 00:25:52,500  
And we were then brought  
in to fill these positions.

424  
00:25:52,500 --> 00:25:54,500  
All the upper  
non-commissioned officers

425  
00:25:54,500 --> 00:25:58,130  
were very angry with us  
because all their friends had

426  
00:25:58,130 --> 00:26:02,390  
been taken away, and for  
the first six, nine months,

427  
00:26:02,390 --> 00:26:04,140  
they didn't like us at all.

428  
00:26:04,140 --> 00:26:07,460  
We had a very difficult time  
getting along with them.

429  
00:26:07,460 --> 00:26:09,560  
What was the difference  
between the training

430  
00:26:09,560 --> 00:26:12,050  
that you received at Hunter  
Liggett and the training

431  
00:26:12,050 --> 00:26:15,590  
you received at Camp  
Butner in North Carolina?

432  
00:26:15,590 --> 00:26:17,360  
Camp Butner was  
much more organized.

433  
00:26:17,360 --> 00:26:21,920

When I joined the  
battalion, they

434  
00:26:21,920 --> 00:26:25,310  
had no heavy weapons  
equipment at all.

435  
00:26:25,310 --> 00:26:28,430  
They only had two Jeeps,  
and one of the Jeeps

436  
00:26:28,430 --> 00:26:31,160  
belonged to the chaplain.

437  
00:26:31,160 --> 00:26:35,480  
We had some machine guns,  
but that was the extent

438  
00:26:35,480 --> 00:26:37,400  
of our heavy weapons equipment.

439  
00:26:37,400 --> 00:26:40,740  
When we got to Camp  
Butner, North Carolina,

440  
00:26:40,740 --> 00:26:43,730  
we were then given the  
additional heavy weapons

441  
00:26:43,730 --> 00:26:49,390  
and augmented the  
firepower of our unit.

442  
00:26:49,390 --> 00:26:53,290  
Did you know either when  
you were at Hunter Liggett

443  
00:26:53,290 --> 00:26:57,130  
or when you were at  
Camp Butner where

444  
00:26:57,130 --> 00:26:59,620  
you were destined

to go and watch

445  
00:26:59,620 --> 00:27:02,080  
your function was going to be?

446  
00:27:02,080 --> 00:27:03,610  
No, we did not.

447  
00:27:03,610 --> 00:27:05,410  
We were very  
apprehensive that we

448  
00:27:05,410 --> 00:27:08,770  
were going to be sent to  
the Eastern theater rather

449  
00:27:08,770 --> 00:27:11,920  
than the Western theater,  
European theater.

450  
00:27:11,920 --> 00:27:17,620  
And we were just hoping that  
we wouldn't have to go there.

451  
00:27:17,620 --> 00:27:18,830  
We wanted to go to Europe.

452  
00:27:18,830 --> 00:27:23,110  
We felt that would be  
more the better for us.

453  
00:27:23,110 --> 00:27:30,590

454  
00:27:30,590 --> 00:27:35,240  
When did you complete your  
training at Camp Butner?

455  
00:27:35,240 --> 00:27:38,150  
We completed our  
training in Camp Butner

456



00:27:38,150 --> 00:27:44,010  
probably around October  
or middle of October,

457  
00:27:44,010 --> 00:27:48,450  
beginning of November 1944.

458  
00:27:48,450 --> 00:27:50,970  
And then what happened?

459  
00:27:50,970 --> 00:27:54,300  
Then we were shipped to  
Boston, and in Boston, we

460  
00:27:54,300 --> 00:28:02,310  
embarked on our transport  
on Christmas Day of 1944.

461  
00:28:02,310 --> 00:28:06,060  
And we progressed overseas.

462  
00:28:06,060 --> 00:28:10,650  
At that time, we were told, and  
I never was able to verify it,

463  
00:28:10,650 --> 00:28:15,270  
that there were six divisions  
on the high seas at that time,

464  
00:28:15,270 --> 00:28:19,620  
and we landed in  
Le Havre, France

465  
00:28:19,620 --> 00:28:25,470  
on New Year's Day of 1945.

466  
00:28:25,470 --> 00:28:30,180  
This concludes side  
A of tape number one.

467  
00:28:30,180 --> 00:28:39,150

468

00:28:39,150 --> 00:28:42,330

This interview is being taped  
on behalf of the United States

469

00:28:42,330 --> 00:28:44,430

Holocaust Memorial Museum.

470

00:28:44,430 --> 00:28:46,770

The interview is  
with Jack Reuben.

471

00:28:46,770 --> 00:28:48,720

The interviewer is Nancy Alper.

472

00:28:48,720 --> 00:28:52,830

The date is February 23, 1998.

473

00:28:52,830 --> 00:28:58,170

Tape number one side B.

474

00:28:58,170 --> 00:29:03,240

Jack, we were talking about  
your leaving on Christmas

475

00:29:03,240 --> 00:29:09,600

Day 1944 for the Western  
theater and arriving in Le Havre

476

00:29:09,600 --> 00:29:13,380

and maybe you could tell me  
what your first impressions were

477

00:29:13,380 --> 00:29:16,830

when you arrived there.

478

00:29:16,830 --> 00:29:19,690

We were-- it was  
very, very cold.

479

00:29:19,690 --> 00:29:21,540

It was very, very windy.

480

00:29:21,540 --> 00:29:26,250

It was snowing, and it  
was just a miserable

481

00:29:26,250 --> 00:29:29,010

situation when we got in.

482

00:29:29,010 --> 00:29:37,320

The boat docked, and we were  
sent to a villa in the area

483

00:29:37,320 --> 00:29:45,090

around Le Havre, a castle  
where some duke or somebody had

484

00:29:45,090 --> 00:29:45,900

lived.

485

00:29:45,900 --> 00:29:51,810

And we were housed in the  
servants' quarters or any place

486

00:29:51,810 --> 00:29:54,510

that we could get in that area.

487

00:29:54,510 --> 00:30:02,680

And our battalion was sort of  
the center of all the activity

488

00:30:02,680 --> 00:30:06,700

that went on, and we  
operated a great deal

489

00:30:06,700 --> 00:30:12,810

with battalion  
autonomy from then on.

490

00:30:12,810 --> 00:30:17,940

What was your purpose in staying  
at this castle at that time?

491

00:30:17,940 --> 00:30:22,320

It was just to get organized,  
to get our equipment together,

492  
00:30:22,320 --> 00:30:28,050  
to get our armaments to  
develop a sense of being

493  
00:30:28,050 --> 00:30:33,690  
there in cohesion and just  
the sense of getting to--

494  
00:30:33,690 --> 00:30:37,890  
stabilizing ourselves.

495  
00:30:37,890 --> 00:30:41,580  
You were then given  
instructions or information

496  
00:30:41,580 --> 00:30:43,470  
about what you were  
going to be doing

497  
00:30:43,470 --> 00:30:46,860  
or what you were preparing for?

498  
00:30:46,860 --> 00:30:48,810  
Not really.

499  
00:30:48,810 --> 00:30:52,890  
We didn't know what  
we were going to do.

500  
00:30:52,890 --> 00:30:58,170  
While in the United States, we'd  
heard about the terrible Battle

501  
00:30:58,170 --> 00:31:01,680  
of the Bulge and everything  
that was going on there,

502  
00:31:01,680 --> 00:31:04,980  
and we were concerned  
that we were

503  
00:31:04,980 --> 00:31:09,750  
going to have to go into  
the Battle of the Bulge

504  
00:31:09,750 --> 00:31:11,550  
and fight that kind of a fight.

505  
00:31:11,550 --> 00:31:15,030  
But the more we learned about  
it, by the time we got there,

506  
00:31:15,030 --> 00:31:16,410  
the battle had--

507  
00:31:16,410 --> 00:31:20,430  
and were equipped and ready  
to fight, which was probably

508  
00:31:20,430 --> 00:31:25,530  
around February, the Battle of  
the Bulge was pretty well over,

509  
00:31:25,530 --> 00:31:30,180  
and we didn't have any problem  
as far as that was concerned.

510  
00:31:30,180 --> 00:31:33,690  
Did you have contact with  
the French population

511  
00:31:33,690 --> 00:31:35,610  
while you were there?

512  
00:31:35,610 --> 00:31:40,110  
Not there, not  
originally near Le Havre.

513  
00:31:40,110 --> 00:31:43,420  
I had studied French  
in high school,

514

00:31:43,420 --> 00:31:46,380  
I had taken three years  
of French in high school,

515  
00:31:46,380 --> 00:31:50,850  
and I have a working  
vocabulary in French

516  
00:31:50,850 --> 00:31:56,790  
so I can discuss and talk  
to the people in French,

517  
00:31:56,790 --> 00:32:01,140  
and I did later on when  
we went into the field.

518  
00:32:01,140 --> 00:32:06,240  
I was able to act as a  
liaison with the French people

519  
00:32:06,240 --> 00:32:08,610  
and the officers in our unit.

520  
00:32:08,610 --> 00:32:11,730

521  
00:32:11,730 --> 00:32:18,150  
Were you assigned to a  
different battalion or division

522  
00:32:18,150 --> 00:32:19,470  
at this time?

523  
00:32:19,470 --> 00:32:20,220  
No.

524  
00:32:20,220 --> 00:32:23,610  
We were always part of the  
89th Infantry Division,

525  
00:32:23,610 --> 00:32:27,000  
although our  
regiment was located

526  
00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:30,270  
some time in different areas  
than the other regiments would

527  
00:32:30,270 --> 00:32:31,170  
be.

528  
00:32:31,170 --> 00:32:33,990  
We were always  
part of the 355th.

529  
00:32:33,990 --> 00:32:41,400  
And we would take assignments  
under that category.

530  
00:32:41,400 --> 00:32:46,480  
How would you characterize  
your regiment?

531  
00:32:46,480 --> 00:32:48,940  
What kind of regiment was it?

532  
00:32:48,940 --> 00:32:51,940  
Ours was a conventional  
infantry regiment.

533  
00:32:51,940 --> 00:32:56,650  
We had three rifle companies,  
one heavy weapons company,

534  
00:32:56,650 --> 00:32:58,840  
and one headquarters company.

535  
00:32:58,840 --> 00:33:05,890  
And the heavy weapons company  
included automatic machine guns

536  
00:33:05,890 --> 00:33:10,220  
and weapons of that nature.

537  
00:33:10,220 --> 00:33:14,380

And then we had  
artillery support

538  
00:33:14,380 --> 00:33:17,690  
from the regimental artillery.

539  
00:33:17,690 --> 00:33:19,460  
Would this have  
been characterized

540  
00:33:19,460 --> 00:33:21,740  
as a light regiment?

541  
00:33:21,740 --> 00:33:22,920  
Not any longer.

542  
00:33:22,920 --> 00:33:25,910  
We were a regular infantry  
regiment by that time.

543  
00:33:25,910 --> 00:33:30,260  
We had vehicles, and  
we had equipment.

544  
00:33:30,260 --> 00:33:33,860  
We had messenger  
vehicles in our unit,

545  
00:33:33,860 --> 00:33:37,700  
and the other units had the  
trucks and that kind of thing.

546  
00:33:37,700 --> 00:33:42,050  
But we did not have any  
tanks or any armored vehicles

547  
00:33:42,050 --> 00:33:43,160  
of any nature.

548  
00:33:43,160 --> 00:33:49,520  
We just had regular  
trucks and Jeeps.



549

00:33:49,520 --> 00:33:52,610

Were you at one time  
a light regiment?

550

00:33:52,610 --> 00:33:55,880

The unit was a light  
regiment before we joined it

551

00:33:55,880 --> 00:33:58,820

at Hunter Liggett,  
but at Hunter Liggett,

552

00:33:58,820 --> 00:34:03,620

we converted into a  
regular infantry regiment.

553

00:34:03,620 --> 00:34:08,179

And you continued in  
this decoding function.

554

00:34:08,179 --> 00:34:11,900

Not only that, as  
we got into combat,

555

00:34:11,900 --> 00:34:14,630

not only did I have  
the decoding function,

556

00:34:14,630 --> 00:34:18,170

but I also had the  
messenger coordination unit,

557

00:34:18,170 --> 00:34:20,750

and I used to coordinate  
the messengers

558

00:34:20,750 --> 00:34:25,850

both to the companies and to  
the regimental headquarters.

559

00:34:25,850 --> 00:34:30,380

And it was my function to see  
that the messages got through,

560

00:34:30,380 --> 00:34:34,310  
either through the radio, which  
we would then delegate that

561

00:34:34,310 --> 00:34:37,460  
to the radio  
communications platoon,

562

00:34:37,460 --> 00:34:40,820  
or if that wasn't  
possible, then to get it

563

00:34:40,820 --> 00:34:43,800  
through by messenger  
one way or another,

564

00:34:43,800 --> 00:34:46,580  
even if I had to  
be the messenger.

565

00:34:46,580 --> 00:34:49,639  
How many vehicles  
did you have assigned

566

00:34:49,639 --> 00:34:54,570  
to you, and how many messengers  
were working with you?

567

00:34:54,570 --> 00:34:57,570  
If I remember correctly,  
we had three Jeeps,

568

00:34:57,570 --> 00:35:02,070  
and we had three or  
four messengers that

569

00:35:02,070 --> 00:35:07,140  
were assigned to us, but I  
don't remember that very clearly

570

00:35:07,140 --> 00:35:09,060  
at all.

571  
00:35:09,060 --> 00:35:11,010  
What was your rank at this time?

572  
00:35:11,010 --> 00:35:14,160  
And did it remain the  
same throughout your tour

573  
00:35:14,160 --> 00:35:16,480  
of duty in Europe?

574  
00:35:16,480 --> 00:35:20,790  
Well, by this time, I  
was a PFC, and then I

575  
00:35:20,790 --> 00:35:23,970  
got promoted to the  
magnificent stature

576  
00:35:23,970 --> 00:35:31,710  
of T5, a technical corporal,  
because of the encoding

577  
00:35:31,710 --> 00:35:32,820  
and decoding.

578  
00:35:32,820 --> 00:35:37,500  
And that was my  
ultimate rank was T5.

579  
00:35:37,500 --> 00:35:40,170  
Did that give you the  
additional responsibility

580  
00:35:40,170 --> 00:35:42,090  
for the other messengers?

581  
00:35:42,090 --> 00:35:43,020  
Yes, it did.

582  
00:35:43,020 --> 00:35:45,300  
I was in charge of

the message center,

583

00:35:45,300 --> 00:35:48,270  
and I worked under our  
communications sergeant, who

584

00:35:48,270 --> 00:35:51,840  
was in charge of the radio  
group and all the other groups

585

00:35:51,840 --> 00:35:59,400  
in there in the platoon, in  
the communications platoon.

586

00:35:59,400 --> 00:36:02,850  
Jack, at that point in  
time, before you even

587

00:36:02,850 --> 00:36:07,830  
left for real combat to  
engage in real combat,

588

00:36:07,830 --> 00:36:13,470  
was information received through  
these messages within the Third

589

00:36:13,470 --> 00:36:19,260  
Army that were telling  
you or was telling you

590

00:36:19,260 --> 00:36:24,180  
other things that were  
going on, say, the Soviets

591

00:36:24,180 --> 00:36:28,260  
moving from East to West  
that didn't strictly

592

00:36:28,260 --> 00:36:33,300  
have anything to do with  
what you would be doing next?

593

00:36:33,300 --> 00:36:34,650

No, we didn't.

594

00:36:34,650 --> 00:36:37,390

We didn't get any of  
that message at all.

595

00:36:37,390 --> 00:36:39,780

The only way we learned  
about what was going on

596

00:36:39,780 --> 00:36:42,000

was through the  
stars and stripes.

597

00:36:42,000 --> 00:36:45,390

We did get periodically  
get issues of the stars

598

00:36:45,390 --> 00:36:48,270

and stripes, and through  
the stars and stripes,

599

00:36:48,270 --> 00:36:52,590

we learned about what was  
going on or with communications

600

00:36:52,590 --> 00:36:55,200

with people in the  
United States, letters

601

00:36:55,200 --> 00:36:59,340

from our families  
and things like that,

602

00:36:59,340 --> 00:37:02,730

that would let us know.

603

00:37:02,730 --> 00:37:14,680

I didn't tell you that I had  
been married in 1944 while I

604

00:37:14,680 --> 00:37:22,780

was at Pomona College and that

I communicated with my wife

605

00:37:22,780 --> 00:37:24,610

by letter, and this is--

606

00:37:24,610 --> 00:37:27,550

we found out as much  
from that as anything

607

00:37:27,550 --> 00:37:29,440

else through the communications.

608

00:37:29,440 --> 00:37:32,740

And we also found out  
through the stars and stripes

609

00:37:32,740 --> 00:37:36,400

what was going on, but  
we didn't hear very much

610

00:37:36,400 --> 00:37:41,410

through the communications at  
our level because we were--

611

00:37:41,410 --> 00:37:44,870

this is at a very,  
very basic level.

612

00:37:44,870 --> 00:37:47,110

It doesn't go any  
lower than this,

613

00:37:47,110 --> 00:37:51,010

and we were just engaged  
in troop activities

614

00:37:51,010 --> 00:37:54,160

and instructions of what  
we were supposed to do,

615

00:37:54,160 --> 00:37:57,610

not major activities  
on the front.

616

00:37:57,610 --> 00:37:59,470

Were the letters  
that you received

617

00:37:59,470 --> 00:38:03,610

and the letters that you  
sent censored at that time?

618

00:38:03,610 --> 00:38:05,410

Yes, they were.

619

00:38:05,410 --> 00:38:07,540

The outgoing letters  
were censored.

620

00:38:07,540 --> 00:38:09,880

The incoming letters  
were not censored,

621

00:38:09,880 --> 00:38:13,600

but the outgoing letters were  
censored, and some of them

622

00:38:13,600 --> 00:38:14,350

were--

623

00:38:14,350 --> 00:38:16,510

I know after I got  
back, I saw them.

624

00:38:16,510 --> 00:38:19,390

They were cut up  
pretty badly because I

625

00:38:19,390 --> 00:38:22,090

mentioned names of  
cities that we'd been in

626

00:38:22,090 --> 00:38:23,330

and things like that.

627

00:38:23,330 --> 00:38:28,230  
And those were all  
deleted from the letters.

628  
00:38:28,230 --> 00:38:31,800  
And what kind of  
information were you

629  
00:38:31,800 --> 00:38:34,590  
getting through the  
stars and stripes?

630  
00:38:34,590 --> 00:38:37,590  
We were getting really good  
information, information

631  
00:38:37,590 --> 00:38:42,340  
telling us where the different  
divisions were located,

632  
00:38:42,340 --> 00:38:45,810  
what the situation was on the  
battlefront, where the Allied

633  
00:38:45,810 --> 00:38:50,910  
forces were, and what was  
happening in different areas.

634  
00:38:50,910 --> 00:38:54,990  
It kept us pretty well informed  
as to what was going on

635  
00:38:54,990 --> 00:38:57,390  
at that particular time.

636  
00:38:57,390 --> 00:38:59,430  
Wouldn't the stars  
and stripes have

637  
00:38:59,430 --> 00:39:02,980  
been available to the  
German army as well?

638



00:39:02,980 --> 00:39:06,090  
Hopefully not.

639  
00:39:06,090 --> 00:39:15,300  
Hopefully it was just  
confined to our area.

640  
00:39:15,300 --> 00:39:17,670  
Maybe if they would have  
captured one of the units,

641  
00:39:17,670 --> 00:39:19,590  
they may have gotten it.

642  
00:39:19,590 --> 00:39:24,070  
But I don't know.

643  
00:39:24,070 --> 00:39:25,545  
We never thought about that.

644  
00:39:25,545 --> 00:39:29,190

645  
00:39:29,190 --> 00:39:32,640  
At the time that  
you were on your way

646  
00:39:32,640 --> 00:39:36,510  
from Le Havre to wherever  
you would be going next,

647  
00:39:36,510 --> 00:39:44,130  
I assume there was no  
indication of any sort of camps,

648  
00:39:44,130 --> 00:39:46,230  
concentration camps  
or death camps

649  
00:39:46,230 --> 00:39:51,330  
that were being discovered as  
the Allies were moving West,

650

00:39:51,330 --> 00:39:54,480

but more importantly, as  
the Soviets were moving--

651

00:39:54,480 --> 00:39:56,880

as the Allies were moving  
East and the Soviets

652

00:39:56,880 --> 00:39:58,300

were moving West.

653

00:39:58,300 --> 00:40:00,520

You're absolutely right.

654

00:40:00,520 --> 00:40:03,570

I look back on it  
now, and I can't

655

00:40:03,570 --> 00:40:10,200

believe the absolute  
lack of any indication

656

00:40:10,200 --> 00:40:15,240

whatsoever about the  
Jewish situation,

657

00:40:15,240 --> 00:40:19,860

about the plight of the Jewish  
people, about the death camps,

658

00:40:19,860 --> 00:40:22,330

about the concentration camps.

659

00:40:22,330 --> 00:40:28,350

We had no information at  
all that I knew about.

660

00:40:28,350 --> 00:40:30,970

Maybe some of the other  
people knew about it.

661

00:40:30,970 --> 00:40:33,810

But personally, I  
had no information

662  
00:40:33,810 --> 00:40:35,830  
at all as to what was going on.

663  
00:40:35,830 --> 00:40:38,430  
I had a general  
idea from the time

664  
00:40:38,430 --> 00:40:40,290  
that we were in  
the United States

665  
00:40:40,290 --> 00:40:44,460  
about the persecution  
of the Jewish people,

666  
00:40:44,460 --> 00:40:47,850  
but we did not have any  
specific information

667  
00:40:47,850 --> 00:40:53,230  
about the concentration  
camps whatsoever.

668  
00:40:53,230 --> 00:40:56,130  
Where did you get the general  
idea of the persecution

669  
00:40:56,130 --> 00:40:57,930  
of the Jewish people?

670  
00:40:57,930 --> 00:41:02,910  
Oh, just from the  
papers in Los Angeles,

671  
00:41:02,910 --> 00:41:10,020  
the work that was going on at  
UCLA in the student lounge,

672  
00:41:10,020 --> 00:41:13,120  
they have information

posted there.

673  
00:41:13,120 --> 00:41:16,590  
And when we would come  
there to eat lunch,

674  
00:41:16,590 --> 00:41:20,790  
or we'd be going by there,  
we'd stop in and look and see

675  
00:41:20,790 --> 00:41:22,480  
what was going on.

676  
00:41:22,480 --> 00:41:27,492  
And this was my best  
source of information.

677  
00:41:27,492 --> 00:41:28,950  
Maybe I didn't pay  
enough attention

678  
00:41:28,950 --> 00:41:31,470  
to the papers or  
anything like that,

679  
00:41:31,470 --> 00:41:35,220  
but it really didn't  
strike me as being

680  
00:41:35,220 --> 00:41:39,760  
readily available to the people  
here in the United States.

681  
00:41:39,760 --> 00:41:41,880  
Do you recall whether  
that information that

682  
00:41:41,880 --> 00:41:47,160  
was posted at UCLA was posted  
by Jewish organizations

683  
00:41:47,160 --> 00:41:49,110  
for Jewish students?

684  
00:41:49,110 --> 00:41:50,610  
No, I don't.

685  
00:41:50,610 --> 00:41:52,110  
I don't remember who posted it.

686  
00:41:52,110 --> 00:41:54,850  
I don't remember  
how it got there.

687  
00:41:54,850 --> 00:42:01,020  
But I do remember that there was  
one area in the student union

688  
00:42:01,020 --> 00:42:05,610  
where we would go all the time,  
and there would be bulletins

689  
00:42:05,610 --> 00:42:08,460  
and some information  
about the situation

690  
00:42:08,460 --> 00:42:12,730  
of the Jews in Germany and  
what was happening there.

691  
00:42:12,730 --> 00:42:15,000  
And this wasn't, for  
example, information

692  
00:42:15,000 --> 00:42:18,600  
that was posted at some  
sort of Hillel foundation

693  
00:42:18,600 --> 00:42:20,820  
or organization.

694  
00:42:20,820 --> 00:42:21,930  
It could have been.

695  
00:42:21,930 --> 00:42:25,410

It very well could have been.

696  
00:42:25,410 --> 00:42:28,680  
UCLA was relatively  
small at that time,

697  
00:42:28,680 --> 00:42:33,570  
and there was a Hillel  
house across from campus,

698  
00:42:33,570 --> 00:42:35,790  
just east of the campus.

699  
00:42:35,790 --> 00:42:43,770  
And they were active, but I  
was not involved with them.

700  
00:42:43,770 --> 00:42:49,350  
When you were about to leave Le  
Havre, where did you go next,

701  
00:42:49,350 --> 00:42:53,400  
and what, if anything,  
were you told to expect?

702  
00:42:53,400 --> 00:42:59,600  
Our first area of combat was  
in the Moselle River Valley.

703  
00:42:59,600 --> 00:43:01,980  
We went to the  
Moselle River Valley,

704  
00:43:01,980 --> 00:43:06,240  
I think it was in the  
latter part of February

705  
00:43:06,240 --> 00:43:11,280  
or the very early  
part of March of 1944.

706  
00:43:11,280 --> 00:43:16,180  
And we engaged in

combat in that area.

707

00:43:16,180 --> 00:43:20,490

And that was our  
first experience

708

00:43:20,490 --> 00:43:25,120

in the combat situation.

709

00:43:25,120 --> 00:43:27,220

Where was the  
Moselle River Valley

710

00:43:27,220 --> 00:43:29,740

in relation to the Maginot line?

711

00:43:29,740 --> 00:43:33,110

712

00:43:33,110 --> 00:43:35,540

Jack, the tape was just paused.

713

00:43:35,540 --> 00:43:38,600

We were talking about,  
I believe, your moving

714

00:43:38,600 --> 00:43:42,290

into the Moselle River  
Valley and engaging in combat

715

00:43:42,290 --> 00:43:43,910

for the first time.

716

00:43:43,910 --> 00:43:48,140

Yes, that's where we had  
our initiation into combat,

717

00:43:48,140 --> 00:43:55,580

and we were there to develop a  
bridgehead across the Moselle

718

00:43:55,580 --> 00:43:59,450

River for the Allied  
troops, and we

719  
00:43:59,450 --> 00:44:03,720  
stayed there a relatively  
short period of time

720  
00:44:03,720 --> 00:44:07,950  
until we were able to pass the  
troops through the bridgehead

721  
00:44:07,950 --> 00:44:10,800  
and across the Moselle Valley.

722  
00:44:10,800 --> 00:44:13,320  
What kind of fighting  
was going on there

723  
00:44:13,320 --> 00:44:16,270  
and how intense was it?

724  
00:44:16,270 --> 00:44:20,380  
It was very intense for  
the frontline troops.

725  
00:44:20,380 --> 00:44:26,800  
We lost quite a few men  
in the rifle companies,

726  
00:44:26,800 --> 00:44:32,150  
and we called for additional  
heavy artillery support.

727  
00:44:32,150 --> 00:44:34,750  
We got some, and we  
were able to make

728  
00:44:34,750 --> 00:44:37,420  
the crossing of  
the Moselle River

729  
00:44:37,420 --> 00:44:39,910  
and able to develop



a bridgehead across

730

00:44:39,910 --> 00:44:43,510

there so that the  
troops could get across.

731

00:44:43,510 --> 00:44:50,710

We didn't see too much from a  
headquarters company standpoint

732

00:44:50,710 --> 00:44:56,500

from back in the  
communications platoon,

733

00:44:56,500 --> 00:45:00,950

but there was quite a bit  
of fighting in that area.

734

00:45:00,950 --> 00:45:03,640

Did you have air  
support at that time

735

00:45:03,640 --> 00:45:09,280

and how were the Germans  
fighting at that time?

736

00:45:09,280 --> 00:45:13,990

We did not have any air  
support that I remember seeing.

737

00:45:13,990 --> 00:45:17,560

The Germans were still  
fighting very, very hard,

738

00:45:17,560 --> 00:45:20,200

and it was very resistant.

739

00:45:20,200 --> 00:45:23,680

It was very slow moving  
kind of activity,

740

00:45:23,680 --> 00:45:27,640

and it was done on foot.

741  
00:45:27,640 --> 00:45:30,970  
There was not a lot of  
vehicular transportation.

742  
00:45:30,970 --> 00:45:34,160

743  
00:45:34,160 --> 00:45:38,660  
How are the Germans equipped  
as far as you could tell?

744  
00:45:38,660 --> 00:45:40,280  
As far as we could  
tell, the Germans

745  
00:45:40,280 --> 00:45:42,020  
had very good equipment.

746  
00:45:42,020 --> 00:45:43,970  
They had plenty of ammunition.

747  
00:45:43,970 --> 00:45:47,870  
There was no hesitancy  
to use the ammunition,

748  
00:45:47,870 --> 00:45:51,140  
and we received a  
lot of small arms

749  
00:45:51,140 --> 00:45:56,150  
fire, a lot of machine gun  
fire, but we did not receive

750  
00:45:56,150 --> 00:45:58,340  
a lot of heavy weapons fire.

751  
00:45:58,340 --> 00:46:04,580  
We did not have cannon  
shells, howitzers,

752  
00:46:04,580 --> 00:46:06,410

or anything of that nature.

753

00:46:06,410 --> 00:46:10,690

We were just mostly  
small arms fire.

754

00:46:10,690 --> 00:46:13,090

How did you know  
that you had been

755

00:46:13,090 --> 00:46:16,870

able to accomplish that  
bridgehead across the river,

756

00:46:16,870 --> 00:46:21,070

and therefore, I assume  
that you were victorious?

757

00:46:21,070 --> 00:46:24,190

Well, when they came  
along, and they told us

758

00:46:24,190 --> 00:46:28,180

we were going back into  
Germany to regroup,

759

00:46:28,180 --> 00:46:31,090

well, then we knew that we  
had accomplished our mission,

760

00:46:31,090 --> 00:46:33,520

and somebody else had  
been passed through us.

761

00:46:33,520 --> 00:46:35,800

I don't remember  
which division it was.

762

00:46:35,800 --> 00:46:41,620

And we were then called  
back, and we regrouped,

763

00:46:41,620 --> 00:46:45,070

and I don't remember  
where this was,

764  
00:46:45,070 --> 00:46:49,360  
and then we started out  
on our major campaign.

765  
00:46:49,360 --> 00:46:52,360  
Why don't you  
describe to me how you

766  
00:46:52,360 --> 00:46:56,890  
knew that was a major campaign  
and how you were preparing

767  
00:46:56,890 --> 00:47:00,590  
for it at that point in time?

768  
00:47:00,590 --> 00:47:04,090  
Well, the reason we knew  
it was a major campaign

769  
00:47:04,090 --> 00:47:06,790  
was because they  
were concentrating

770  
00:47:06,790 --> 00:47:11,440  
a great number of troops  
in the very small areas,

771  
00:47:11,440 --> 00:47:15,220  
and we were getting all the  
equipment that we needed,

772  
00:47:15,220 --> 00:47:22,540  
and we were also seeing boats  
being brought into the area.

773  
00:47:22,540 --> 00:47:27,340  
They were Naval boats, wooden  
boats from Naval ships,

774  
00:47:27,340 --> 00:47:34,690

more like the emergency landing  
craft that are on Naval ships,

775  
00:47:34,690 --> 00:47:38,210  
and they were being brought  
into the area by truck.

776  
00:47:38,210 --> 00:47:40,510  
And we were kind  
of wondering what

777  
00:47:40,510 --> 00:47:43,330  
the heck, what they were  
doing with these boats

778  
00:47:43,330 --> 00:47:46,870  
inland, and we had no  
idea what was going on

779  
00:47:46,870 --> 00:47:48,000  
or where we were going.

780  
00:47:48,000 --> 00:47:51,290

781  
00:47:51,290 --> 00:47:55,580  
How long, if you can remember,  
were you in that fighting

782  
00:47:55,580 --> 00:47:58,280  
in the Moselle River  
Valley and then

783  
00:47:58,280 --> 00:48:01,070  
how long, if you  
can remember, did it

784  
00:48:01,070 --> 00:48:04,490  
take you to get to  
your destination,

785  
00:48:04,490 --> 00:48:06,560  
the next destination?

786  
00:48:06,560 --> 00:48:07,880  
It wasn't very long.

787  
00:48:07,880 --> 00:48:10,250  
I think we were only  
there a couple of weeks,

788  
00:48:10,250 --> 00:48:12,200  
and then when we  
were pulled out,

789  
00:48:12,200 --> 00:48:14,750  
we were pulled out  
in another week.

790  
00:48:14,750 --> 00:48:17,600  
So it was around  
the end of February

791  
00:48:17,600 --> 00:48:20,360  
sometime when we were  
getting ready to start

792  
00:48:20,360 --> 00:48:22,730  
our next campaign.

793  
00:48:22,730 --> 00:48:25,520  
What was the weather like  
then, do you remember?

794  
00:48:25,520 --> 00:48:26,750  
It was snowing.

795  
00:48:26,750 --> 00:48:27,770  
It was snowing.

796  
00:48:27,770 --> 00:48:29,030  
It was cold.

797  
00:48:29,030 --> 00:48:30,560  
It was miserable.

798  
00:48:30,560 --> 00:48:37,010  
And we were camped  
out in canvas tents,

799  
00:48:37,010 --> 00:48:42,230  
and it was a really very,  
very terrible situation

800  
00:48:42,230 --> 00:48:44,570  
as far as living in  
those conditions.

801  
00:48:44,570 --> 00:48:49,400  
And maintaining records and  
doing coding and decoding,

802  
00:48:49,400 --> 00:48:53,420  
it was just a very  
difficult situation.

803  
00:48:53,420 --> 00:48:59,210  
How did you pass on messages  
after you had decoded them?

804  
00:48:59,210 --> 00:49:03,710  
How did they get moved  
around within the Army?

805  
00:49:03,710 --> 00:49:06,770  
That's what we used  
our messengers for.

806  
00:49:06,770 --> 00:49:11,270  
We had the people in our  
platoon who we would then

807  
00:49:11,270 --> 00:49:14,600  
tell them to take this message  
to so-and-so, such and such

808  
00:49:14,600 --> 00:49:19,190  
a unit located so-and-so,

and we would then

809  
00:49:19,190 --> 00:49:21,770  
use them to disperse  
the messages

810  
00:49:21,770 --> 00:49:24,920  
and forward them  
to whatever unit,

811  
00:49:24,920 --> 00:49:29,280  
whatever company they  
were assigned to.

812  
00:49:29,280 --> 00:49:33,740  
And you were still receiving the  
stars and stripes at this time?

813  
00:49:33,740 --> 00:49:40,330  
Occasionally, late,  
late, late, late.

814  
00:49:40,330 --> 00:49:43,370  
The thing I remember about  
the stars and stripes

815  
00:49:43,370 --> 00:49:47,360  
after we started our major  
campaign into Germany,

816  
00:49:47,360 --> 00:49:50,030  
at one point about--

817  
00:49:50,030 --> 00:49:56,170  
I think it was someplace  
in maybe mid March

818  
00:49:56,170 --> 00:50:00,610  
or the end of March, we got  
a stars and stripes that

819  
00:50:00,610 --> 00:50:03,550  
showed us, showed



the 89th division

820  
00:50:03,550 --> 00:50:08,470  
as the most furthest advanced  
point into all of Germany.

821  
00:50:08,470 --> 00:50:12,700  
We were at the head of Patton's  
Third Army going into Germany,

822  
00:50:12,700 --> 00:50:14,110  
but that was a little bit later.

823  
00:50:14,110 --> 00:50:26,700

824  
00:50:26,700 --> 00:50:30,990  
So you were proceeding, and  
you see these boats coming in,

825  
00:50:30,990 --> 00:50:35,040  
but you're not sure what  
they're going to be used for.

826  
00:50:35,040 --> 00:50:38,020  
And then what happened next?

827  
00:50:38,020 --> 00:50:40,560  
Then we were told  
that we were going

828  
00:50:40,560 --> 00:50:43,500  
to make an assault  
crossing of the Rhine.

829  
00:50:43,500 --> 00:50:48,810  
And this was our position  
was North of Frankfurt,

830  
00:50:48,810 --> 00:50:55,200  
and we were stationed  
north on the west side

831  
00:50:55,200 --> 00:51:03,900  
of the Rhine north of Frankfurt,  
and we were able to get--

832  
00:51:03,900 --> 00:51:05,410  
well, we were given--

833  
00:51:05,410 --> 00:51:09,270  
not given, but we had  
some heavy support,

834  
00:51:09,270 --> 00:51:11,760  
a very heavy artillery.

835  
00:51:11,760 --> 00:51:16,830  
And the artillery bombarded  
the east bank of the Rhine very

836  
00:51:16,830 --> 00:51:18,330  
ferociously.

837  
00:51:18,330 --> 00:51:23,640  
And then they brought the  
boats down to the water.

838  
00:51:23,640 --> 00:51:27,300  
We got on the boats, and  
we went across the Rhine

839  
00:51:27,300 --> 00:51:29,220  
in an assault of the Rhine.

840  
00:51:29,220 --> 00:51:32,550  
And the thing that  
made it so difficult

841  
00:51:32,550 --> 00:51:37,200  
is the Rhine is like an  
indentation in the ground.

842  
00:51:37,200 --> 00:51:40,140  
There's high banks

on both sides,

843  
00:51:40,140 --> 00:51:43,840  
but the Rhine River  
is very, very low.

844  
00:51:43,840 --> 00:51:46,740  
And so the people  
on the other bank

845  
00:51:46,740 --> 00:51:50,820  
shoot down on you, and as  
you go across the river,

846  
00:51:50,820 --> 00:51:53,490  
there at a very  
great disadvantage

847  
00:51:53,490 --> 00:51:57,810  
because you don't know where  
the fire is coming from.

848  
00:51:57,810 --> 00:52:00,250  
You can't see where the  
fire is coming from.

849  
00:52:00,250 --> 00:52:04,200  
They also shoot over the  
embankment from the other side,

850  
00:52:04,200 --> 00:52:06,750  
and you don't know where  
those weapons were.

851  
00:52:06,750 --> 00:52:11,250  
So we lost quite a few boats  
going across the river,

852  
00:52:11,250 --> 00:52:13,860  
and then we finally  
got across the river,

853  
00:52:13,860 --> 00:52:18,360

and then we went up  
the side of the--

854  
00:52:18,360 --> 00:52:21,090  
east bank of the Rhine  
and got to the top,

855  
00:52:21,090 --> 00:52:25,950  
and we managed to extinguish  
most of the areas of fire

856  
00:52:25,950 --> 00:52:27,180  
that were coming from us.

857  
00:52:27,180 --> 00:52:31,380  
But that was a very,  
very difficult assault

858  
00:52:31,380 --> 00:52:35,700  
crossing that we made  
of the Rhine River.

859  
00:52:35,700 --> 00:52:37,800  
But you had air  
power support, and I

860  
00:52:37,800 --> 00:52:40,140  
assume they were  
trying to knock out

861  
00:52:40,140 --> 00:52:44,880  
the Germans who were on the  
other side, the east side

862  
00:52:44,880 --> 00:52:45,660  
of the river.

863  
00:52:45,660 --> 00:52:46,590  
Yes, we did.

864  
00:52:46,590 --> 00:52:48,690  
We had very good  
air power support,

865  
00:52:48,690 --> 00:52:52,110  
and that was one of the  
things that saved us, I think,

866  
00:52:52,110 --> 00:52:55,200  
because as the  
further we got in,

867  
00:52:55,200 --> 00:52:59,100  
the more they we could tell them  
where the fire was coming from.

868  
00:52:59,100 --> 00:53:03,390  
And then they would attack  
that particular area.

869  
00:53:03,390 --> 00:53:05,460  
It was very, very good support.

870  
00:53:05,460 --> 00:53:07,830  
We had excellent support.

871  
00:53:07,830 --> 00:53:10,970  
Now, during that time  
in fierce battle,

872  
00:53:10,970 --> 00:53:15,510  
you were presumably  
trying to get messages out

873  
00:53:15,510 --> 00:53:19,500  
to various units  
of what's going on

874  
00:53:19,500 --> 00:53:21,090  
and what they need to be doing.

875  
00:53:21,090 --> 00:53:25,170  
Yes, because we were the  
central command point

876

00:53:25,170 --> 00:53:30,450  
for the Lieutenant Colonel who  
was in command of our battalion

877  
00:53:30,450 --> 00:53:34,170  
and all of his orders  
when he wasn't--

878  
00:53:34,170 --> 00:53:35,620  
he was a great guy.

879  
00:53:35,620 --> 00:53:37,900  
He was in the  
field all the time,

880  
00:53:37,900 --> 00:53:42,720  
but when he needed to get  
communications to the company

881  
00:53:42,720 --> 00:53:46,650  
commanders, he would have  
us take the messages to them

882  
00:53:46,650 --> 00:53:48,870  
and tell them what  
he wanted to do

883  
00:53:48,870 --> 00:53:50,670  
and where he wanted them to go.

884  
00:53:50,670 --> 00:53:56,540  
And some of our messengers would  
be assigned to the colonel,

885  
00:53:56,540 --> 00:54:00,060  
and they would go with  
him into the field.

886  
00:54:00,060 --> 00:54:03,000  
And where did that  
place you in terms

887  
00:54:03,000 --> 00:54:04,900

of being on the front lines?

888

00:54:04,900 --> 00:54:09,900

Did that place you up at  
the front or somewhere else?

889

00:54:09,900 --> 00:54:12,690

No, I was not up at the front.

890

00:54:12,690 --> 00:54:15,720

I was in the first  
line behind the front

891

00:54:15,720 --> 00:54:19,320

because it was my job to make  
the messengers available,

892

00:54:19,320 --> 00:54:25,890

to handle the messages, to relay  
any firing our heavy artillery

893

00:54:25,890 --> 00:54:30,150

weapons commands or requests  
that the colonel wanted

894

00:54:30,150 --> 00:54:34,890

and to coordinate all of the  
activity that was going on

895

00:54:34,890 --> 00:54:38,220

that he wanted to see  
coordinated when he wasn't

896

00:54:38,220 --> 00:54:41,530

actually with the companies.

897

00:54:41,530 --> 00:54:43,690

How wide was the Rhine River?

898

00:54:43,690 --> 00:54:46,330

Do you have a recollection  
of that at the location

899

00:54:46,330 --> 00:54:48,640  
where the heaviest fighting was?

900

00:54:48,640 --> 00:54:50,780  
It was miles wide.

901

00:54:50,780 --> 00:54:52,720  
It went on forever.

902

00:54:52,720 --> 00:54:55,420  
I thought we were never  
going to get across it.

903

00:54:55,420 --> 00:54:57,230  
But I don't know.

904

00:54:57,230 --> 00:55:02,440  
I guess I'd estimate something  
around maybe half a mile wide,

905

00:55:02,440 --> 00:55:06,160  
something-- maybe  
--, I think but for--

906

00:55:06,160 --> 00:55:08,360  
when we were going  
across it, it seemed

907

00:55:08,360 --> 00:55:10,840  
that it was going on forever.

908

00:55:10,840 --> 00:55:14,950  
Took us days to get across it.

909

00:55:14,950 --> 00:55:17,980  
Did you see the  
death or wounding

910

00:55:17,980 --> 00:55:21,940  
of a great many  
American soldiers?



911

00:55:21,940 --> 00:55:23,950

Yes, we saw --

912

00:55:23,950 --> 00:55:27,700

there wasn't too many  
fatal casualties,

913

00:55:27,700 --> 00:55:31,390

but there were a lot of wounds,  
a lot of shrapnel wounds

914

00:55:31,390 --> 00:55:33,160

and things of that nature.

915

00:55:33,160 --> 00:55:37,900

And we would send them to  
the rear to the hospitals

916

00:55:37,900 --> 00:55:39,520

as quickly as we could.

917

00:55:39,520 --> 00:55:45,070

We had very good support from  
the hospitals with ambulances

918

00:55:45,070 --> 00:55:48,370

and things like that, and when  
we'd run out of ambulances,

919

00:55:48,370 --> 00:55:53,230

we just put them on Jeeps and  
send them back with the Jeeps.

920

00:55:53,230 --> 00:55:57,370

This was probably our  
heaviest engagement

921

00:55:57,370 --> 00:56:00,355

that we encountered  
throughout the whole campaign.

922

00:56:00,355 --> 00:56:03,840

923

00:56:03,840 --> 00:56:07,050

And a question going  
back to an earlier period

924

00:56:07,050 --> 00:56:11,130

is before you had  
this fierce fighting

925

00:56:11,130 --> 00:56:14,370

to take to get across the  
Rhine, had you already

926

00:56:14,370 --> 00:56:17,770

seen German soldiers captured?

927

00:56:17,770 --> 00:56:21,600

And if so, what was that like?

928

00:56:21,600 --> 00:56:23,380

We saw a few.

929

00:56:23,380 --> 00:56:27,240

We didn't see very many of  
them in the Moselle campaign.

930

00:56:27,240 --> 00:56:34,650

931

00:56:34,650 --> 00:56:36,870

I was very upset with them.

932

00:56:36,870 --> 00:56:43,320

I really didn't want to have  
anything to do with them.

933

00:56:43,320 --> 00:56:45,030

As far as I was  
concerned, the quicker

934

00:56:45,030 --> 00:56:47,100

we got rid of them, the better.

935

00:56:47,100 --> 00:56:53,190

And I did not have any  
conversations with them,

936

00:56:53,190 --> 00:56:58,200

although my Yiddish was good  
enough to converse in German,

937

00:56:58,200 --> 00:57:02,280

and there was another fellow  
in our battalion headquarters

938

00:57:02,280 --> 00:57:04,260

company who was German.

939

00:57:04,260 --> 00:57:05,070

He wasn't German.

940

00:57:05,070 --> 00:57:06,540

His family was German.

941

00:57:06,540 --> 00:57:09,450

And he could speak  
German better than I.

942

00:57:09,450 --> 00:57:13,170

But I did also act  
as an interpreter

943

00:57:13,170 --> 00:57:20,000

with the German people as  
we went through Germany.

944

00:57:20,000 --> 00:57:21,640

I didn't see any--

945

00:57:21,640 --> 00:57:24,150

I saw some German soldiers,  
but I never did talk

946

00:57:24,150 --> 00:57:27,060  
to them, not at that point.

947  
00:57:27,060 --> 00:57:29,100  
What kind of condition  
did they seem

948  
00:57:29,100 --> 00:57:33,810  
to be in when you saw them,  
and what was happening to them?

949  
00:57:33,810 --> 00:57:35,550  
They looked a little gaunt.

950  
00:57:35,550 --> 00:57:39,930  
They looked like they  
hadn't had adequate food,

951  
00:57:39,930 --> 00:57:44,670  
but they didn't seem  
much too bad as far

952  
00:57:44,670 --> 00:57:45,600  
as the other concerns.

953  
00:57:45,600 --> 00:57:47,820  
I didn't see any of the wounded.

954  
00:57:47,820 --> 00:57:51,240  
I don't know what  
happened to the wounded,

955  
00:57:51,240 --> 00:57:56,220  
but I didn't see any of the  
wounded German soldiers.

956  
00:57:56,220 --> 00:58:00,630  
What was done with them  
after they were captured?

957  
00:58:00,630 --> 00:58:05,460  
We immediately  
established holding pens--

958  
00:58:05,460 --> 00:58:11,160  
holding camps and would  
have the German prisoners

959  
00:58:11,160 --> 00:58:12,600  
into these holding camps.

960  
00:58:12,600 --> 00:58:14,640  
And we'd turn  
those holding camps

961  
00:58:14,640 --> 00:58:17,730  
over into the troops who  
were coming behind us.

962  
00:58:17,730 --> 00:58:20,250  
There would be troops  
who would be assigned

963  
00:58:20,250 --> 00:58:23,310  
to take care of these prisoners  
because we didn't have

964  
00:58:23,310 --> 00:58:26,160  
the time, the energy,  
or the personnel

965  
00:58:26,160 --> 00:58:27,810  
to take care of those camps.

966  
00:58:27,810 --> 00:58:32,010  
They were just there to be  
held until the troops who

967  
00:58:32,010 --> 00:58:35,250  
were assigned to that function  
came in and took them.

968  
00:58:35,250 --> 00:58:38,940  
We didn't keep them any  
length of time at all.

969

00:58:38,940 --> 00:58:43,470

When they were spoken  
to by other soldiers,

970

00:58:43,470 --> 00:58:48,420

what was the interchange  
like if you saw any such?

971

00:58:48,420 --> 00:58:50,160

It was very marginal.

972

00:58:50,160 --> 00:58:51,510

We didn't talk to them.

973

00:58:51,510 --> 00:58:53,607

We didn't want to have  
anything to do with them.

974

00:58:53,607 --> 00:58:54,690

We'd just get rid of them.

975

00:58:54,690 --> 00:58:55,890

We had other things to do.

976

00:58:55,890 --> 00:58:58,800

We were too busy taking  
care of our own things.

977

00:58:58,800 --> 00:59:00,810

We wanted them out  
of the way so that we

978

00:59:00,810 --> 00:59:05,550

could do what we needed  
to do to get the troops--

979

00:59:05,550 --> 00:59:08,970

see they were supplied,  
to see that everybody

980

00:59:08,970 --> 00:59:10,890

was doing what

they needed to do,

981

00:59:10,890 --> 00:59:15,210

see that the fighting proceeded  
the way that the colonel wanted

982

00:59:15,210 --> 00:59:17,910

us to do it.

983

00:59:17,910 --> 00:59:20,850

After you cross to the other  
side of the Rhine River,

984

00:59:20,850 --> 00:59:22,380

what happened?

985

00:59:22,380 --> 00:59:25,770

Well, after we crossed the  
other side of the Rhine River,

986

00:59:25,770 --> 00:59:30,790

we consolidated there for  
about two or three days.

987

00:59:30,790 --> 00:59:39,060

And then liberated a bridge up  
north of us on the Rhine River.

988

00:59:39,060 --> 00:59:41,670

I forgot exactly  
where it was, and they

989

00:59:41,670 --> 00:59:46,320

were able to get a lot  
of transport equipment

990

00:59:46,320 --> 00:59:51,330

across this bridge, and the  
transport equipment came down,

991

00:59:51,330 --> 00:59:55,110

and we were able to  
then get into vehicles.

992  
00:59:55,110 --> 00:59:58,500  
And it seems that once we  
crossed the Rhine River,

993  
00:59:58,500 --> 01:00:05,520  
we broke the last main point of  
resistance of the German army

994  
01:00:05,520 --> 01:00:10,260  
because from then on, most  
of our travel was vehicular.

995  
01:00:10,260 --> 01:00:13,380  
We didn't march or  
anything like that.

996  
01:00:13,380 --> 01:00:18,270  
We'd travel by day in vehicles.

997  
01:00:18,270 --> 01:00:20,820  
Then at night we'd  
take over a village.

998  
01:00:20,820 --> 01:00:24,930  
We'd kick all the German  
people out of their houses.

999  
01:00:24,930 --> 01:00:26,850  
We'd take over their houses.

1000  
01:00:26,850 --> 01:00:33,690  
We'd eat from our own mess  
camps, but we'd stay in houses.

1001  
01:00:33,690 --> 01:00:38,500

1002  
01:00:38,500 --> 01:00:39,000  
we.

1003  
01:00:39,000 --> 01:00:43,980



Were moving at such a fast  
pace, it was just very--

1004  
01:00:43,980 --> 01:00:46,890  
it was unbelievable how  
fast we were moving.

1005  
01:00:46,890 --> 01:00:51,360  
We moved 20, 3- miles a  
day through the countryside

1006  
01:00:51,360 --> 01:00:53,370  
on the main autobahns.

1007  
01:00:53,370 --> 01:00:56,640

1008  
01:00:56,640 --> 01:01:00,270  
The Germans didn't-- they  
left the autobahns there.

1009  
01:01:00,270 --> 01:01:03,340  
They didn't blow up any  
bridges or anything like that.

1010  
01:01:03,340 --> 01:01:09,210  
We just continued with  
our scouts out in front,

1011  
01:01:09,210 --> 01:01:14,850  
and we'd come up, and the scouts  
would move out ahead again.

1012  
01:01:14,850 --> 01:01:20,580  
In that early crossing after  
that crossing the Rhine River,

1013  
01:01:20,580 --> 01:01:26,640  
what was your impression of  
the countryside, the roads,

1014  
01:01:26,640 --> 01:01:33,150  
the people, their homes, what

kind of condition it was in?

1015  
01:01:33,150 --> 01:01:34,310  
I was surprised.

1016  
01:01:34,310 --> 01:01:36,800  
I was really surprised.

1017  
01:01:36,800 --> 01:01:40,310  
The homes looked  
in good condition.

1018  
01:01:40,310 --> 01:01:45,290  
And the people  
seemed to be healthy.

1019  
01:01:45,290 --> 01:01:48,620  
They seemed to be well-fed.

1020  
01:01:48,620 --> 01:01:52,610  
There didn't seem to be a great  
deal of deprivation or anything

1021  
01:01:52,610 --> 01:01:54,540  
like that.

1022  
01:01:54,540 --> 01:01:59,660  
It was a relatively  
unscarred community,

1023  
01:01:59,660 --> 01:02:02,510  
except once in a while,  
we'd see some bombing

1024  
01:02:02,510 --> 01:02:08,690  
and things like that, where  
that community would have been

1025  
01:02:08,690 --> 01:02:10,670  
very, very much devastated.

1026  
01:02:10,670 --> 01:02:13,850

But outside of that  
in the countryside,

1027  
01:02:13,850 --> 01:02:19,520  
there was very little evidence  
of the war having gone on.

1028  
01:02:19,520 --> 01:02:22,610  
Would you characterize the area  
that you were moving through--

1029  
01:02:22,610 --> 01:02:25,100  
and I know you were  
moving through rapidly--

1030  
01:02:25,100 --> 01:02:28,580  
as industrial or agricultural?

1031  
01:02:28,580 --> 01:02:30,350  
Very agricultural.

1032  
01:02:30,350 --> 01:02:33,860  
It was very agricultural  
with isolated

1033  
01:02:33,860 --> 01:02:36,920  
industrial communities.

1034  
01:02:36,920 --> 01:02:40,010  
There was some  
industrial communities

1035  
01:02:40,010 --> 01:02:46,510  
that we went through, but  
most of it was agricultural.

1036  
01:02:46,510 --> 01:02:49,750  
What was the reaction  
of the German citizenry

1037  
01:02:49,750 --> 01:02:51,070  
to your presence there?

1038

01:02:51,070 --> 01:02:54,850

1039

01:02:54,850 --> 01:02:56,740

It was unbelievable.

1040

01:02:56,740 --> 01:02:58,900

When we first would  
take a village,

1041

01:02:58,900 --> 01:03:01,690

everybody would be  
so afraid that we

1042

01:03:01,690 --> 01:03:03,670

were going to pillage  
them and rape them

1043

01:03:03,670 --> 01:03:08,830

and just destroy the houses  
and everything like that.

1044

01:03:08,830 --> 01:03:10,600

But when they found  
out that we really

1045

01:03:10,600 --> 01:03:12,760

weren't interested  
in that, what we were

1046

01:03:12,760 --> 01:03:18,850

interested in was moving  
on and making sure

1047

01:03:18,850 --> 01:03:22,210

that the rest of the country  
was under our control,

1048

01:03:22,210 --> 01:03:26,380

they would then turn around, and  
they would start talking to us.

1049

01:03:26,380 --> 01:03:30,940  
And there would be evidence  
of friendliness and things

1050  
01:03:30,940 --> 01:03:32,230  
of this nature.

1051  
01:03:32,230 --> 01:03:40,240  
And it was very hard to  
pin the degree of blame,

1052  
01:03:40,240 --> 01:03:46,240  
the degree of acrimony,  
the degree of fierceness

1053  
01:03:46,240 --> 01:03:52,330  
that we felt because they  
were very, very nice.

1054  
01:03:52,330 --> 01:03:57,310  
Were they forthcoming in terms  
of giving you their homes

1055  
01:03:57,310 --> 01:03:59,770  
and providing food to  
you if you needed it

1056  
01:03:59,770 --> 01:04:02,200  
or other sorts of supplies?

1057  
01:04:02,200 --> 01:04:03,760  
We just kicked them out.

1058  
01:04:03,760 --> 01:04:05,920  
We didn't have--  
we just said out.

1059  
01:04:05,920 --> 01:04:09,710  
We're taking this  
over for tonight.

1060  
01:04:09,710 --> 01:04:15,680  
We didn't eat their food.

1061  
01:04:15,680 --> 01:04:22,040  
We ate food from the commissary  
that we carried with us,

1062  
01:04:22,040 --> 01:04:24,980  
and I'm not sure why,  
but that's what we did.

1063  
01:04:24,980 --> 01:04:26,720  
We did drink their beer.

1064  
01:04:26,720 --> 01:04:33,650  
But other than that, we didn't  
take any of their stuff.

1065  
01:04:33,650 --> 01:04:36,260

1066  
01:04:36,260 --> 01:04:38,630  
After the crossing  
of the Rhine River

1067  
01:04:38,630 --> 01:04:46,630  
and as you were moving,  
making this movement east,

1068  
01:04:46,630 --> 01:04:52,240  
I assume that you saw  
more German soldiers

1069  
01:04:52,240 --> 01:04:58,330  
being captured and having  
to be somehow taken care of?

1070  
01:04:58,330 --> 01:05:00,250  
Yes.

1071  
01:05:00,250 --> 01:05:03,040  
After we got through  
with the Rhine

1072

01:05:03,040 --> 01:05:07,060  
and we started moving East  
at these very heavy rates,

1073  
01:05:07,060 --> 01:05:09,640  
we started capturing  
the Germans,

1074  
01:05:09,640 --> 01:05:14,590  
not in tens, not in  
twenties, but in hundreds.

1075  
01:05:14,590 --> 01:05:20,260  
At one time, we were  
proceeding down the road,

1076  
01:05:20,260 --> 01:05:23,140  
and all of a sudden, we saw  
this whole great big group

1077  
01:05:23,140 --> 01:05:26,230  
of German soldiers  
marching towards us,

1078  
01:05:26,230 --> 01:05:28,540  
and we all got out  
of our vehicles.

1079  
01:05:28,540 --> 01:05:30,940  
And we manned our  
guns, and we were all

1080  
01:05:30,940 --> 01:05:33,130  
ready to kill them all.

1081  
01:05:33,130 --> 01:05:37,300  
And what we noticed was that  
they were marching towards us

1082  
01:05:37,300 --> 01:05:39,670  
with their hands in the air.

1083  
01:05:39,670 --> 01:05:45,350

And they were led  
by their colonel,

1084  
01:05:45,350 --> 01:05:49,320  
or whoever was in charge,  
and they wanted to surrender.

1085  
01:05:49,320 --> 01:05:52,790  
It was a whole battalion  
of German soldiers

1086  
01:05:52,790 --> 01:05:55,790  
who wanted to surrender,  
and we didn't have the time

1087  
01:05:55,790 --> 01:05:58,010  
to take care of them.

1088  
01:05:58,010 --> 01:06:03,530  
We just said go on, go  
on, go on in the back.

1089  
01:06:03,530 --> 01:06:08,200  
This concludes the side B of  
the first tape of an interview

1090  
01:06:08,200 --> 01:06:10,350  
with Jack Reuben.

1091  
01:06:10,350 --> 01:06:11,000