

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Hans Tuch
November 7, 2013
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PREFACE

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HANS NATHAN TUCH

November 7, 2013

Gail Schwartz: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with Hans Tuch conducted by Gail Schwartz on November 7, 2013 in Bethesda, Maryland. This is track number one. What is your full name?

Hans Nathan Tuch: My full name is Hans Nathan Tuch, T-U-C-H but all people who know me call me Tommy. It was acquired when I first came to the United States and people called me Tommy Tucker sang for his super and so this is where I acquired Tom. So people who know me call Tom and people who don't know me call me Hans.

Q: Where were you born and when were you born?

A: I was born in Berlin in Germany on October 15, 1924.

Q: Let's talk now about your family. Who were the members of your family?

A: My father was and his name was Bruno Tuch and my mother was Rosa Tuch.

Q: And her maiden name?

A: Her maiden name was **Olsner** and both sides of the family came from **Posnan**, Posen in Germany. I mean in Poland but they were Germans who emigrated to Berlin right after World War I. And my grandfather became a banker in Berlin and my mother's father. And we became Berliners. They both became Berliners.

Q: Do you have any siblings?

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A: No I was the only child of Bruno and Rosa. My father was an insurance executive. He had the Berlin representation of the worldwide insurance company, **Allianz** and Stuttgart **Arfine** which of course still exist today. He was their Berlin representative.

Q: And did your mother work?

A: My mother did not work, no. She was trained and educated as a, in music and as a singer. She never sang professionally but she was very interested in opera and she introduced me to opera at an early age. And this is what I really am doing now. I'm a complete amateur but opera is my thing.

Q: What about an extended family? Aunts, uncles, cousins?

A: My mother had four, she had two brothers. She had -- my mother was one of five children and they all lived in Berlin at that time. Her older brother was a physician in the worker area of Berlin. My father was, had one brother who was a, had two brothers actually who, his older brother was a distinguished judge who was the only one who actually suffered during the -- I should add that nobody in my family became a victim in the Holocaust. I was very lucky. And there was no victim. They all got out of Germany. My father died at a very young age, at 46 of a brain tumor. And my mother was widowed when she was 39 years old and never remarried. And she took over his business in Berlin and then lost it through the Nazi taking over of her insurance business.

And but everybody in the family on both sides got out of Germany. So I had no real tragedy in my own family life in that respect.

Q: How old were you when your father died?

A: I was 12 when my father died in 1936 and the one thing that my mother who wondered why he was ill and in a hospital. She wanted to keep me out of you know out of her hair. So she bought me a season ticket to the Olympics, 1936 Olympics in Berlin. And I happened to see

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Jesse Owens had four of his five world records in Berlin. And I was present when Hitler was in the audience also. So the –

Q: Were you able to see him?

A: No, no. I mean no. The 1936 Olympics sort of were the, in my own memory that stood out.

Q: We'll get to that in a minute.

A: I went to grade school to a Catholic grade school in Berlin, **Aschaffenberg**. I was actually born in Berlin **Metta** but my family, my mother and father moved to Aschaffenberg about one block from **Rathaus** Aschaffenberg on **Apostel Paulus Strasse** and we lived there and that's where I grew up and I went to the **Hohenzollern** Gymnasium until the spring of 1938 when I was kicked out, being Jewish. And I then went to the Jewish gymnasium but for only about five, six, five months before I left for the United States.

Would you like to hear about my, why and how I came?

Q: We'll get to that. Let's do a section on your experience in Berlin. Was your family a religious family?

A: No, they were reform Jewish. It is interesting. My father and mother considered themselves Germans. Their religion was Jewish, reform Jewish. But it was not an ethnic thing for them to be Jewish. They were reform Jewish and I was bar mitzvah in 1937, a year before. And as a matter of fact, I had a high soprano voice at that time. My mother was interested in that. And I did the whole service in, and sang it.

Q: Which synagogue was it?

A: Prince **Regentan** [ph] Strasse in Berlin which was a reform synagogue and had a very well-known rabbi. **Schwanzensky** [ph] was his name or something like that. At any rate, it was not a religious household at all.

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Q: What language did you speak at home?

A: German.

Q: When you say it wasn't a religious household, did you observe, did your family observe anything. Passover or –

A: Yeah we observed.

Q: Any of the holidays or the Sabbath?

A: Yes the holidays we went to the temple and we actually fasted on Yom Kippur but it was a thing that you did but it was not a very important thing in my mind. You know. And being Jewish was you know I was Jewish religiously but I had no real feeling deep or my parents did not inculcate in me a major feeling of being ethnically, and as I said we were religious but that was it.

Q: How did you train for your bar mitzvah?

A: I was trained by the cantor of the temple for about five months.

Q: But before that you hadn't gone to Hebrew school or anything?

A: Oh no, no.

Q: Not to Sunday school or anything –

A: No, not at all. We went to temple on holidays, period. After my father died in 1936, this was two years before I immigrated. I was 12. That was before I was bar mitzvah, I took his death very seriously and I went to temple every night for 30 months I believe it was. And observed the ceremonies of being **Yurov**.

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Q: Mourning.

A: I did that very conscientiously. I just remember that.

Q: Did you know Hebrew at that point?

A: Only what, no, I didn't know Hebrew. I mean I learned Hebrew for my bar mitzvah and I learned to read the prayer service. And I could read Hebrew. I learned to read Hebrew, but you know and I memorized most of it so.

Q: What kind of neighborhood did you live in? Was it Jewish and non-Jewish?

A: No, we lived in Aschaffenberg as I said, one block from Rathaus Aschaffenberg on the, in the **Bayerischer Firkel** [ph] which was an sort of upper middle class area where you know we were in a nice apartment. We had a large apartment which still exists. The building still exists. And we lived one block from Bayerischer Platz which was one of the squares of that area and where the Ubahn was, had a stop. And it was a very nice part of –

Q: Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors.

A: No. I mean, non-Jewish. I mean we didn't have any. No, no we didn't know our neighbors. I mean.

Q: You did not know the people who lived in the building?

A: Barely. No. We didn't. Actually, actually our, we had a fairly large apartment which in part was my father's office. He had his office in front and then we had a fairly large apartment in the back. My relatives, my close relatives, uncles and aunts lived in the neighborhood within about a mile. They all lived in that particular area. My grandparents also.

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Q: What about your school friends. Were they Jewish or non-Jewish?

A: I really didn't have many school friends in either, I mean that I remember. I had a friend who lived in the same building, apartment building who was the son I think of the janitor. And we were friends. We were close friends, but other than that I really had no German -- I don't remember having close school friends or other friends at all. Either in grade school or in high school. It was in Hohenzollern gymnasium which was very close to where we lived on Martin Luther Strasse. And so I just really don't remember very much about my --

Q: What did you do after school? Were you interested in sports? Did you have any hobbies?

A: I was at my gymnasium, I was interested in sports. That was swimming and track which I participated in. I was never very good at it. No, I had what you call letters in it and so forth. But the one thing that I remember very, very closely is right across the street from us lived our physical ed teacher who was an officer in the SS, who took to me. I was the best marcher. You know when we marched and I also was the best saluter. And he was a very friendly to me. He lived right across the street. And every once in a while he wore his SS uniform. But I had absolutely no fear or any kind of, other than that he was one of my teachers and he was friendly with me. And I really didn't feel any kind of persecution or otherwise until I was told that you had to leave the Hohenzollern gymnasium. And I was very disappointed because it was a very good gymnasium. It was close to where we lived. And I had to go to the Jewish gymnasium, way across town and I bicycled. But this was a really relatively short time.

What happened was after my father died in 1936, my mother took over his business. We lived happily in Berlin. In 1937 her first cousin who lived, from Kansas City. They came to Europe. They didn't come to Germany. They met in Marienbad in Czechoslovakia. My mother went down. She didn't take me along and I really don't know why because she sent me off to camp. And they met in Marienbad in 1937. It was her first cousin. Interestingly about her first cousin who emigrated to the United States before World War I as a young person. He had worked for my grandfather and somehow he had gotten into financial trouble. So my grandfather said get out of here. I'll pay you to go to the United States and sent him abroad in order to keep him out of trouble. He never forgot that what my grandfather had done for him.

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And therefore, they came to Germany, to Marienbad to Czechoslovakia. And met. It was sort of a family reunion. He and his wife and their son Jeff who was my second cousin came to Marienbad.

And they made the decision that the following year I was to go to Kansas City for one year and my cousin Jeff was to come and stay with my mother for a year. Sort of be a family exchange. It developed during that following year he wasn't going to come but I was going to go for good. And I had an affidavit and I had a visa. My mother did not yet. She had, she had an affidavit from her cousin but she didn't have a visa yet. It hadn't come up yet. So I went by myself in 1938. She took me to Hamburg and put me onto the Manhattan ship and I went off as a 14 year old to New York.

Yeah, but going back to Berlin.

Q: Stay with Berlin.

A: That so I really I should say something else about Berlin. I am sure that if my father had lived we would have all succumbed in the Holocaust because he felt he wasn't German. He had served in World War I. He had an Iron Cross, actually an Iron Cross that was bestowed belatedly by Hitler. So he was, this was never going to happen to us. We would have never left Berlin and we would have all succumbed if he had not passed away. So this is one of the, my personal history that I feel that the only way that we really survived is because he had passed away at an early age.

Q: Let's now talk about you as a child in Germany. Did you experience any anti-Semitism?

A: Only on one occasion and it was not really anti-Semitism. It was the week before I left. My mother had purchased for me a pair of long trousers, knowing that in the United States young boys wore knickers but also long trousers. And I had them on, was right across the street from where we lived and where I was accosted by four or five young boys who didn't like what I was wearing. Whether I was Jewish or not I have no idea. And they beat me up. And I came home and my mother, in her usual way, said this did you good so you had this experience of being beat up so you know what will happen to you if you know, things like this.

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And that was the only occasion that I personally felt it was, that I had any kind of bad experience in this. So I really never personally experienced the awful things that happened in Germany vis a vis the Jews.

Q: When did you first start hearing about a man named Hitler? Do you remember your first impression?

A: Oh I think it was quite, I mean I was –

Q: In 1933 you were nine.

A: I remember my father being a veteran and Hindenburg was a former general. And a marshal. And he was a political father figure for me. Hindenburg was. Hitler came aboard and I certainly was conscious about him. I don't remember that there were any things. Sorry. I don't remember that there were any things that happened to us personally because in any way. I heard about him pretty early but it was one of those things that my father said this doesn't concern us. We're Germans. He's not an important figure. Of course and actually his, while he was alive, his business was fine. I mean he had no problems at all. This was 19, between 1933 and 1936. He died in 1936. So I really had no bad experiences. Kristallnacht came two weeks after I left Germany. And there is a little story about that.

But so anyway –

Q: What about boycotts or book burnings, anything like that. You were not aware, is that what you're saying.

A: I was not aware, no not at all. I really was, I was not aware of the problems and the dangers that came –

Q: You didn't feel it. You were under any restrictions about places to go, places –

A: No, no

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Q: You could do all of that freely.

A: Yes and actually my family, my mother's relatives, close relatives left, got, they left Germany. In the two year -- between 1936 and 1938. They were still there when my father died. My mother's younger brother, actually in 1936, my mother's younger brother died of what is known as hepatitis. He was 34 years old. She lost -- her father died in 1936. They all died my father, grandfather and uncle all died in one year. And her older brother who was a physician was the hardest hit by this because he lost his father, his brother and his, and his brother in law all in one year. And that I remember, very hard. And they all departed at the time when I left. My mother was the only one who was left by herself. And what happened on Kristallnacht which was after, two weeks after I left. I didn't learn about this til oh about, ten, 15 years ago. She never talked about it. She never told me, but when Kristallnacht came she had a large apartment, she was a widow living by herself. Six of her cousins and relatives came to her and she put them up in the apartment. And I heard about this only after she died. She never told me, from the cousins.

Oh she put us, actually not from the cousins, from their children. She put us up, she put us up for two weeks and we stayed in the apartment.

Q: What was your reaction as a young boy seeing German soldiers and the swastika? Did it elicit any response?

A: None, except I liked parades. I liked, I mean German soldiers. My father was a soldier in World War II. I found, attracted to military displays. The fact that there was a swastika and that you did Heil Hitler, really was not particularly, did not impress me. I was a child.

Q: I'm trying to get what a child's reaction is to that?

A: I was not, I was more impressed by military precision and military parades as a young boy and I was very interested in sports and the fact that German, especially in track and field. You know they were very good at it and I was very interested in Foosball. in soccer and I had a

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favorite team which still exists and is doing pretty well this year. But I was very interested in soccer and sports and I, in sports teams. I followed them and Germans were very good in sports in those days and I was very proud of my German team.

Q: So there was never any fear that you felt when you saw German soldiers.

A: No, no.

Q: Or even the swastika? Did you see –

A: Actually I never also experienced any kind of, see this all came after I left. And you know the demonstrations and things like that.

Q: Did you witness any anti-Semitic incidents as a child?

A: No, no.

Q: Things being done to other people?

A: No, the only thing that I remember is that my family decided, thought things were going to get bad and we should get out and they all did. My grandmother left with one of her – and went to Israel with a son and daughter, with her doctor. And his wife. They had one son born by that time. And no, they all departed happily. My father's older brother was in America from 1933, 34 on. He was. And he was sort of an operator type and he was always doing very well but not really doing very well. And he was in the United States much earlier. And then of course my mother's cousins in Kansas City with whom she was close. And he, I didn't realize this til much later. He always felt very close to my mother because her father had done the right thing.

Q: What was his name?

A: His name was Olsner.

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Q: His first name?

A: Sally, S-A-double L-Y, that would have been, what would have been –

Q: Solomon.

A: Probably was, I mean he was known as Sally Olsner yeah.

Q: Let's talk about your leaving. You're 14 years old. What were your thoughts? Did you think you were going for permanently or you were going for a year?

A: I was going on an adventure.

Q: For a year or you didn't know.

A: No, I was leaving.

Q: You were leaving to remain. You knew you weren't coming back?

A: Correct.

Q: That you knew. How did that make you feel? Was that upsetting?

A: No.

Q: Exciting to go on a –

A: Exciting going on an adventure by myself on a transatlantic ship all by myself. It was an adventure.

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Q: Were you a very independent child?

A: Yes.

Q: You must have been to do –

A: I was. I mean my mother insisted that I was independent and you know she sent me to Switzerland on Christmas time to go skiing with some of her relatives. I mean with her cousins and so forth at Christmas time. This is after my father died that I – and she sent me off to boys camp in the summer.

Q: So you had been away by yourself before you left for the United States.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: By the way just tangentially, did you celebrate Christmas?

A: No, Hanukah. No we did not celebrate. I didn't celebrate Christmas until I came to this country. And then it became, with my American family.

Q: So now you're told you're going to be going and you went to Hamburg.

A: Yeah I mean the first kind of experience was getting a visa from the United States and getting an exit permit from the German **politsi**, from the police.

Q: Who did that for you and how did it happen?

A: I did it myself. I mean she sent me to the German consulate. I mean the American consulate general and she sent me to the police. She never, she didn't go with me. She sent me by myself. I mean she was a very, I mean she really trained me to be very independent from – and I was an only child.

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Q: Were you afraid going into the German offices at all to get your exit visa.

A: No, no. It was, no, no. I was – and I still I mean I have the documents still. And no, no. it was to me something natural. She says you go to the police and go there and be there at such and such a time. I went on the Ubahn and you know and did my thing. It was natural.

Q: Ok so now you're getting ready to leave. What did you take with you?

A: I took a large steamer trunk, a large steamer trunk of my mother's which she had had ever since her marriage. It was a large steamer trunk and the history, I, I kept that steamer trunk until the 700th anniversary of Berlin's creation which was about 15, 20 years ago. And I donated that trunk to the museum in Berlin, Potsdam **Abanhof** [ph], a museum which collected things like that. And I donated the steamer trunk. And I have an article, German article about the donation of that steamer trunk. That steamer trunk was my home for the next 30 years.

I even in the foreign service. I mean I – that's where my things were as it was a large trunk. And I traveled with that trunk and then baggage and so forth. And that's what – I had my things there. And that was it.

Q: Did you take anything special, books and something personal besides clothes?

A: I only took clothes and I took maybe some books, a few books and one thing that I took with me and which I still have. I had started, the week before, the month before leaving Germany my mother allowed me to go to the Stadt's Opera, to the opera four times. She went with me three times and the last time I went by myself. And she allowed me to see four operas during the month before I left. Every, I think it was every Sunday before I left. And I saw four operas. Faust, **Trovatore**, **Tannhäuser** and Fidelio. And I lost, and I kept the programs and I lost three of them but held one that I took with me. I think, no I took all four of them with me but I lost three of them since then. And the fourth one I have kept, I still have. And I started collecting opera programs. And I have a collection of about 3000 and they are now at the Wolf Trap Opera

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company in their archives. And they have all been computerized and they are available for people who need them.

That one program of Fidelio, I didn't look at it for about ten years and about ten years later I looked at it and it says **Eregand**, conductor. Herbert van Karajan, debut. The first time he conducted in Berlin. He came from Aachen where he was the general, the director and I showed it to him in Berlin. I was in Berlin, a place that we met briefly. I didn't know him well. And I wouldn't give it to – he didn't have it and I wouldn't give it to him. I made a Xerox and gave it to him, but I kept it and it's in the collection at Wolf Trap, but it's one of those little things you know that happen. But this is one of the things that I took with him. No I took actually four with me and somehow the other three got lost. But I think I took a few books.

Q: Did you have any souvenirs from the Olympics the 36 Olympics that you took?

A: No, no, no. Unh hunh.

Q: So you never had anything from the Olympics?

A: No, no, no. I didn't keep my tickets or anything. I didn't. I may have had a badge or something but I didn't take them, no. So I really just took clothes and personal items. I don't really remember taking anything you know with me.

Q: I just happened to mention the Olympics when Jesse Owens won. How did you feel about that?

A: Oh. I was you know we all applauded and it was great. All the people around me. I mean they were very enthused about him and it was only you know Hitler and his cohorts who objected. I mean he – everybody cheered for him. Yes. Yes.

Q: They did?

A: Yes. Even though he beat the best German at --. It was very, very favorably.

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Q: Do you remember any other parts of the Olympics or was that –

A: No, I don't really.

Q: Did you go by yourself?

A: Yes, but yeah sure. I mean I took the U Bahn and it was great. I don't, you see I think my mother from an early age kind of trained me to be very independent. I was an only child and I never realized that other people had brothers and sisters. You know it was just you know I was not conscious of being an only child.

Q: How did you get to Hamburg?

A: By, my mother took me on the train from Berlin to Hamburg and she took me to the boat and said goodbye to me as I went up the gangplank.

Q: Did she say anything special that you remember?

A: No, I don't remember. She was, I don't really remember her crying. We went by train and people, family wise, saw me off at the train station but she went with me and took me to Hamburg.

Q: So this was what, September in 38.

A: That was, that was September 29th. Yeah, must, no September 30th because the boat – sorry, it was not. It was October 17th.

Q: 1938.

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A: After my birthday and I landed in New York on the 30th of October. It was a 15, 14, 13 day trip on the Manhattan.

Q: On the Manhattan. And number one did you speak any English?

A: Very little. I had had a few lessons when my mother decided that I was supposed, I was going to go. I had not had any English in school. I had Latin and French and I think she gave, had me take some private lessons but I knew very little English. And as a matter of fact there is a family tale about my English knowledge. When I landed in New York, my uncle, he was actually a cousin. My mother's first cousin but he was a generation higher. So he was uncle Julius. Uncle Julius. Met me at the pier. In New York and it was pretty late in the evening by the time I got off the boat and he said. Are you – and he spoke German. He was the only member of my American family who spoke German. And so he spoke German but not very well anymore.

Are you hungry? And I said yes. And he took me to Penn Station where the Harvey restaurants were open 24 hours a day. And he took me to Penn Station. He had a, my aunt in Kansas City who was quite well to do, the family was well to do. Had a cousin in New York who lived in the Warwick Hotel, on 54th and Sixth Avenue and had a limousine and a chauffeur. And that limousine and chauffer came with my uncle to the pier. And we went to you know meeting someone that's just the way they live it. It was new to me. They took us to Pennsylvania Station and we went into the restaurant, Fred Harvey's. And there's a huge menu. And he says what would you like to eat and I looked at this menu and I wanted to show off my English knowledge and I says I want apple pea. And apple pea became the sort of family -- Tom wants apple pea.

So that was my sort of introduction. Then we went by train –

Q: Coming into the pier or coming into New York, did you see the Statue of Liberty? And did you know what it was. And what it meant?

A: I must have and I saw it but I didn't – only later did it become –

Q: Symbolic. What did the United States, what did you know about the United States? What did it mean to you as a child?

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A: Cowboys and Indians. I was an adherent to Karl May the German author who wrote books about Indians and cowboys. He wrote about 40 books, all -- I don't know whether you know about this.

Q: No, I don't.

A: Every German school boy was addicted to Karl May who was a German author, living in the late 19th century and he wrote his books in the 80s and 90s of the 19th century. Never having been to the United States. He was somewhat disreputable in his business dealings and I think he was even in prison for a time. Debtors' prison or something. But he wrote about 40 books, many of them translated into English about the Wild West. And then he wrote another series of books about 20, 25 about Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. And the books about the Wild West was the bible of every young German boy. And unless you had read at least 20 of them, and they were all 600 page books. You read them at night underneath your blanket with a flashlight. You were, you were not accepted in your group of German -- Karl May.

Q: How do you spell his last name?

A: M-A-Y. Karl May, yeah. And he's known in this country, he's translated, but it was one of those things that Karl May was every young school boy's sort of Bible and you read about the Wild West and the chief Indian of the Apache Indian tribe. His name was **Winnetou** and the cowboy chief was Old Shatterhand. And there was another one cowboy was Old Surehand and their rifles and their armaments and what they had and they were, these Apaches were fighting the Comanches. And so you knew all about Kansas and Ar-Kansas, not Arkansas. Ar-Kansas. And you know everything about cowboys and Indians that you learned.

At the same time you also were acquainted with the other, with the Middle East where the hero was a white Anglo-Saxon or maybe German effendi was his name and he had an assistant, an Arab whose name was **Hadschi Halef Omar ben Hadschi abu Abbas ibn Hadschi aldof Gosrab** [ph]. And he was the, I mean to this day. At any rate so he wrote about 20, 30 books about the Middle East. And you know so you were acquainted with these two areas. And your whole education about America was Karl May.

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Q: You come and as you say your relative meets you and had your dinner.

A: Well actually and again my aunt, my cousin but my aunt was one of those wonderful well educated, wonderful person who had absolute – her idea of how she was to treat me and accept me in her family. She was going to be my mother. I called her Aunt Helen but she treated me in exactly the same way as she treated her own son. There was absolutely no difference, so much so that she knew that I had been bar mitzvah in Germany. Her son, my cousin Jeff was going to be confirmed in the reform Jewish in Kansas City. He was going to be confirmed the next spring. She insisted that I would be confirmed again with him because she wanted me to have the same number of presents that he got. That I would – she treated me as her own family's son. And was just terrific. I was accepted you know completely into her family. She was well to do. Her father had founded in St. Jo Missouri a company which moved to Kansas City. I think right after World War I of cigars and pipes wholesale. And my uncle, my cousin was the executive vice president of that company and was that until he died. And my cousin Jeff took it over and finally, I mean sold it. But I was accepted into my American family as though I were a complete member of it immediately and was treated as such.

Q: What kind of correspondence did you have with your mother?

A: I wrote to her every week and she saved the letters. As a matter of fact, I wrote to my mother through my service, until she came to the United States. And she saved them all and I kept those letters until last year and I had them down in the basement. I finally got rid of them. I mean there was nothing. And I took out the photos and things like that. And I got rid of them. But I wrote to her and she wrote to me. She could not get out of Germany because she did not have a visa until March 1940. After the war started. She got a visa to go to the Philippines while she waited for – she had an affidavit but she didn't have a visa. So in March 1940 she went to the Philippines by boat from Genoa.

And spent a year in the Philippines where her younger brother and his wife were also already waiting for a visa to the United States. So they were together and her younger brother

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and his wife had a child. No, no I'm sorry. My mother got out of the Philippines in August 1941 and came to Kansas City and that's when we were reunited.

Q: What was that like?

A: It was very interesting. I mean in retrospect. I was not, I was by that time an American. Living with my American family and I was thoroughly Americanized language wise. I only spoke English. I would not speak German to my mother because you are in the United States. Now you learn English. And she did and the curious thing about my mother over the years, she spoke German with her friends. She could not speak German with me. She switched into English when she talked to people and it's something psychological. She was never able to speak German with me. And I say mother speak German for heaven's sake. We were in the same, in Bonn in Germany. We were in a department store and she would ask me to translate for her because she would not speak German in front of me. And it's obviously something psychologically but she absolutely learned German and she spoke only English. Learned English and she spoke only English with me. And learned English really very well. She became a businesswoman.

She was the credit manager of Carter and Hay meat packing company in Kansas City for many, many years.

Q: So you moved out and went with her?

A: I moved out and lived with her first in a very small apartment in Kansas City and then some years later we moved into another apartment.

Q: Did you miss Germany those first few years.

A: No.

Q: You did not.

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A: I became so immediately, so my aunt when I came to Germany said right away she said let, for two weeks let us have every morning, she took me to a teacher. Yeah they took me. They had a chauffeur. They took me to a teacher to study English with her.

Q: Like a tutor?

A: Like a tutor for two hours every morning. She happened to be a friend of the family. And after two weeks, she sent me to Southwest high school. And I was thrown into Southwest high school and that was it.

Q: What was the reaction of the other students? Did they ask you about your background or –

A: Not very much. I mean they just sort of, I was the new kid. But my 50th high school reunion. Mimi and I went to Kansas City and we went to this. And I, we walked into the country club where it was being held. And there were two people standing there. And one of them says Tom Tuch, Hans Tuch. You were the kid who wouldn't speak English. And I mean this is how they remembered me as the kid who didn't speak English. And I was thrown into a high school. And it was probably the wisest decision that she ever made. Sink or swim. And I had a number of teachers who were very sympathetic.

Q: Did anybody ask you about your background?

A: Yeah, yeah I'm sure they did. I mean you know and, but I was sort of integrated into American high school life. The interesting thing too was we lived on the Kansas side, across the state line from Kansas City, Missouri. Across the state line. Just one block. There was no high school in that area of Shawnee Mission Kansas. So we were permitted, Jeff and I to go across the state line in Missouri, in Kansas City, go to high school. To get there, we got drivers licenses when we were 14 in Kansas so that we could go to school in, across to Southwest high school.

And my cousin wasn't doing very well so he, after one year he went to private school, Cumberland country day school. And I continued at Southwest and went there for four years.

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Q: So you felt welcomed and –

A: Yes.

Q: Were you aware of what was happening in Germany then? Were you interested?

A: Yes, I mean after, you know, yeah Kristallnacht became something that I was aware of but I was not –

Q: What were your thoughts when you heard about Kristallnacht? Made aware of the damage?

A: I heard from my mother. She was ok. And I was, I became more conscious as I grew older of what was going on. And but as I said, I had no personal contact in Germany anymore. No relatives, no friends. My mother's friends, there were some but I was not aware of them. I was not familiar with them.

Q: You move in with your mother and then you finish high school and then what?

A: I was just 18 in 1942 and I started immediately after I graduated in June of 1942 at the University of Kansas City which was then a private university and my aunt's brother in law was the chairman of the board of the university. And I went there, started summer school. And I got in a year and three, and I went that fall and I went to night school at the same summer school than winter. Because I was working in the cafeteria to earn money and I was working in the library to earn money. And then I was working in the front office. 30 cents per hour. We, you know, as a student.

And I managed to enroll in night school at the same time when I was going to day school, which was not permitted. But I was able to because I was working at the registration department, I kept the two records separate. And so I got in a year and three quarters in one year at, of college. By May of the following year of 43, I was drafted into the army.

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Q: Let's go back a little bit. What about Pearl Harbor? Do you remember that?

A: Oh yes, I do remember that. My family on Sunday had a lunch, a family lunch and we went into the sun room where their radio was and we had the radio on when we heard about this. Actually this was yeah that was Pearl Harbor. And then the next day the president's speech about it. Yeah, FDR's speech. I remember that. And then of course –

Q: You were not a citizen yet were you, when you were drafted.

A: No that was, that is another story.

Q: Now you're draft, you get the notice.

A: I was drafted and I was at Camp Sibert in Gadsden Alabama in chemical warfare basic training.

Q: What were your thoughts about going into the American army? Were you upset or --

A: No, no, no I was, I was, I didn't have a chance to volunteer. I was drafted. You know almost, I went in the army six months after I was 18. And I was in Camp Sibert in Alabama in chemical warfare which meant you did everything in basic training with the, as the infantry does except with gas masks on. You walked, jumped, ran with gas masks on. Then I guess the army decided that there wasn't going to be any chemical warfare in this war. So they closed the camp and I was sent to New Orleans to be in a port battalion as a stevedore, loading and unloading ships, army ships. And I was doing this and I said I've got to get out of here.

And so I applied for training, STAP, advanced specialized training program as a soldier. I was a private. And I was accepted but you had to have some kind of security clearance and they came to me says you can't go to ASTP, you're an enemy alien. So they assigned a, my sergeant you know who supervised me and you know he said you will go down to New Orleans to the district court and you will be sworn in as a citizen. You will be made a citizen. But you have to have a witness who has known you for three years to do this. And of course I knew

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nobody. My sergeant well I've known him for three years. He's known me for three weeks. And we went, he says I swear that I've known him. I'm a witness so he could get a day off that way and we went into the city of New Orleans and I was sworn in as an American citizen on that day.

Q: That have any meaning for you?

A: Yeah I was, well I mean I was able to get out of stevedoring.

Q: That's what it meant.

A: Exactly and I went to the University of Illinois for several months and did actually I was put into a graduate program in German and I ended up with 12 hours of credit towards my bachelor's degree later on. And I was there for about three months. And then I went to Camp Ritchie. That was sort of my approach. My University of Illinois I went to Camp Ritchie, Maryland.

Q: Now let's start talking a little bit about Camp Ritchie. Did you know what it was?

A: Yes, it was the Army Intelligence school. And I was going to be an intelligence specialist. Knowing German and having German as my main qualification for going there. And it was a, I was used to army life by that time. Camp Ritchie was different. It was a camp close to Washington where your training was not six days a week and one day off. It was seven days a week and the eighth day off which was called ban day because the commanding general of Camp Ritchie was a brigadier general by the name of Banfield. So you worked six, seven days and got the eighth day off. And the course I think was eight weeks long.

It was also a sort of a peculiar camp because many of the soldiers there were privileged kids of senators and congressmen and people in the administration and on weekends very often, on ban day, there were limousines coming up to take sons and daughters. There were some very fancy people who were soldiers there. The permanent staff at Camp Ritchie were primarily, they were you know not, they were not German specialists or anything. They were not – there were a lot of refugee children. I mean youngsters at Camp Ritchie. And some of them were children of very prominent people.

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Q: When you say refugees, do you mean German Jewish young people?

A: Yeah. Yeah. Because we all spoke German.

Q: German was their native language.

A: The previous element at Camp Ritchie was Italian speakers because they, initially there was plans to invade Europe through Italy. And they were training Italian speakers. And when it was determined that they were not going through Italy, they kept these youngsters, these Italian speaking, as staff. And they were, became the enemy that we were trained to come to fight. They were the enemy. They were all Italian speaking kids. Italian Americans.

The German speakers, there was a permanent staff there. And the man in charge, master sergeant, **Manmar Hudeen** [ph], a very well-known former wrestling champion was the master sergeant in charge of our barracks and so forth. His name was Manmar Hudeen. He was a huge guy and I do remember distinctly, he was a very nice person. And but his name was Manmar Hudeen. There was the, there were some pretty well known children of well-known people. In the camp.

And I became, I just cannot remember him now, a well-known writer, author who later on in late life was in East Germany. He defected to East Germany. I will be able to look it up but I just don't remember it now. But we were, and it was a pretty fancy kind of a camp. I mean being a private in the army in Camp Ritchie, I was very impressed. And our training consisted, our intelligence training, consisted of fighting the battle of Gettysburg from the intelligence point of view.

And we were taken out at night and put on trucks and we were taken into the Gettys – we were at Camp Ritchie is you know, in the Gettysburg area. And they let us out of the trucks and said find yourself back to Camp Ritchie within the next three hours. This is your compass. Well we all had learned by that time from other kids, you went to the next farm, rang the door. Farmer would, saying we're from Camp Ritchie. What campus, what direction should I take. They said take as with so and so and you will find your way back. Now they would ask what

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language are you in. German, he says take such and such an, said and you will get back to camp and we all learned that and so that's what you did. To get.

But you fought the battle of Gettysburg from the intelligence point of view and that was in the Gettysburg area. And that was your part of the training.

Q: Anything else you can tell me about the training that you're allowed to tell?

A: Oh well there was nothing classified in those days. As I said you know you were treated really very well. The food was good. You had, it was not like basic training.

Q: It was a country setting wasn't it?

A: Oh it's a lovely, you don't know.

Q: I've seen pictures.

A: Yeah. I mean it's a, I mean they have guide tours through it. And it's next to Camp, it's next to the president's –

Q: Camp David.

A: David, yeah it's really next to it. And no and at the end I remember after we graduated.

Q: You were there for how long?

A: Six weeks.

Q: Just at Camp Ritchie for six weeks?

A: Yeah. And –

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Q: When you were there you said there were other refugee young men. Did you talk about Germany, did you –

A: Very little. Not. No, not, no we –

Q: Did you stick together with them? Did you feel a connection?

A: We were all, no. You see all they were all German speakers so most of them were refugee children. There were very few –

Q: Did you feel a connection, emotional connection with them having gone through what –

A: No we were army kids. I mean we were GIs. We spoke German and had similar backgrounds. We, most of us came from Germany.

Q: Were, and they were Jewish?

A: Many of, yeah I think. Practically all but you didn't know until you – this was not an element that you know you were conscious of. As a matter of fact throughout my foreign service career, I had many friends who were Jewish and I didn't have any idea that they were Jewish. Yeah it just was not an element that was known. As a matter of fact one of my closest friends, his name was **Hartree** and about ten years after we'd known each other I found out he was born in Austria. I said Hartree, how come you know you're from Austria. He said it was **Hertzbaugh**. You know. I mean this is the way it worked. Yes, that's the end of Ritchie.

Gail Schwartz: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Hans Tuch. This is track number two and we were talking about Camp Ritchie and you said you stayed there for six weeks.

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Hans Tuch: Yes, I should –

Q: Anything else you want to –

A: I should interpret. 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 that you know. I mean I was, 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. But which I still have. But or we, which has come back in my old age. I mean I notice it myself being sort of a linguist that I have. My, actually my accent sort of returns slightly now. Yeah.

But I had actually no feeling of ever having been a German you know at that time. I was so Americanized from Kansas City, Middle Western kid. And psychologically the other thing being 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 was, I had nobody to speak German with. So I didn't and I you know only spoke English, learned to speak English. And I was if you, if I landed in New York and lived in New York among other refugees, I would have felt like Kissinger you know. With a German accent and so forth. I deliberately tried to lose my German accent because I didn't want to be, I wanted to be with you know integrated so to speak.

And therefore I had really lost any contact with Germany. My mother, for just a year, you know a year and a half and then she left and she came to the United States. So my, 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 exper -- have related experiences with and I didn't know anybody who – because I was thoroughly Americanized and my family was American. My uncle was the only one who spoke German, well a little bit of German. And he was gone all day long.

So I was, I was Americanized and I had no feeling, not being an American. So –

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Q: Did Jeff speak any German?

A: No none whatsoever.

Q: And his mother, was his mother American or German? Jeff's mother?

A: American yeah. I mean she didn't speak a word of German.

Q: So it was just the uncle.

A: 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, she told. I mean told me. And so she understood German. For me as a 14 year old and she was wonderful, just a terrific person. And she was fairly young. I mean she was in her 30s at the time. So as a housekeeper in the family. And but understood me and she was really a great guide for me. and we became very close friends, until she died.

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

A: No. I mean we were at war. We had not had an invasion yet. We were at war. Actually we invaded Africa. But no, we were just being trained as soldiers and there was –

Q: But did you see pictures of Hitler in the newspaper and if so, what reaction did you have?

A: Don't remember. In those days, no.

Q: The next step?

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A: 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 when there was in the north Atlantic it was so. And we were very crowded in this troop ship. We were stacked up four in a level. And kept at night, you know it was dark and so forth and it was, I mean it was pretty crowded.

And we got to Broadway, to England and we went to Broadway in Worcestershire and it was a very nice place. It was the intelligence sort of assembly plant from which we were assigned to various divisions.

Q: What month, what are we talking about here?

A: March.

Q: Of?

A: 1944.

Q: 44, what was –

A: March, April. March. Yeah March, April 44. April.

Q: Did they have different classes at Camp Ritchie and what number were you in?

A: I don't remember. I think I was the eighth class.

Q: It says class 18.

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

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Q: Airborne?

A: Airborne divisions. Looking for people who were going to be interrogators of prisoners of war. Intelligence specialists. And I know I was inebriated but I signed up for the paratroop, for the 101st Airborne division. But it was –

Q: You hadn't had any of that training yet?

A: No and I was as a, I was so inebriated I signed up my best friend also without him knowing it.

Q: And you're all of 20 years old?

A: No, I was 19. 19.

Q: 19 and a half?

A: And we were sent off to Leicestershire where the 101st Airborne division was located, waiting for, to for the invasion. I mean – no actually not. We went to Leicestershire and there was a sort of an ad hoc training camp for paratroopers. And I think yeah, the training camp was actually maintained by the 82nd division. It was in Leicestershire. And we had seven days of nothing but physical training. Seven, eight hours a day of physical training. And only jumped from platforms. Learned how to jump from platforms. And the second week, five days, every day to jump out of an airplane. Locally. And they took us up in the airplanes and the US Army had purchased a number of farms which were the landing areas.

And we were told that when we jumped 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 we 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 Redding. In various camps because – and there we were waiting for the invasion. I mean for the date and we jumped in Normandy.

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Q: On June what?

A: June sixth, June. We jumped before H hour. We landed you know two hours before H hour, yeah.

Q: Were you aware of the magnitude of the invasion?

A: No we were a soldier and this was part of, we were going to invade France you know and go in there. And the only thing and this is a story that I've told and it is known, a little anecdote. We were in this plane, the 20 people, 24 people in the plane. And we were flying towards the continent at night. With the plane had no doors because paratroopers, planes with paratroopers had no doors. They were open because they couldn't, they so you just and 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. You know 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.

Q: And where did you land?

A: We landed, well I don't know exactly where we landed but our landing area was a, the city was **Carentan**, Omaha Beach. Near Omaha Beach, a little bit inland. Carentan. We were supposed to land and make, keep the road, block the road from German replacements from coming into that area and replace German. That was our mission. And whether we accomplished this or not, I have no idea.

But I must say that we had no idea where we were when we landed. When we landed. Fortunately the assistant division commander of the 101st Airborne division by the name of

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Higgins, apparently knew where we were and he sort of took us in hand and we managed to get you know, 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. I mean we had a little bit of food with us. No equipment. But 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.

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

A: Yeah, a few. I mean they were as scared as we were, when –

Q: Did you have any physical reaction to seeing them, being German yourself?

A: No, no, no. I was an American. I mean none whatsoever, none whatsoever. The German was the enemy. The fact that I was of German origin. No, I was an American. And –

Q: Did you speak to any of them?

A: We took a few, 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 waited. We were in England. I was in the Redding area in a camp until the Holland invasion, in September 17th I believe. September 17th was the invasion of Holland. And that was a more difficult jump because it was day time. And there were, the other thing I wanted to mention is we also had glider troops. The 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. You know and so people, you had to volunteer to be a jumper,

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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 Normandy, into Holland and we, the 101st Airborne Division was situated around Eindhoven. The 82nd Division was **Nijmegen** and the Sixth British Paratroop division was across the river. I can't remember. And that was the occasion where the British were annihilated. And the reason they were annihilated is we were supposed to, three divisions were supposed to jump and maintain the road open for the second British army to move through and across the line and liberate Holland. What happened is Marshall Montgomery apparently just, 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. They stopped, got off their tanks. And sat with us and had tea and then they never made it to, to **Arnhem**. Arnhem. They never made it and the British were annihilated across the river. The whole division was and it was, the reason was that Montgomery never came and did that. We were in Holland for 70 days. We were supposed to be there for ten days at the most and 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 were 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 either.

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 and before we were taken out. And brought back to rest camp in France called near **Rels** [ph] called **Mumalo le Grand** [ph]. That was our camp, was a French, old French, French camp with actually straw mattresses still. And we were there briefly and then started to Bastogne to counterattack, the British counter attacked and we went to Bastogne, and were there throughout the siege of Bastogne.

We went there on the 18th of December, 17th of December and then we were completely isolated and Eisenhower declared Bastogne the expendable to stay there and not give up. We were completely surrounded by Germans. And it was General Patton, the Third army decided he was not going to, what Eisenhower had determined to make us 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

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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 a surrender, the 101st Airborne surrender. I was working on, I mean I was with my colonel by the name of Harper, I was a regimental commander and we were actually right across from division headquarters. And they sent, the Germans sent in a team to make a surrender. And what happened was the surrender, the team two officers and two enlisted men were held when they came across with the white flag. And they were held in an outpost. And brought in the letter to surrender and my colonel and I were with our division commander. At the time was, he was assistant division commander because General Taylor was in Washington at the time. I mean 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 were standing by them. He said oh nuts, what am I going to tell them. And no idea of – he said oh nuts, what am I going to tell them. And Colonel Kennard, his chief of staff stood by him and said 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?

Q: What does it mean?

A: Nuts. I said, what is nuts. I said go to hell. And that you know that became the translation of nuts. 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-47th came over massively, throwing down medical supplies. Food. And everything, all of a sudden on Christmas morning. It was great.

And then after a few days we were sent, we were liberate -- No, we were there for another week or so. And then we moved out of Bastogne and we moved by that time we were very much emaciated. I mean troop wise, we were one third of our strength. We moved over to the right and down the line on the west side of the line, we moved down. We saw no combat.

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Practically no combat. It was towards the end of the war. The last three weeks of the war. And we went, we moved down and ended up on the day that the war ended, on May 6 at **Berchtesgaden**. We actually took Berchtesgaden. There was nothing to take. And being still prisoner of war specialists we headed immediately for Hitler's, and we went up to the **Berghof** and 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 that story.

And then we were there for about a month. Oh 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 is 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, you know 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.

Q: Did you do any questioning of –

A: Not, in, after we got to Berchtesgaden it was over with. We were, as a matter of fact we were put in charge of securing Berchtesgaden but there was nothing to secure. You know, no problems at all.

Q: But you had said there are all these high level prisoners?

A: The prisoners were taken, we were not involved, not involved at all. Those were by that time yeah.

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Q: And then where did you go?

A: Well then briefly the 101st Airborne Division was taken south to **Bad Gastein** in Austria which is about an hour south of Salzburg. And we were there briefly and then I was detached. I was able, because I had had enough points being in 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 Desine** [ph], a suburb of Paris and I was there for about a week and then was shipped home. And I was actually got home by December eighth. You know I was one of the first people in my own acquaintance to get out of the army and get back. And then I immediately enrolled back to go to college on the first of January I was back in school. Most of my friends and relatives were, like Jeff, they were not home yet.

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

A: When I finished college in University of Kansas City I was persuaded by my, Henry Bertram Hill. History professor. He said I should try to get to graduate school. At the school of advanced, he suggested it was the school of advanced international studies.

Q: Johns Hopkins.

A: 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 don't think I distinguished myself academically. However, on the weekend before the fourth of July in some reason or other, the cooks of the school quit. Left. And left, the school was without a cook for the long weekend. For the Fourth weekend. So before they could go down to Boston to hire a 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

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next year because they couldn't refuse my application. So I went to SIAS and at the first week in Washington, my wife Mimi had come down. She had been graduated from Carleton College. She had sort of a record there. She had a absolute A, four years of nothing but A's. She made Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year. And she was a valedictorian of her class. She had actually literally never had anything but an A as long as she was going to school, until graduate school and we had met and that's when she got her first B and she blamed me for that.

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

Q: And then what did you do?

A: I 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 ten 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 if we 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 fiancée 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 from 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

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bank and I didn't want to be in 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 Hamburg 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 **Douten** and you go out and see her and maybe you'll get hired. So I went out there to 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 and then 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 Douden. I said so I can read this and see what, I write 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 and he stopped me after about four or five minutes and he says just a moment Mr. Tuch, I want to – and he came back, went out and came back with Patricia Van Douden 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 Pat Van Douden 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 then I became a foreign service officer.

The action by – or the same day that I was sworn in, another young man was also sworn in and his name was Natel, Wallace W. Natel. We were sworn in on the same day and were he was just 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 fire fighter, a paratroop fire fighter in Colorado. So a fellow paratrooper. So we immediately became close friends because we both were paratroopers. 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 he became.

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Q: Where were you stationed during your diplomatic career?

A: I start, as I said I started out in 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 conductor of music, 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 days when you know nothing was permanent. 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 became 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 I was 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 temples behind the Lincoln Memorial on Ohio drive. And I started there and we were 12 students. I was the only outsider and we had five instructors. It was a marvelous course. We had five linguists. These were all Russian linguists of different backgrounds. There was a lawyer and different, and one linguist. And we were allowed to speak English only with the linguist, with the Russian lang -- 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 a different linguist and the sixth hour was with the linguist. Well I was there for a week and suddenly word came down that I wasn't allowed to be there, at CIA. I wasn't 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.

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Q: What were your other postings?

A: And then I went, then for about a year they wouldn't give me the Russians, the Soviets wouldn't give me a visa because I was with this spy organization, USIA. So I resigned from USIA. I was commissioned in the State Department. Before that happened I was actually, I was with the Voice of America in Munich. As a correspondent and as a writer of commentaries and a correspondent in Munich with the Voice. And then finally I got a visa and was assigned in August 1958. August 58 I was assigned to Moscow. And we were there and I was the first public affairs officer, the first we didn't call them that. I was the first cultural and press attaché in Moscow since World War II. The first one because there was a break sort of in the ice. There had been the Camp David meeting between Eisenhower and then 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 there to, 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 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, my fourth book. And everything that transpired from Moscow onward is in that book. My foreign service experience and so forth.

Q: When did you retire?

A: 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 USIA, 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 him 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

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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 life style 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. It became standard and so we stayed there for a third year. Then I came back to Washington and I became - - Ed Murrow was the director of USIA and I became one of his assistants, responsible for the Soviet Union at least in Europe and I was that for three years. I mean actually more. He died, he passed away.

And then I was under, and I assigned myself since I was in charge of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe I assigned myself to be public affairs officer in Warsaw. I went and stayed in the area, 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, former you know. 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 a proposal to you, 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 and where I was 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. It was a, well it's ok. He had an accident where he killed a pedestrian when he was driving an embassy car. And this went on and the Bulgarians were awful about this. There's this American killing our children and 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 which was about five months, six months later. And so he came. And after Sofia, I got a plush post. I got to be PA or Public Affairs officer in Berlin, my home town. And we were in Berlin for three years and we had a really personally a

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wonderful time because theater, opera, everything was just gravy. However, the job was, became really terrible because the situation in Germany, in Berlin specifically had turned entirely where the young Berliners felt that we were, 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, oh after Berlin we –

Q: Did you go to Bonn?

A: No, not yet.

Q: Brasilia?

A: 67 to – yeah, after Berlin we, I was assigned as diplomat in residence at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy. And after that we, well I was, that was a two year assignment and I only lasted one year because I was called back to become deputy director of the Voice of America and then almost very shortly thereafter, acting director of the Voice of America. And after that assignment, three years and I was, 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 and I really, because journalism was really my thing. And I felt that this was a wonderful assignment. And after the Voice of America I decided well – oh I was an inspector. I became chief inspector of the USIA and I inspected Brazil. And being in Brazil four months, I decided that was going to be my next post. You know completely different and they said well you can't go to Brasilia. You speak Russian, German, French. You don't have Portuguese. I said --. I never did learn it very well. But we were in Brazil for five years. And with a marvelous, who became a very close friend, with a marvelous person who was our American ambassador in Brazil by the name of **Crimmens**, Jack Crimmens. And he was a career officer. And while we were there, should I go on.

Q: I wanted to step a little further ahead, after you retired which was, when was that?

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A: After Brazil.

Q: Just tell me where you were?

A: After Brazil we were in Bonn. And we were in Bonn for four and a half years and that's when I retired.

Q: 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 it came out and the camps and –

A: The thing is I felt like practically, 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 death camps. I mean the concentration camps. We were, I was never in a concentration camp. Yes, I was in Dachau but only visited it. I mean I saw what was, but it never professionally. And so I felt really just like any other American did. I had no personal losses so therefore this was not a felt like maybe just like you. You know like any other person.

Q: Even though you were born in Berlin?

A: Even though I was born in Berlin, I had no, 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 had happened. No, the aftermath. But it wasn't anything personal.

Q: Did this make you feel more Jewish, less Jewish or the same. Did it have any, your childhood and what you went through –

A: It had really nothing to do. I wrote a paragraph about my being Jewish. I personally feel that I was brought -- I was brought up Jewish. I, as my religion. My ethnic or I was German and I was

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Jewish because, by religion. After I left my Jewish feelings or beliefs, I'm actually I'm an atheist by – 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 when I feel that my entire background is German. And I have never identified in any way with being Jewish at this stage.

Q: What about your children? Were they raised –

A: They were, actually Mimi was a Methodist, she's Christian and they were both baptized, but both entirely left any religious feelings. They have no religion at all, either one of them as adults. But they went to Sunday school you know as kids.

Q: What are your thoughts about Germany today?

A: I feel, I have a deep feeling the fact that the post war German government starting with Adenauer and subsequently have done a terrific job of redemocratizing 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. I mean 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 in the 19, especially in the 1950s. Until the early 1960s and I just have felt very personally committed to participating in the reorientation of the German society into a western democratic society. I mean that was a very, I'm grateful for that and 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 and is a –

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

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A: 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. You know what is happening in Africa and 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.

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

A: Oh it's a great institution. I think it's a marvelous institution. And actually what they do in their out, yeah is wonderful and yeah it's great. I just have not been like the Ritchie boys and anything with the US Army is sort of lost on me, but that's ok. But I, and the other thing is that 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 –

Q: You are American?

A: I am an American of German origin. That's the way I feel you know. Of German origin. And I think as I said in the beginning, I think my father, it was inculcated by my father because we never discussed when I was a child. But he also felt so strongly about being a German. World War I veteran.

Q: Was he a Zionist at all?

A: No, no, no. He was, the only time that I ever felt him being Jewish is on the holidays period.

Q: What are your thoughts about Israel?

A: I am very critical of Israeli politics. I felt that the establishment of Israel, Zionism was a absolutely marvelous thing and a very, 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

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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. Finally was a TWA flight that was I think was in I think Lebanon. And he was the first hostage of the plane. But his wife who was a cousin once removed of mine, about ten years younger. She is. And we are in touch with one another.

Q: Have you been to Israel?

A: Yes. I visited, 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 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 call me about it. I found out from my cousin in Jerusalem about it and I was mad. And 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.

Q: What were your thoughts during the Eichmann trial?

A: During the Eichmann trial, I mean it was the worst that could come. I mean what happened to him was actually the right thing and what the Mossad did in getting him fine, great. You know just like picking up Osama Bin Laden. But no I just, I feel that our Secretary of State in currently in his efforts to get the – is fighting an uphill battle and I so disagree with Israeli politics at the moment. And I must say I disagree with the American, the lobby.

Q: AIPAC?

A: Yeah, yeah just awful.

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Q: Is there anything else you wanted to add before we close?

A: If you want to take a look at this book. And before, and add it to the library. It 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're doing, I think is – what I did do participate. Do you know Edith **Fierst** [ph]. She lives here and I worked with her on the ten 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 in Kansas City. I worked with her at that. She's marvelous and she's 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 mean I don't think I have terribly much to contribute to this program.

Q: It's important. That's a nice note to end on. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Hans Tuch.

(End)