

8838, reel number 3.

Mr. Bogacki, reel three.

Well, you asked me if I expected the attack. Well, in a way, yes. Because I knew I was mobilized on the 23rd of August. And of course, the purpose of mobilization is to prepare for enemy's attack. Will that happen on the 1st of September, of course, I wouldn't know. But listening to radio communications, which were quite frequent and described the position and the movement of the German arm of the German side board and so on and very strong incident provoked by the Germans-- you probably read about it.

They provoked, for instance, an attack of a German radio station in Silesia, in Gleiwitz or something like that by their own soldiers dressed in Polish uniforms. Apparently, they were ex-concentration camp convicts, whom they shot immediately. Yes, I wasn't surprised with the bomb, really. Well, we knew it started. That's all.

And what did you then do immediately afterwards, personally?

I did nothing. I just prepared. As I said before, I was organized. All the HQ, from the signals point of view, I had my advanced positions moved many, many miles towards the border on orders from the chief of staff. And that's how the war started. And the Germans came from East Prussia, I think, on the 3rd of September, already overrun the Polish defense line there.

On the 4th of September, the HQ from Modlin packed up and moved away towards Warsaw. And of course, I packed up my signals parts and went with them. WE organized the signals in the new HQ, not far from Warsaw and so on. And now we-- our, the retreat went on and on and on and on, which I could probably tell you by day by day because it's still vividly in my mind. That's not necessary, I think.

Anyway, in the end we landed in not far from the town Lublin. It is southeast of Warsaw. South of Lublin, in some kind of wood, forests. And there we were encircled. And it's a real paradox of nature. All the time there was fantastic good weather, sun, dry. So the Germans, with a heavy tanks and equipment, just drove quickly fore.

On the 23rd of September, I was called in to the HQ. They said, look, we are-- tomorrow or during the night tomorrow, General Anders with his cavalry brigade will try to get through, fight through the German lines south. And the HQ of the army is dissolving now. But we are telling you, you can go that way with your company. Or you are free what you do.

We are not more as an army operating. And the general said he is dissolving the whole thing because we were encircled. The only thing I could go behind that, which I tried but I did not succeed, at that night came rain. And that part of Poland is not sandy. It's clayish. So not only the Germans stuck in it, but also we stuck in this whole clay and rain.

I did not succeed to go through. So I went, I stood one day-- in my company, I said to my soldiers, look, you are free. We are-- I'm going here, try to go down. If you want to go with me, well and good. And I will take charge of you, to the south, to the Hungarian border or something.

So all you want to go home if you can, if you are succeeding, it's all your decision. They asked me if they can take the van or the lorry. I said, yes, you can take it. It's all yours. And they went on that lorry, a few of them. The rest marched. Thus I finished my career as a commanding officer of that army signals. And the army packed up. It ceased to exist.

And I remained there, standing the next day on a hill with my superior officer, who was the chief signals officer of the army and another one with German origin, of which I will tell you later. And I only kept two horses and the cart, which were a part of the equipment of the company and the soldier.

Well, and we just went. I had my car, everything. I left everything. But there was no petrol or nothing. Anyway, I was running my cars and the company cars on pure spirit, which I got from the-- where they produce spirit. Now they call

them-- anyway, so I left the car, got the horses, and we went, three of us and the soldier. We went up.

Now the situation is this. The Germans are on left side. We are not far from the river Bug.

River what?

Bug-- B-U-G, Bug, which divided the Germans from the Russians. On the right, from the other side of the Bug were the Russians. And there was a part of a no-man's land, where the Germans did not come in. They were-- ours here, and the Russians not in.

Well, it is really a personal story. I don't know if that it--

Yes.

And so we went to the nearest small town. We were all in uniforms. I was really, at that time, I must admit, I was really shocked. I didn't know what to do. With all my uniforms, they said, well, you must change because they will take us there. I had all my pistols, everything. I said, I will not.

So we went to the nearest town, and a friend of mine, who were higher ranks with me, they knew that I somehow did not want to change. They brought me a civilian [INAUDIBLE] and asked me to change, so I changed. And we stopped in a small village, in the small village school, and sat down because we couldn't move. The Germans were not far here. There was no war at that time. They were here, the no-man's land. They were probably talking to each other.

Anyway, cutting the whole story short there, I went myself maybe twice through the German line somehow, with the help of a local because we had no documents. I couldn't show anybody my military documents. To the nearest village, how do you call it? Superior-- some kind of man who had a stamp, and he could stamp some kind of document, that I belonged there.

The village headman?

Could be headman. Yes. So that's what the only thing I managed to crawl through the lines, somewhere between here and there, and nobody saw me. Anyway, once we got that, the Germans walked over our the village, just went through. There was no resistance. Normal people living there, they were not interested in-- they didn't come into the house at all.

Once they moved over, the people started moving freely behind the lines. So we went our horses, water and started. It's about 150 kilometers, probably from-- oh, 200-- from Warsaw, we started our way to Warsaw, took us quite a long time. Finally we reached Warsaw. There was, of course, a tumult or movement of people on the roads, people in all directions. Nobody knew where from. They were running away from the Germans, now they're coming back again, [? in ?] [? our ?] car, and then horses in between there.

We came to the outskirts of Warsaw, barbed wire, German soldier. Happily, all three of us, we spoke German. And they asked questions, where you are? I said, well, we just after the war, we're coming back home. What should we do? What-- we looked around. Nothing, go away. So we just threw the barbed wire. We went into Warsaw. I told the soldier, look, my boy. You live not far from Warsaw. The horses and the cart is yours.

You are a farmer, take it with you. And good bye and good luck to you.

You were pretending to be a farmer?

He, he was a farmer, farmer's son. The soldier who went with us, not the horse and driver. So we gave him the horses, the horse, and he's supposed to go home. Probably he did reach home. I don't know. This was his. And we just went.

There was a taxi in somewhere around or something like that already, because Warsaw fell on the 27th of September. And we came there, it was October, two weeks late or something like that.

And we went to the house of the friend of mine, who were with me. He had a house and a wife in Warsaw. And that's how my war, in September 1939, ended.

What rank were you when you finished?

I was lieutenant.

And can you say something about what you considered about the caliber of the German army as an enemy to fight?

Well, as a signal officer, you never are on the front line. So I can only tell you, that's what I heard. I never seen them or nobody shoot at me because HQ of the army is always quite away from-- even in that surrounding, there's quite a few kilometers or miles. So I can't-- I don't know. Well, they must have been good. I don't know.

Although, when the Poles retaliated, they usually succeeded in the short run. But they were overpowered by sheer power, mobility. So even courage was short-lived. They got the village back. They killed a lot of people. And got prisoners, what to do with them?

No, no. This was a hopeless fight in the end.

What was the--

You must remember that on the 17th of September, the Russians put the knife in our back. That's why they were on the other side. We had nowhere to retreat. And they were fighting with us, taking prisoners and so on. So--

What was the condition of Warsaw when you got there? What did it look like?

Warsaw? Horrible. [LAUGHS] Was all bombarded, a lot of rubble, houses demolished, burnt out. So--

What was the demeanor of the civilian population? Were they dazed or what?

I would have thought-- I can only-- I was dazed myself. But looking at the people, everybody was trying to make some kind of living. They were moving, movement around. There were people standing on the corner selling something here, a piece of bread or a shoe or something, wanted to get the money, make the living somehow. Complete, complete turmoil really, really.

Because their jobs no longer existed?

Of course, nothing existed. Later, a few days later, I realized that the public was against that. The army or the commanding things that we haven't fought properly or something like that. But this all changed in the next years, when they found out that France even fell quicker than we did, didn't fight at all.

Was it October 1939 that you reached Warsaw?

That's right. Yes, the first half of October. I couldn't tell you exactly when it was.

And can you tell me something about how the Germans behaved once they took over?

1939, Germans behaved-- this was the army. That's a completely different thing from later on, which I experienced from the Gestapo and SA and so on. This was the army. They were fighting there. Of course they were proud. They were walking around here and there. And nothing special, they behaved normally, just normal people in that time.

Well, there's one little thing that's my personal story. October, not a week or two later, still in October I think, end of October, something like that, there was an announcement given that all officers have to report-- because they knew they

haven't taken prisoners, all of them. Some went away, some like that, have to report on the square, Pilsudski Square in Poland, it was at that time-- and so on.

So my friend of mine, both of them were majors at that time, they said, look Konrad, you go first. They always sent me first. You know, even during the battle, I was always in the first car moving from HQ to HQ, with a machine gun in my hand and the chauffeur here and driver, over the hills. So this will go fast. I said, well, actually, I don't want to report to the Germans. I'm here, and I couldn't care less about them. Anyway, they convinced me. I went.

First time, nothing happened. They sent us home. The second time, I came there, stood in a row of many officers. And there was a general also in between them. And a German came out of that house and said, all professional soldiers-- in German, of course-- come here. In German it sounded [SPEAKING GERMAN]

What does it mean?

That's what I said, all professionals-- all these step out from the row, forward. And so I went in. And I see near me stands my second officer, who was with me in the company, second lieutenant. Anyway, I went to the-- after the second time, I went to the-- where there were these German soldiers sitting and taking personal details from you.

I told him who I am, my name, my rank, my everything. Where do you live? I said, on the street such-and-such, but I gave him the wrong number. I told him in Polish-- I had to help him a little because he couldn't speak. I said, look, I have given him a wrong address. I don't trust you [INAUDIBLE]. You'd do the same. He did not.

Anyway, they gave me a paper with a stamp, and I could free walk in Warsaw, not being protected in that way. I came home to my sister. That's what it is. And their wives say, oh, that's fine. You must go now, and that's all free and so on.

This all lasted till November, I think 11 or something like that, which is a certain Polish remembrance day. In the morning, one of those chaps lived with me in one room, not far on that street, where the others were. And the maid from that family came running. Look, Major [PERSONAL NAME] is taken by the Germans this morning.

And the other major with whom I was together said, oh, dear. Dear. Dear. I must-- he had a house, a flat really in Warsaw. But he gave it to another-- a wife of another officer. So he lived with me.

So he went there. And she said, yes, the Germans were here asking for you and said that they asked you to be in the evening here. So I thought, Well, I said -- and I went to that number, which I gave wrong-- it's opposite-- to the housekeeper. And she says, what is all about. I said, Oh, they were here looking for some kind of Bogacki. But I never heard. It was what [INAUDIBLE]

So anyway, all them were taken, cutting this whole thing short-- and sent to the prisoner of war camps. And I remained in Warsaw. That's a small incident.

Now, you said that the German troops were behaving normally at first. You mean they behaved correctly?

Well, 1939, I haven't heard about any special, brutal behavior or something. I seen that later, yes. If you walked on the pavement, and they just shoot you in the face and [INAUDIBLE] you away, simple as that.

Smack you in the face?

Yes. But you couldn't care less. Out of your way. He walked straight, not very common but it happened. But in '39, this was really the time of day. They were probably not organized themselves properly, just the front was on. They were reorganizing themselves.

What changes did the German occupation bring about to everyday life? How did it affect everyday life in Warsaw?

Well, I don't know how to say, how to explain that. Anyway, all public institutions, all, say, factories or something like

that were taken over by the Germans. There was always a German manager or director put there. Even outside Warsaw, on the land, where there were landowners, this all was taken over by Germans. There was also a German put in charge of it, although the people were sitting there, the workers were working. They're paying something, some little salaries or something.

So food was rationed, very miserable supply. But how we lived, we made excursions out into the villages and bought something and brought it to Warsaw in the beginning, which was forbidden later on. You could even land in the concentration camp later on, when they found a little meat under your-- on your body because you put it on your body, put the jacket on, and brought it with you.

In the beginning-- and so that was-- life was on. Everybody tried to live on his own as much as he could, to earn money. How? I don't know. I wasn't suffering from that because I had my salaries still. Before the war started, I put my little, what I earned, savings, in my pocket.

When I was discharged, my superiors, signals, got from the treasurer, from the army treasurer, our three advance salaries. So I had a bit of money with me. And the prices were not exaggerated at that time. So the living was quite, as far as I am concerned, quite tolerable. I was a bachelor at that time.

And my first thought was to find somebody. I must tell you one thing. After the HQ of the army was dissolved, I could have, later on, gone south. And that's what many people did, over the Slovak or Hungarian or Romanian border south, and join somehow the west. And I would be probably during the war here somewhere. But I did not.

I distinctly said to myself, I will not do that. I'm going to Warsaw. And this might sound a bit pathetic. But you see, my generation was brought up on quite a good historical knowledge of the past, of Polish history, which was tragic. It was always risings, from 1831, '63, and so on, maybe to '48.

So I thought to myself what to do. Because these two chaps with me, two majors, they wanted to go south. I said, I'm not going. If you go, you take the horses, and it doesn't matter. I'm not going with you. So they did not. They did it with me.

I was somehow the-- I was probably stronger by will than they were. Although, they were married, and I was a bachelor. I could have gone, you know.

In my mind I had one clear. This is impossible that nothing will happen. German overrun, there surely must be something happening here that we will fight or somehow act against the Germans. That was my belief. So when I landed in the end in Warsaw as you heard, I tried to find I didn't know what-- anyway, some friends.

And I found-- first, I came across of one of my pupils, who just graduated second lieutenant in '39. And I told him, look-- he was Adam, his Christian name. Doesn't matter. He doesn't-- he's dead already, killed by Germans. If you can contact a friend of yours, do that and let me know who they are. And be in contact with me because I think we will organize a little signal unit. Because I said, there must be some kind of connection.

I thought about that then-- some radio connection with the outside world because whatever happens here, this will be needed. Whoever does create something in the future, he must have a connection with the outside world. See, I was an active and professional soldier. I knew this was my-- knew I could do. I thought about it at that time already.

And very shortly, I had a few of these lieutenants. I met even, probably a few weeks later, a friend of mine, a captain who was with me in that signal school. And we started-- and I'm starting now my war time activity with that story now.

And also shortly, I contacted, from the same signals center, education center, other ranks. There was a sergeant and so on, who were radio operators-- Morse, now in contact. Now, I think this was end of October or beginning of November, something like that. I got a contact of a gentleman who was representing already the organizing itself underground organization, of which in charge was put in charge by the last commanding officer of defense of Warsaw, a General RA³mmel.

And this one here, who was in charge, put on charge and asked to act underground and create a certain underground organization, was General Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski. Tokarzewski is probably enough-- T-O-K-A-R-Z-E-W-S-K-I-- Tokarzewski. And the chap who I was-- I contacted by some pure accident was a major in charge of the secret department or something like that, like the MI-5 or something like that.

He said, all right. I said, I have already a few-- I'm a signals officer, I said. And I have already a few people with me. And I am willing to organize something in the radio direction. He said, all right. Be in contact with you, or I will be in contact with you. We made a certain arrangement, where he can find me. He said, as soon as a chief signals officer will be nominated, because I was still a lieutenant, there must have been a major or captain or even [INAUDIBLE], we will contact him with you.

In the meantime, one of those of my group was a reserve officer from before the war. And he was an owner of a house in Warsaw, which was partly bombarded. And the second one was adjacent, semi-detached. So we had already a house. We had these few people. And I was looking now for equipment.

And of course, I couldn't find-- there was limited military equipment. But I knew perfectly well the military equipment I can't use in a conspiracy. A big thing here, and they were not prepared. The wavelengths were not the right, and technically not the right--

Session number 8838, reel number 4.

Mr. Bogacki, reel 4.

Well, as I said, the military equipment, which I could find somewhere concealed in Poland, I knew is not-- it's too cumbersome, too big. I can't move with it, not to be discovered. Anyway, shortly after I contacted so-called radio amateurs association, who were existing, functioning before the war and had contact by shortwaves all over the world. And they promised to help me.

But unfortunately, the Germans knew about them because they were a registered people on the track. And they were chased and haunted immediately. And besides, their equipment, it technically was the right one, because they could communicate all over the world. But this wasn't the right equipment which I could use in a secret way walking around from here and there and just running away. Because they were in a big room, units, which-- anyway, it wouldn't work.

January, the chief signals officer was nominated. I met him. He came to me. Apparently we knew each other. He was a captain before the war, and I would hear about it. I told him that the unit is ready except-- and the room is ready. The only thing we are lacking is equipment.

He was apparently a fully qualified engineer and before the war, worked in the ministry of telecommunication in the radio section on the International thing. So he was quite knowledgeable about radio and this sort of thing. And he found out, and he knew about it, that Poland produced, before the war, for their secret intelligence, small radio transceivers, small ones. I have somehow even the measurements.

And so I said, that's excellent. Where are they? So he gave me a contact to a gentleman, who took me there. This factory was already taken over by the Germans, of course. But there was still the caretaker there. So sometimes in the evening, when the Germans were away-- you mind, it was '39. They were not so strict, looking everywhere.

He took me there with the side entrance. In the corner lying there, partly made, some finished, some unfinished components, this sort of thing. I said, that's fantastic. So I took, I think, about two, I could find, in so-called working order, supposed to be in the working order, two components. Outside was a horse carriage. There were no taxis, of course. There was horse-driven, like you see nowadays in Malta, for instance, or something.

So we went on it and have driven through Warsaw. I just said to this driver, I said, look, don't go through middle of Warsaw. Yes? He looked at us from the side here. Oh, yes, yes. I know, he said. So somehow sideways he reached the

suburbs of Warsaw, where we had the house. And that's how I gained the first transceiver.

So we had to find out how it works. We listened. Now the main problem was how and with whom to gain a radio contact. To gain a radio contact, you have to exchange verbal or written information, written information. That is the wavelength, the signal, and the time.

So at that time, a courier was going to Budapest from our underground movement. And I asked that courier, through my signals superior at that time because he was in contact with him-- contacts were always limited. You had contact with him, but you didn't know what happened there. He didn't know what I was contact-- I contact had with somebody. This was all in groups.

Anyway, I gave him my wavelengths I had. This was a quartz orientated or designed transceiver. My wavelength-- and I put some few letter signals, which he has to call me, and I will call him-- a few letters, three. It's 3HW or something like that-- and the time, and he went. And he came back after a few weeks time. This was already, I think, beginning of February.

He said, yes, I have a confirmation. That's the whole thing. And we started calling each other from, say, February-- no result. No result. Nothing. Or we heard them, but they wouldn't hear us, no answer.

So this was-- he'd gone to Budapest?

Budapest, the courier, yes.

And he'd practiced contacting you, had he?

He gave him my-- these elements, like signal code.

Who had he given it to?

I gave them to the courier, who took it to Budapest, to them. He said, you can call me on that wavelength. And you can hear me or listen to me on that wavelength.

But who was his contact in Budapest?

Oh, I see. That was the Polish Consulate still there. You must remember, Hungary was not overrun by Germany at that time yet. There was the Polish Consulate still there. And they had, their consulate or whatever they had there, some kind of radio equipment.

So you were telling me how you were trying to establish contact with the consulate.

I'm trying to tell you how I organized that, that he knew how to find me, how to talk to me. Because they had already contact with the Polish HQ, Polish government in exile, in France, in Angers, where General Sikorski was.

So anyway, he came back. He confirmed everything, that they know everything, how to listen to me and how to call me. And a long time nothing came out of it. Anyway, cutting through this whole thing-- on the 4th of March, we achieved exchanged contact. He said, yes, I hear you. And there are certain abbreviated forms in the Morse code. He says, all right, I hear you, so-and-so, with a strength this and that and that and so on. And we said also.

Anticipating that I have-- I might have to contact, I already reported to the HQ, to the general, that I might have the-- I haven't gotten that yet, but I might have the radio link very shortly. So they sent me already an initial short telegram, just to prove it, through them to Angers, to Sikorski from our general.

So once I got that contact, my other rank sergeant was sitting on it and knocking here. So I gave him. He said, put that down here. It was coded, of course, deciphered. 4th of March, 1940, we had already our first contact, the radio link with

the outside world.

What kind of messages were passing?

What's in the message, I can't tell you because they were coded. And I was not in charge of the deciphering the unit. This was completely separate. And it must have been separated. You must remember, we worked in a very difficult position.

The radio, Morse, once he presses the key, he is in the air. And not only my friend hears it, but everybody hears it, and the German also. And that was proved later. There were very quick with so goniometry, cutting into and find out where they are.

So once caught by Germans-- and we had losses, of course, later on-- you can't tell where the rest is, even if they beat you to death. So ciphering, deciphering was a special unit. Few ladies were sitting somewhere near the HQ. Even they didn't know properly where that is. So what's in the telegram, I haven't a clue.

You don't even know the type of material which was passing?

No, nothing. Nothing. Of course, nowadays I can find out because we have here records in our archives. But and there are five volumes of books already printed. No. Later on I knew sometime, because I had personal contacts with some officers who were in charge of departments.

If they wanted something special, they came to me and said, look, could you telegram such and such? Somehow, put it quicker. Because I restricted them in the volume in Warsaw later on. Because-- and then in later years, in about 10, 15 minutes, half an hour at the most, they were on our doorsteps, wherever in Warsaw I pressed the key. They're very good, later on, the Germans.

So you were having to move from place to place all the time, were you?

Later on. But in the beginning, we had that house. Of course, we were inexperienced conspirators. Nobody told us before the war that such a thing might exist. And nobody knew properly how to organize a conspiracy. This wasn't our line. So we learned the hard way.

So that was this villa, the house, partially damaged, without-- the roof bombarded, snow coming through. Mind you, this was March. And the telegraph sitting in a fur coat there on the transceiver and contacting Budapest.

Shortly after we got contact with Budapest, through Budapest who had contact with Bucharest in Romania, we got the elements to contact Bucharest. And we got connection with Bucharest shortly after.

You see, once you have one, then they inform them. They could freely communicate at that time still between Romania and Hungary because this wasn't Germany. And they told us by telegram how we contact them, so I got Bucharest.

The borderline between Germany and Russia was the river Bug and south to the Tatra Mountains. And there was a town, Lvov, or the Germans said Lemberg, Lvov. And they're also already existed an underground nucleus, who had already, on their own achievement, on their own initiative, a radio link with Budapest. So through Budapest, I got with my Polish town a Lvov connection in that time.

Anyway, at that time we had Bucharest. Shortly after we had Ankara in Turkey. Shortly after, at the same year, probably till August, September, we had the contact already with Belgrade in Yugoslavia. And we used all those stations because, you must remember, Hungary was overrun not shortly after. I can't tell you 1940, which month it was. And then Bucharest was in danger as well.

And we contacted-- we had a contact with Angers only through intermittent stations.

Intermediate.

Intermediate stations. And so once we knew that Budapest is in danger, we head to Bucharest. We go to Bucharest and Bucharest to Angers. Once Bucharest was in danger, we had the contact with Ankara, and through Ankara to Angers. And Belgrade for a certain time helped us quite a lot. There was also, for a short while, but never really used, Cairo. We had that contact as well. But this was never used for any, for the length of time.

The most we used Ankara later on because the whole Europe was out. Germany overran all Europe, Yugoslavia as well-- so Ankara, till the late autumn 1940, where after France, the Polish government settled in England. We achieved-- this was, I think, September. I'm not sure-- achieved a straight, direct contact with Great Britain, with England, with the Polish HQ.

Why couldn't you go via Stockholm?

Good question. We tried. We could never achieve it.

Because of technical problems?

Yes. What I learned after the war, Stockholm had a similar, a weak transceiver, weak transmitting power, and not a very selective, good receiver, which you have to have. If you want to have a good radio link with your agents in the terrain, somewhere in the world, your main point where you sit, like England for instance, you have to have powerful transmitters and excellent receivers. So you can-- the weakest get out from the air and between other noises.

Stockholm had a weak one, similar to ours. And we never could achieve. That was the nearest one, of course, but we couldn't. Mind you, distance doesn't matter. The further the distance, probably easier to achieve communication than on a short distance. And that was my problem later on. See? Because later on I was created the chief of staff of signals in the HQ underground army signals.

And I had to prepare the operational in case of a rising or something like that, so the commanding officer, army [INAUDIBLE], could communicate with his points in Poland. But I'm running away, of course, ahead. So technically, a transmitter has a ground wave, which is a limited length, depending on the power, and a bouncing wave from the ionosphere somewhere, which-- and that is a-- very often, that at that time anyway-- nowadays everything might be different. The ground wave ends, and the bouncing wave starts only a distance. There's a-- that distance, where you can't reach anything. So that's why I couldn't create, really, I couldn't get a good communication between, say, towns, which were 150, 200 kilometers.

Are you all right?

Yes.

So 150, 200 kilometers, it was practically impossible to achieve. But I think I will come to that later on. So 1940, September I think, we got this direct contact with London. And of course, we ceased to use, or very little, the other stations, Ankara especially, later on.

Well, the Germans were on our trail. We knew this was still the army was occupying. And the army has their own units, which listen to the enemy. So they found out that something is ticking in Warsaw. But the army equipment is not very, very good. It's just rough at that time, pre-war.

So we found out that on the next road, that van stands there. And it's not soldiers. beginning they was acting soldiers here, but civilians looking around. And we found out they are Germans. And that-- [INAUDIBLE] something suspicious.

Whenever we started sending telegrams-- in the beginning, we were quite generous. We could sit in the air for an hour. Of course, they were there. So I say, there was always an outlook from us. Whenever you see them, just signal to us, we

stop.

But shortly after, see, in the turn of '40, '41, this van disappeared. But when we started sending our messages, a slow flying airplane was circling over our heads, that part of Warsaw. We found out whenever we started he was there. But I'm coming back in the beginning, say, more or less June, July, 1940.

I knew, spotting that van, that we can't sit in the open, in the house, because whoever walks in, he's just a sitting duck. So what can we do? I said to my superior and my friends who were with me, I said, look, we have to conceal that kind of thing, to make some kind of room, conceal, this sort of thing. Anyway, after lengthy deliberations, there was a garage under the house from which you can drive in from the garden-- cement floor.

I said, look, we will go under that cement floor. They looked me. They thought I'm mad. I said, no, you have to conceal it. The chap who owned that house was a mechanical-- I think he only finished the polytechnic university. Anyway, well equipped for that kind of thing.

So we knocked out a plate of cement, start with a spoon first, dug deeper, deeper, deeper, deeper, under the house, under the foundations. We built up the foundations of the house. I later on called an architect friend of mine. He said, my word. If I would be here, I would run away. The whole house could have collapsed.

You scraped out the concrete with a spoon?

No, not this. The concrete wasn't knocked away. But then with the earth, we start from a spoon-- taken out, and then the bucket, and then the shovel. And in the end, under the house we built a little two rooms, where you can walk and stand. And you put the radio transmitter, transceiver there, and the operator. And the antenna in the chimney, up to the top and on the-- how do you call it, crossbars on the top there, on the roof--

Beams.

Beams. Yes. Concealed somehow. But this is very-- well, it sounds easy. It took a long time. But to dig out is easy, but how to conceal it? So if somebody walks in that part of the house, will not see the hole. And here there was quite ingenious, what this friend of mine did.

That hole, he made a cement form, like a dish, deep pot, built in some main duct, of course, water, tubes, with a big cup. So it indicated. And it was covered with simple timber plank. If somebody opened it, it was like a main tap to the house, of water. But this was on special rollers. You just put the little needle somewhere, disconnected a little lock, and this whole thing rolled away. And the hole opened, and you just slid in and shut it after you.

And this saved our life once. February the 3rd, I was in that house at that time. I did not need to be there, But I was.

Is this 1941?

'40. '41-- '41-- April, '41. The outlook, suddenly Germans! You see? And the telegraph-- this was about 6 o'clock in the morning. Telegraph was already sitting down there to start a correspondence with England. But it was much before 6:00. So we all make a flutter. There was another concealed thing, but I'm not going into details.

Like a flash, we were down there. And only one lady remained in the house, houseowner, registered. So they went. They ran around, not in our house immediately. But from that concealed spot under the ground there, I had, in the house microphones in all the door locks, behind the locks. In the frame, really. In the frame side.

So when the Germans finally came in, I heard how they knocked-- how they talked on the entrance, how they talked into the room. I heard everything-- how they talk to that lady. But their main impact of looking or chasing or-- I've lost the word at the moment.

Searching.

Searching-- that's the word. Yes. Searching-- went to the neighbor house. What I found later, that the head in between them in that whole group of commanding officers, there was one air force man. And he put his finger on that house. That means they had the measurement from that airplane flying. So beam here, this was about 100 yards, probably, away. And they made a mess in that house. But they were in our house.

Luckily, this was February. And a few days before we were snowed down completely. Entrance to that derelict house, where the radio station was, from outside was completely snowed on. There was no mark or any footsteps. So they went through the neighboring house.

And from the neighboring house, we had the concealed the entrance to that derelict house from inside. So we didn't need to go out. So they checked everything, even the locks. But they looked-- they have seen that open roof, look down, everything snow in the derelict house. They didn't go into it.

This lasted till the late afternoon in that area. They were sitting. They were searching. they were-- about-- I think it was about 6 o'clock again. And he's still sitting there and listening to England. He said-- and I was with him, and few old friend of mines in that thing, we were sitting all the time there.

He said, Mr. Z, because I had the crypto name, that Zaremba, England is calling. I said, quiet. But in the same time, I got the message from that lady from upstairs through our internal intercom. The Germans are going into the vans and driving away.

So I was young at that moment. Today I wouldn't do it probably. I said to him, look, they had excellent contacts. They were professionals here and there. I said just, ta-dat. By the tone of the voice, they knew who is calling. And he responded immediately. He said, I have for you 1,000 group of telegram. That means a long telegram. And I'm beginning.

So he started receiving, not acting. Once he did that ta-ta-dat, to give a sign that he is here and I'm here, I'm ready to receive something, the message from that lady-- the Germans are again-- they are like a thunder in them, you see? They were out immediately on the street. They might have been-- must have been listening still. And they thought that they must be-- they were searching the whole day.

They are going home. And those, if I may say such a bad word, so-and-so, they're out starting the radio. They were [INAUDIBLE] to shut down They searched again for a short while and gone. This was a big risk, of course, I made. But well--

Why had you place the mics in the door frames originally? Was it for that particular purpose?

Because I wanted to make-- to have contact with the outside world once I'm cut off. All this was deliberate, quite deliberate.

Which part of Warsaw was this in?

We went into a suburb name, Zoliborz. It's a Z with a dot, O-L-I-B-O-R-Z. And Z with a dot is also zhed. It's confusing.