

Charles Stein

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Charles Stein (né Karl Robert Stein) was born in Vienna, Austria, on November 28, 1919. In the spring of 1938, after his first years of medical school at the University of Vienna, he traveled to Luxembourg, in route to the United States. He arrived in New York on December 18, 1939.

Charles was drafted on October 7, 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor. That same month, his parents were deported to the Lodz ghetto. In addition to field artillery training, Charles had intelligence training because of his knowledge in English, German and French. In June 1944, he went to Normandy with the 9th Infantry Division, 60th Infantry Regiment, as the commander of a prisoner-of-war interrogation team. The information from the interrogations was immediately relayed to the artillery and infantry units that were with him. He was in the combat zone from Normandy to the Czech border and in Germany. His only concentration camp encounter was at Nordhausen, where he interrogated Ukrainian guards. By the end of the war, he had moved up the ranks to captain. In December 1945 he returned to New York.

In September 1948, Charles became the chief of the translation section in the Office of Military History at the Pentagon. He served in Korea and Tokyo for five years. In 1953 he married Barbara, an Air Force lieutenant, in Tokyo. In 1955, they moved back to Washington D.C. and Charles worked for Air Force Intelligence and, later, for the State Department until his retirement in 1978. As a foreign service officer, he was responsible for the resettlement of refugees, including Russian Jews and Kurds, and traveled extensively throughout Europe.

In the 1980's Charles wrote about his experiences for his three sons. About three years ago, Charles learned his parents' fate: they were deported from Lodz to the Chelmno death camp on February 28, 1942, where they perished. He is currently chairman of the Volunteer Advisory Board at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Note: This interview focuses on the interviewee's post-Holocaust experiences. An earlier interview was conducted by Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation on February 27, 1997.