

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Hans Tuch. This is track number 1. And we were talking about Camp Ritchie. And you said you stay there for six weeks.

Yes, I should--

Anything else you want to say?

I should interpret me. I had no feeling or connection to Germany. I was absolutely an American citizen. I was an American. The fact that I had a German background really came only into play because I was in Camp Ritchie and I spoke German.

I had no feeling at all of having been a German citizen at one time-- forgotten then. I felt absolutely and thoroughly as an American, just like any other American. And by that time, I probably didn't have much of an accent anymore-- maybe slightly, which I still have-- or really, which has come back in my old age.

I notice it myself being sort of a linguist that I have. Actually, my accent sort of returns slightly now, yeah. But I had absolutely no feeling of ever having been a German at that time. I was so Americanized-- from Kansas City, Middle Western kid. And psychologically, going to Kansas City immediately in the Middle West, I was thrown into an American Middle Western family.

There were no other German refugees around me. I had to learn English. And I had nobody to speak German with. So I didn't. And I only spoke English, learned to speak English. And if I had landed in New York and lived in New York among other refugees, I would have felt like Kissinger-- with the German accent and so forth.

I deliberately tried to lose my German accent, because I wanted to be integrated, so to speak. And therefore, I had really lost any contact with Germany for just a year, a year and a half. And then she left and she came to the United States. So I had absolutely no feeling or contact for having really been a German. I was thoroughly Americanized.

And I never had anybody, really, to speak German with or to have related experiences with. And I didn't know anybody, because I was thoroughly Americanized. And my family was American. My uncle was the only one who spoke German or a little bit of German, and he was gone all day long.

Right. So I was Americanized. And I had no feeling not being an American. So--

Did Jeff speak any German?

No-- none whatsoever.

Was his mother American or German, Jeff's mother?

American.

I see.

She didn't speak a word of German.

So it was just the uncle.

No, they had a housekeeper. They had a cook and a housekeeper. The housekeeper came from a community in Missouri, which was German. And she said she spoke a little German, but she spoke no English until she was six years old.

And so she understood German for me as a 14-year-old. And she was wonderful-- just a terrific person. And she was fairly younger-- she was in her 30s at the time as a housekeeper in the family, but understood me. And she was really a

great guide for me. We became very close friends until she died.

When you were at Camp Ritchie, did they talk about what was happening in Europe and the war-- militarily, and Hitler, and so forth? Did they keep you informed about that?

No. I mean, we were at war. We had not had an invasion yet. We were at war.

Right.

Actually, we'd invaded Africa. But no, we were just being trained as soldiers.

But did you see pictures of Hitler in a newspaper? And if so, what reaction did you have? No, you don't remember?

Don't remember any, no, in those days.

So the next step.

The next step was I got a three-day pass, and that was the first time I flew in a plane to go back to Kansas City to see my mother. And I flew back to Camp Ritchie and then got an assignment to go to England to be overseas into a intelligence replacement camp in Broadway in Worcestershire. We went by troop ship.

And that was a real troop ship. It was during the time in the North Atlantic, and we were very crowded in this troop ship. We were stacked up four in the level and kept it at night, it was dark and so forth, and it was pretty crowded. And we got to England, and we went to Broadway in Worcestershire, and it was a very nice place. It was the intelligence assembly plan from which we were assigned to various divisions.

Now, what month-- what are we talking about? When?

March.

Of--

1944.

'44. What was--

March, April-- March. Yeah, March April '44-- April.

OK. And did they have different classes at Camp Ritchie and what number were you?

I don't remember. I think I was in the 8th class.

It says 18-- class 18.

18, it's possible. I just don't remember. And at this replacement camp, we were there. And recruiters came from the 101st and the 82nd--

Airborne?

Airborne divisions, looking for people who were going to be interrogators or prisoners of war intelligence specialists. And I know I was inebriated, but I signed up for the 101st Airborne division.

But you hadn't had any of that training yet.

No. And as a matter of fact, I was so inebriated, I signed up my best friend also without him knowing it.

You're all of 20 years old.

No, I was 19.

19 and a half, yeah.

And we were sent off to Leicestershire where the 101st Airborne Division was located, waiting for the invasion to be done. No, actually not-- we went to Leicestershire, and there was a sort of a ad hoc training camp for paratroopers. And I think the training camp was actually maintained by the 82nd division.

It was in Leicestershire. And we had seven days of nothing but physical training-- eight hours a day of physical training-- and only jumped from platforms-- learned how to jump from platform. And the second week, five days, every day to jump out of an airplane locally. And they took us up in airplanes, and the US Army had purchased a number of farms which were the landing areas.

And we were told that when we jump, we had to jump in that area because if we jumped across into another farm, they had to buy the farm or something like that. And so for five days, we jumped, one jump a day and were qualified-- one of which was a night jump, and that was scary. So we jumped.

And then we were assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, which was South of London in the area of Reading in various camps. And there, we were waiting for the invasion-- for the date. And we jumped at Normandy.

On June what--

June 6. We jumped before H-hour. We landed two hours before H-hour.

Yeah, you did.

Were you aware of the magnitude of the invasion? How much did they tell you?

No, we were a soldier, and we were going to invade France and go in there. And the only thing-- and this is the story that I've told and is now known, a little anecdote-- we were in this plane, the 24 people in the plane, and we were flying towards the continent at night.

The plane had no doors, because planes with paratroopers had no doors. They were open so there was a lot of noise. And we were scared as hell. And we had been issued just before we left new first aid. Everybody had first aid kits on their helmets-- just strapped to their helmets.

We had been issued new first aid kits which had a vial of morphine in them, because if you jumped and got hurt that you could inject yourself with morphine. We were flying towards Normandy at night, scared. And somebody in our plane said, why wait until you get hurt to use morphine? And the whole plane broke open their first aid kits with the vials, and we jabbed our next door neighbor with morphine. And all of us went out of the plane when we jumped feeling no pain.

And where did you land?

We landed-- well, I don't know exactly where we landed, but our landing area-- the city was Carentan-- near Omaha Beach-- a little bit inland in Carentan. We were supposed to land and block the road for German replacements for coming into that area and replace Germans. That was our mission.

And whether we accomplish this or not, I have no idea. But I must say, we had no idea where we were when we landed. Fortunately, the Assistant Division Commander of the 101st Airborne Division by the name of Higgins apparently knew where we were, and sort of took us in hand, and we managed to do our thing. The interesting thing about the Normandy

landing-- we were in combat only for nine days.

And that was the plan-- that the paratroopers would land. We had no equipment-- we had no food with us or anything with us, because we were supposed to be there for eight or nine days. We had little bit of food with us in our equipment-- but we were to be taken out immediately when the area was secured. And that is what happened. We were there, I think, for nine days and went back to England and stayed in England in that area.

Did you see any German soldiers when you were in Normandy?

Yeah, a few. They were as scared as we were.

Did you have any visceral reaction to seeing them, being German yourself?

No. No, I was an American-- none whatsoever. None whatsoever. The German was the enemy. The fact that I was of German origin-- no, I was an American.

Did you speak to any of them?

We took a few prisoners and interrogated them, but it was really purely tactical interrogation-- where do you come from? What is the name of your unit? How many are in your unit-- and things like that, just very simple questions because it was a very fluid situation. But we actually got taken out very quickly and went back to England.

And then we were in England. I was in the Reading Area in the camp until the Holland invasion in September 17, I believe-- September 17 was the invasion of Holland. And that was a more difficult jump because it was daytime.

And the other thing I wanted to mention is we also had glider troops. 101st Airborne Division had a glider regiment, and I was actually assigned to the glider regiment but as a jumper. And the replacements that we got after combat and injured were all soldiers who were from the glider regiment, because the gliders were much more dangerous than jumping.

And so you had to volunteer to be a jumper, but to be a glider rider, you were assigned. So after the Normandy invasion, all the survivors of glider volunteered to become paratroopers because it was so much more dangerous to be a glider rider. And so we went into Holland, and the 101st Airborne Division was situated around Eindhoven.

The 82nd Division was Nijmegen and the 6th British paratroop division was across the river-- and that was the occasion where the British were annihilated. And the reason they were annihilated is three divisions were supposed to jump and maintain the road open for the 2nd British Army to move through and crossed the Rhine and liberate.

What happened is Marshal Montgomery, apparently they were so slow, and here we were holding the road open, and the British came, and they stopped, and they had tea in the afternoon-- stopped, got off their tanks, and sat with us, and had tea. And then they never made it to Arnhem. They never made it.

And the British were annihilated across the river. Their whole division was. And the reason was that Montgomery never came and did that. We were in Holland for 70 days. We were supposed to be there for 10 days at the most, then again were to be removed. We stayed there for 70 days.

And the big problem was food, because we hadn't brought any food with us. And we literally lived off the land. And the land were apple orchards. This whole area in that part around Eindhoven were apple orchards. And we lived off apples, and so did the local population, because they didn't have anything much easier. So what there was of farmers and people who were around, they couldn't give us anything.

For once in a while, they got a chicken or something like that. But we were there for 70 days before we were taken out and brought back to a rest camp in France called near [? Rels ?] called Mourmelon-le-Grand that was our camp with a French caserne-- French camp-- with, actually, straw mattresses still. And we were there briefly, and then it started to

pass down-- the British counter-attack, and we went to Bastogne. And we were there throughout the siege of Bastogne.

We went there on the 17th of December, and we were completely isolated. And Eisenhower declared Bastogne expendable to stay there-- and we were completely surrounded by Germans. And it was General Patton-- the Third Army, what Eisenhower had determined to make it expendable-- he decided that he was going to send in a tank battalion to rescue us.

And that tank battalion was headed by Colonel Abrams, who was later General Abrams in Korea. And they came through with his tank battalion and on Christmas morning reached us, and broke through the German-- the Germans had us completely surrounded. And we didn't take any prisoners there, because we were going to be their prisoners.

And my one claim to fame in the army was when they came to have us surrender, the 101st Airborne surrender, I was with my colonel by the name of Harper, who was a regimental commander. And we were actually right across from division headquarters. And the Germans sent in a team to make us surrender.

And what happened was the surrender team, two officers and two enlisted men, were held when they came across with the white flag. And they were held at an outpost and brought in the letter to surrender. And my colonel and I were with our division commander. At the time, he was the assistant division commander, because General Taylor was in Washington at the time. He was not there. And McAuliffe was the assistant division commander.

And so they presented this surrender demand to the commander. And general McAuliffe-- and I was standing by there-- he said, oh, nuts, what am I going to tell them? And no idea of surrender-- he said, oh, nuts, what am I going to tell them? And Colonel Canard, his chief of staff, stood by and he says, tell them just what you just said. He said, what did I say? He said, you said, nuts. He said, all right, OK, nuts, and he wrote it out-- nuts.

And then he sent my colonel, Colonel Harper, and me back to the surrender place with the German officers, two German officers waiting, and we went down there, and handed them the slip which said, nuts. And the German officers said in German, what is this?

What does it mean?

Nuts, I said. What is, nuts? I said, go to hell. And that became the translation of nuts-- go to hell. And that was the end of that. They left. And then on Christmas morning, we were liberated. And we had not been able to be supplied by air because the weather was very bad. It was snowing and raining. And on Christmas morning, there was bright sunshine. And suddenly, the C-47 came over massively, throwing down medical supplies, food, and everything.

All of a sudden on Christmas morning, it was great. Then after a few days, we were liberated-- we were there for another week or so, and then we moved out of Bastogne. And by that time, we were very much emaciated, troop-wise. We were one-third of our strength. We moved over to the Rhine and down the Rhine on the West side of the Rhine.

We moved down. We saw practically no combat. It was towards the end of the war-- the last three weeks of the war. And we moved down and ended up on the day that the war ended, on May 6, in Berchtesgaden. We actually took Berchtesgaden-- there was nothing to take. And being still prisoners of war specialists, we headed immediately for Hitler's, and we went up to the Berghof. Then we wanted to get up to the Eagle's Nest.

And we found out that we were not the first. There was a French company that had preceded us. And they had gone up to the Eagle's Nest and taken all kinds of furniture and equipment and thrown it down the elevator shaft that had been the elevator. So we had to crawl up there by foot to get to the Eagle's Nest. There was nothing there anymore.

But they had managed to throw stuff down the elevator shaft so you couldn't use the elevator to the Eagle's Nest. That's the end of the story. And then we were there for about a month. We ended up in the Berchtesgaden Hof, which is the fancy hotel in Berchtesgaden. And we were there for, I think, four days when we were kicked out of the Berchtesgaden Hof.

And all the high level POWs-- the generals and the ministers that were captured around there-- were put into the Berchtesgaden Hof. This was where they held them as prisoners. And we were in a hotel across from the Berchtesgaden Hof which was a lovely sort of a country hotel with cabins-- individual cabins.

And we landed in that hotel, and we gave the proprietor and the kitchen staff all of our K rations and everything we had, and they provided us with food for a month. It was wonderful.

Did you do any questioning--

After we got to Berchtesgaden, it was over with. As a matter of fact, we were put in charge of securing Berchtesgaden, but there was nothing to secure. There was no problems at all.

You had said where were all these high level--

The prisoners were taken-- we were not involved-- not involved at all. Those were, by that time--

Yeah.

Yeah.

And then where did you go after?

Well, then briefly, the 101st Airborne Division was taken South to Burgerstein in Austria, out which is about an hour south of Salzburg. And we were there briefly. And then I was detached, because I'd had enough points being in all these various combat situation. And having gotten by that time a Bronze Star and combat infantry badge, I had enough points to be one of the first to get out.

So I was sent back to a camp near Paris-- Le Vesinet, a suburb of Paris, and I was there for about a week and then was shipped home. And I actually got home by December 8. I was one of the first people in my own acquaintance to get out of the army and get back. And I immediately enrolled back to go to college on the 1st of January, I was back in school. Most of my friends and relatives, like Jeff, they were not home yet.

And then when you finished college, where did you go?

When I finished college in University of Kansas City, I was persuaded by one of my professors, Henry Bertram Hill-- a history professor-- he said I should try to get to graduate school at he suggested it was the School of Advanced International Studies.

Johns Hopkins.

Which became Johns Hopkins-- at that time, it was still independent. And they had a summer school in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and occupied the residence of a women's boarding school. I think they had Kendall Hall School for Girls or something in Peterborough, New Hampshire. And I was admitted only for summer school. I was not admitted for the actual college at that time.

So I went up there, and I don't think I distinguished myself academically. However, on the weekend before the 4th of July, for some reason or other, the cooks of the school quit, left. And the school was without a cook for the 4th of July weekend. So before they could go down to Boston to hire new chefs for that weekend, I volunteered to cook for the school.

And I think that is what got me into graduate school for the next year, because they couldn't refuse my application. So I went to SAIS And at the first week in Washington, my wife, Mimi, had come down. She had been graduating from Carleton College. She had sort of a record there.

She had an absolute four years of nothing but A's. She made Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year. And she was valedictorian of the class. She had actually literally never had anything but an A as long as she'd gone to school until graduate school. And we had met, and that's when she got her first B, and she blamed me for that.

She should. And so we really started going with one another after the first week at SAIS. And we got our master's degrees.

And then what did you do?

Looking for a job, I was hired by the Chase National Bank and went into a program in New York in international banking training at the bank. And I was trained for paid \$200 a month plus lunch, which was very important, for 10 months. And then I was assigned to go to Germany where they had three branches primarily serving the military in Germany-- primarily, not completely.

But they had three branches in Germany-- in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Munich. And I went there. And Mimi and I had decided, rather than getting married in Washington and then immediately being separated because there was no housing available, that we would wait, that I would go over there, and I would find housing for us, and then she would come over, and we'd get married and live happily ever after.

I went to Stuttgart, and most of my customers were military. And through them, I got a place, an apartment, to live. And I was going to be able to have an apartment. And so I told the bank that I was bringing my fiance over, and they said, oh no, you can't get married for three years. I said, what?

Says, yes, we want to be able to move you around to the other branches. You can't get married. And I walked out of the bank not having enough money to get back to the United States. Fortunately, the State Department was taking over for military government the administration in Germany. In other words, we were establishing an embassy for military government.

And they were hiring people on the spot, and they preferred hiring people who had not been with military government. And so I was hired, practically from one day to the next. And they wanted to put me in finance, and I didn't want to be in finance. I had been working for the bank, and I didn't want to be finance. So I was told that you don't want to be in finance, would you like to be in cultural and press affairs?

And having been journalistically trained and worked a little bit in journalism, I said, yes. So they sent me out to Bad Homburg, which is a suburb of Frankfurt, where there was to be the headquarters of the America House Program in Germany. And the director of that program was a woman by the name of Patricia van Dowden. And you go out and see her, maybe you'll get hired.

So I went out there and couldn't see her, but I was admitted to her deputy, Max Kimenthal. And as we started to talk, I had no idea what an America House was. This was an America House program, I didn't even know what an America House was. But I was there to be interviewed, and he started talking to me and had a telephone call. And he said, excuse me for five minutes, I'm going to have to go out and see someone, but why don't you sit here at the coffee table, whatever you have, read, and I'll be back in five minutes?

And there was a paper which said the future of the America House Program in Germany by Patricia van Dowden. And I said, I'm going to read this and see-- I read it. He came back and he said, if you were a director of an America House, what would you want to do? And I just regurgitated what I was reading in the paper, and he stopped me after about four or five minutes-- and says, just a moment, Mr Tuch.

And he went out and came back with Patricia van Dowden, who was a formidable, middle-aged woman. And would you start again, Mr Tuch? And I told the story, and they hired me on the spot. I was sworn in that day. It took me two years to admit to Patricia van Dowden what I had done. But that's the way I got into the Foreign Service. I was temporary, and then after two years, I took the exam, and I became a Foreign Service officer.

And where were you?

The same day that I was sworn in, another young man was also sworn in. And his name was Picklatell-- Wallace W Natell. We were sworn in on the same day. And he was just maybe a year or two older than I was. But we were given certain rank-- very low rank-- the equivalent of a second lieutenant type of thing.

But he wasn't even given that because he had been a conscientious objector in the war. And he had been a paratroop firefighter in Colorado-- so a fellow paratrooper. So we immediately became close friends because we both had paratroops. And we remained friends our whole life. And he was assigned to Darmstadt, and I to Wiesbaden. And after three months, he went to Hanover, and I went to Frankfurt, and that's how we became--

So where were you stationed during your diplomatic career?

As I said, I started out at Wiesbaden, after three months was assigned to Frankfurt to run the America House, which was the US Information Center there. I was there for five years. And the reason I was assigned to Frankfurt is that the then-director of the Frankfurt America House, who was a frustrated musician, with the budget for his Information Center, he went out and hired himself an orchestra and performed a performance with himself as the conductor. He was fired the next day.

Those were the days when nothing was permanent. He was fired the next day, and I was assigned to replace him from Frankfurt. We were there for five years. And then I was in Washington, and my job there-- President Eisenhower had given his Atoms for Peace speech. And that became a major program issue-- Atoms for Peace.

And I was assigned to build Atoms for Peace exhibits in Japan, in India, and Portugal. And I was doing that. And at the end of that, we were starting to assign officers to the Iron Curtain countries. And I volunteered immediately for the Soviet Union. And I was given Russian language training.

And the State Department at that time did not have a good Russian language program. So they made an exception, and I was sent to CIA, which had a marvelous program. And at that time, the CIA language program was in one of the tempos behind the Lincoln Memorial on Ohio Drive. And I started there, and we were 12 students. I was the only outsider.

And it was a marvelous course. We had five linguists-- these were all Russian linguists-- of different backgrounds. There was a lawyer and one linguist. And we were allowed to speak English only with the linguist. And we had two students and one linguist, and we changed every hour for five hours every day.

So the two of us were with different linguists, and the sixth hour was with the linguist. Well, I was there for a week, and suddenly word came out that I wasn't allowed to be there with CIA. I was not allowed to know who people were. And they finally compromised, since I had already been with my five colleagues for a week.

They finally compromised that I could stay there, but I couldn't go into the cafeteria. So for a year, I had to bring my own lunch and I couldn't go into the cafeteria. But I had a terrific experience in learning Russian.

Then what were your other postings?

Well, then for about a year, the Soviets wouldn't give me a visa because I was with a spy organization, USIA. So I resigned from USIA. I was commissioned in the State Department. Before that happened, I was actually with the Voice of America in Munich as a correspondent, and as a writer of commentaries, and a correspondent in Munich with a voice.

And then finally, I got a visa and was assigned in August of '58, I was assigned to Moscow. And we were there, and I was the first public affairs officer. We didn't call them that-- I was the first cultural and press attache in Moscow since World War 2, the first one, because they thought there was a break in the ice.

There had been the Camp David meeting between Eisenhower, and Khrushchev had been to the United States. And so they thought that there may be a break. And we had signed the first US-USSR cultural agreement in January of 1958.

And I was assigned to carry out that program in August '58.

And that's when we started having exchange programs. And actually, my experience from then on-- this is in my last book-- and I was thinking I should probably donate a copy of that book to the Holocaust Museum and give it to you. And here it is. This is my last book-- it's my fourth book. And everything that transpired from Moscow onward is in that book-- my Foreign Service experience and so forth.

And when did you retire?

I retired in January '85. We served in Moscow for three years. There had been a strict State Department rule that Foreign Service officers should not serve longer than two years at that time because of the Cold War situation. But Tommy Thompson, our American ambassador, such a marvelous person, always thought that two years is too short a time for us really to get involved.

And he asked, since I was actually still in the US, I had been over-- he asked George Allen, who was the director of USIA and a former ambassador and Foreign Service officer, and a close friend of Tommy Thompson, he asked whether he could ask me to stay a third year, unbeknownst to me. And he said, yes, of course. And so Tommy Thompson asked me whether I would be willing to stay for a third year.

And I felt so flattered to be asked anything by Tommy Thompson, I immediately said, yes. And then I went home to confront Mimi and our two little children. But she was at that time such a conservative in her lifestyle, and even politically at that time, she thought, anything is better than a change. So let's stay for a third year.

And we were the first family to stay in Moscow for three years, which, of course, is standard now-- became standard. And so we stayed there for a third year. And then I came back to Washington, and Ed Murrow was the director of USIA, and I became one of his assistants responsible for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And I was that for three years.

Actually, he died. He passed away. And then I assigned myself-- since I was in charge of the Soviet Union Eastern Europe-- I assigned myself to be public affairs officer in Warsaw. I wanted to stay there. And we had a fairly large program in Warsaw, and I wanted to go to Warsaw. And Mimi and I studied Polish for several months. And the new director of USIA came in, Carl Rowan.

And he says he wouldn't let me go to Warsaw. You have to stay here in this job because there is nobody to replace you. So I stayed. I didn't go to Warsaw. But the next year, I assigned myself again to Warsaw, and we studied Polish again. By that time, Carl Rowan had left, and Leonard Marx became the director of USIA. And Leonard Marx called me in and says, I'm going to make an offer to you that you can't refuse.

And I said, what's that? I was ready to go to Warsaw within about three weeks. And he said, you're going to go as deputy chief of mission to Bulgaria, to Sofia. And I couldn't refuse that. So Mimi and I studied Bulgarian for two weeks and went off to Sofia, where I was the DCM-- deputy chief of mission. But we didn't have an embassy yet. We had a legation.

So I was consul of legation. And the minister, who became a very close friend of mine, had to leave after one year. He was recalled. Well, it's OK. He had an accident where he killed a pedestrian when he was driving an embassy car, and the Bulgarians were awful about this-- this American killing our children, so forth.

And he was finally withdrawn. And I was chargé of the Legation for a long period, because the person who was to replace him, Jack McSweeney, didn't want to come to Sofia as a minister. He wanted to be an ambassador. And so he delayed and delayed. And they finally told him, if you don't go to Sofia, we're going to cancel your assignment, and he finally came. This was five months, six months later. And so he came. And after Sofia, I got a plush post. I got to be PAO, public affairs officer, in Berlin, my hometown.

Oh my.

And we were in Berlin for three years. And we had really, personally, a wonderful time, because theater, opera-- everything was just terrific. However, the job became really terrible because the situation in Germany, and in Berlin specifically, had turned entirely where the young Berliners felt that we became the enemy in Berlin. And that's quite a bit in the book.

And the situation that developed and working in Berlin became very, very difficult and frustrating. And it really didn't turn around. Well, after Berlin, '57--

Did you go to Bonn?

No, not yet.

Brasilia?

Well, in '67-- yes, after Berlin, I was assigned as diplomat in residence at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy. After that, there was a two-year assignment, but I only lasted one year, because I was called back to become Deputy Director of the Voice of America, and then very shortly thereafter, Acting Director of the Voice of America.

And after that assignment, three years-- that was one of my fascinating assignments for me, because I had been with the Voice as a correspondent in 1957 before going to Moscow. So I was really coming home to the Voice. And running the Voice, to me, was a wonderful assignment-- a difficult one, but a wonderful assignment, because journalism was really my thing. And I really felt that this was a wonderful assignment.

After the Voice of America, I was an inspector. I became a chief inspector of the USIA. And I inspected Brazil. And being in Brazil for a month, I decided that was going to be my next post-- completely different. And they said, well, you can't go to Brazil. You speak Russian, German, French-- you don't have Portuguese. I said, we'll learn. I never did learn it very well.

But we were in Brazil for five years with a marvelous, who became a very close friend, with a marvelous person who was our American ambassador in Brazil by the name of Cremins-- Jack Cremins. And he was a career officer. And while we were there-- should I go on?

Well, I wanted to step a little further ahead. After you retired, when was that?

After Brazil--

Just tell me where you were.

After Brazil, we were in Bonn.

Yeah.

And we were in Bonn for 4 and 1/2 years, and that's when I retired.

I would like now just to get some of your feelings and thoughts about your background and your career. When the war was over and you realized what had happened to the Jews, did you have any visceral reactions-- when all of that came out, and the camps?

The thing is I felt probably like any other American, because I had had no personal losses in the Holocaust. So I thought what had happened was horrible. And I was aware of the concentration camps. I was never in a concentration camp. Yes, I was in Dachau, but only visited it-- but never professionally.

And so I felt really just like any other American did. I had no personal losses. So therefore, this felt like maybe just like

you-- like any other person.

Even though you were born in Berlin.

Even though I was born in Berlin-- but I had no feeling being personally involved. And again, I think the main thing was that I had no direct personal losses. I felt like any other American who looked at this horrible thing that happened and the aftermath. But it wasn't anything personally.

Did this make you feel more Jewish, less Jewish, or the same? Did it have any, your childhood and what you went through after?

It had really nothing to do. I wrote a paragraph about my being Jewish. I personally feel that I was brought up Jewish as my religion. I was German and I was Jewish by religion.

After I left my Jewish feelings or beliefs-- actually, I'm an atheist-- I had no feeling about being in any way related to being Jewish. My Jewish was not ethnic at all. My Jewish, this was my religion-- as others are Catholic, as others are Protestant.

So I feel that my entire background is German. And I have never identified in any way with being Jewish at this stage.

What about your children?

Actually, Mimi was Methodist-- she's Christian. And they were both baptized, but both entirely left any religious feelings buried. They have no religion at all, either one of them, as adults. They went to Sunday school as kids.

What are your thoughts about Germany today?

I have a deep feeling the fact that the post-war German government, starting with Eisenhower and subsequently, have done a terrific job of re-democratizing their society and becoming a valued member of the International Democratic community. I don't necessarily agree with individual policies of the German government, especially now, but I feel sociologically and historically they have done a terrific job with the help of the United States.

I must say, what the United States, what we did in the 1950s to reintegrate Germany into the international democratic society was also a very tough and very remarkable job where we helped the Germans do it. They had to do it themselves, but we gave them a tremendous amount of assistance in doing it, and were very successful, and were appreciated by the Germans for doing that, I would say especially in the 1950s until the early-1960s.

And I just have felt very personally committed to participating in the re-orientation of the German society into a Western democratic society. I'm grateful for that, and that I participated in this, and I think it was successful. And I actually wrote about this-- well, it's in this book, but it's more actually in my previous book, which is on public diplomacy.

Do you feel the world has learned any lessons from the Holocaust?

The world? I don't know. I don't know. I think part of the world-- I think we have. And I think the Europeans have, but I'm not sure that other societies are aware and have learned from it. What is happening in Africa and in other societies, I don't think so.

But I know we have. And I think most people in Europe have also. But I'm not sure that other societies have. As a matter of fact, I feel not.

How do you feel about the Holocaust Museum being in Washington, DC?

Oh, it's a great institution. I think it's a marvelous institution. And actually, what they do in their--

Education.

Is wonderful. And it's great. I just have not been, like the Ritchie boys and anything with the US Army, is lost on me. But it's OK. And the other thing is that-- and I think some people will disagree with me on this-- but I have no feeling of either having been a German or Jewish. I think personally--

You are American.

I'm an American of German origin. That's the way I feel-- of German origin. And I think, as I said at the beginning, I think my father-- it wasn't inculcated by my father, because we never discussed it when I was a child, but he also felt so strongly about being a German World War I veteran.

Was he a Zionist at all?

No, no, no. The only time that I've ever felt him being Jewish is on the holidays, period.

What are your thoughts about Israel?

I'm very critical of Israeli politics. I felt that the establishment of Israel, Zionism, was a absolutely marvelous thing, and for the world a very, very positive development. I disagree very much with Israeli politics at the moment.

I have close relatives-- I have a cousin in Jerusalem. Actually, the cousin, he passed away last year. But he was a very well-known physiologist who came to the United States, I think almost every year, to lecture at different universities. And his claim to fame was that when the hijacking of the first TWA plane, he was the one hostage that they kept. They kept him, and he was finally released-- he was exchanged.

It was a TWA flight that was, I think, in Lebanon. And he was the first hostage with the plane. But his wife who was a cousin once removed of mine-- about 10 years younger she is-- and we're in touch with one another.

Have you been to Israel?

Yes. Mimi and I visited them when my mother's younger sister, who lived in Jerusalem, was still alive. We went there for her 90th birthday. I had my mother's oldest brother, the physician, moved with his family and his mother with his wife to Tel Aviv. Their children, two boys, I have lost complete touch with them. And it's their fault.

I have tried my damndest to be in touch with them, they just don't answer. And when my aunt, who happened to be my favorite aunt, their mother, died in Tel Aviv, they didn't even tell me about it. I found out from my cousin in Jerusalem about it, and I was mad. Because when we visited Israel, we visited Tel Aviv, and we were with them, but they just decided not to be in touch with me.

What were your thoughts during the Eichmann trial?

During the Eichmann trial, I mean, he was the worst that could come. What happened to him was absolutely the right thing. And what the Mossad did in getting him, fine. Great-- just like picking up Osama bin Laden. But no, I feel that our secretary of state currently in his efforts is fighting an uphill battle. And I so disagree with Israeli politics at the moment. And I must say I disagree with the lobby.

The AIPAC?

Yeah, just awful.

Well, is there anything else you wanted to add to this before we close?

No. If you want to take a look at this book and add it to the library, is very anecdotal. And I did mention the fact that I had the feeling that if my father had lived, we would have never come out of this alive. But no, I think what you are doing-- what I did do participate-- do you know Edith Fears?

Yes.

She lives here. And I worked with her 10 years ago when we started this program. I interviewed a couple of the people. And my job really was to try to place the tapes in schools. And I did manage it at Kansas City.

Wonderful.

I worked with her then and she is marvelous. She is still very with it. She runs our public affairs program here, Edith does. So at any rate, I feel what you're doing is terrific, because you are getting at people and their experiences. I don't think I have terribly much to contribute to this program, but it's fun.

No, it is important. That's a nice note to end on.

Great.

This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Hans Tuch.