

04/20/1998

JOKŪBAUSKAS, Norbertas Stasys
Lithuania Documentation Project
Lithuanian
RG-50.473*0021

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Norbertas Stasys Jokūbauskas, a military officer, talks about his duties guarding the Kovno (Kaunas) ghetto and also discusses his participation in two separate mass killings at the Ninth Fort. He explains that while guarding the ghetto, he attempted to rescue a Jewish girl and her mother. With regard to the mass killings at the Ninth Fort, he insists that his duties were comprised of guarding the pile of clothing of the victims as they undressed and that he only fleetingly saw the graves at the Fort. He talks about a few Jewish women he recognized at the Ninth Fort and provides one victim's name. He adamantly asserts that he did not give any orders or participate in the actual shooting during both mass killings at the Ninth Fort. This interview also includes testimony about his military campaigns in Latvia near the end of the war.

[01:] 00:09:05 – [01:] 09:43:12

00:00 – 10:01

[There is a barely audible incidental conversation playing on the tape before the title card is shown. The interview then segues from this conversation and begins officially with questions from the interviewer.] He introduces himself as Norbertas Stasys Jokūbauskas, born on 6 October 1916, in Skuodas. He hesitates to talk about his family, but relents in providing a few details: his brother, now deceased, worked as an engineer in the Building ministry, his younger sister, now deceased, worked as an accountant in a garment factory, and he has two other sisters, one in Canada and one in Alytus. He then details his military service: he joined the army in 1938, attended the war college in Panemunė, in 1939 was promoted to lieutenant and sent to Plungė, near Palanga, in the 6th regiment, with the interned Polish soldiers. He explains that one of his duties was to watch over the officers who lived at the residence of Countess Tiškevičienė. Continues to explain that after some time he left the army and attended university, in the department of law. He says that in 1941, when the Russians arrived, he was conscripted again into the army and given command of a battalion in Kauno Senamiestis (Old town area of Kaunas), that he remembers when the Aleksoto bridge was destroyed and many Russians perished, that he was then assigned to the 13th battalion, which had a bad reputation because of its participation in killings and which received its commands from Karl Jäger.

[01:] 09:43:14 – [01:] 20:16:12

10:01 – 21:00

He explains that the 13th battalion was ordered to guard the ghetto, that he was a lieutenant, commander of the regiment of guards, that he organized the guards, that sale of goods and exchanges occurred between the guards and Jews, though he did not heed this; he describes the location and environment of the ghetto and also the order of the guards. He tells of a situation when one day while visiting his friends, the Kėvalaitis family, on Žemaičių street in Kaunas, he came upon a young Jewish girl, a student, who was the daughter of Doctor Baronienė (the spelling of the name indicates that she is a married woman, wife of Mr. Baronas) and that he offered to let both her and her mother out of the ghetto. He continues to tell the story by saying

that he made all of the necessary arrangements to set them free through a gate, but that at the appointed time, the daughter came without the mother, who refused saying these words, "What happens to all of the Jews, may it also happen to me," and so they did not leave the ghetto, or if they did, he does not know. He explains that if he were caught setting Jews free from the ghetto that he would be tried as a traitor and sentenced to death, that he took a big risk by attempting this escape, that he had to send away his soldiers, though the soldiers did not ask questions because soldiers have no right to think for themselves, and that he would have saved more Jews if the opportunity arose. He then says that his battalion was sent to the war front.

[01:] 20:16:14 – [1:] 27:56:20

21:00 – 29:00

He tells about the autumn of 1941 through the spring of 1942 when his battalion was sent to Zapole (Latvia), that they dug bunkers there, that they were sent on reconnaissance missions. He describes the battalion's first battle in Russia, that there were those who defiled Russian prisoners, they would poke out their eyes and fill them with cement; he insists that he did not participate in this, that the prisoners were interrogated in Russian, yet he did not speak Russian, that he often set several of the prisoners free, that there were occasions when the soldiers stole from the corpses, but he did not participate in this.

[1:] 27:57:24 – [1:] 36:26:20

29:01 – 37:51

He explains that he was promoted to Major, that after the battles, the Germans would arrive for an inspection and that they were satisfied, gave them cognac, that cognac was readily available in the Verpflegung (rations); he tells of a incident when the group drank too much and he insulted his commander, Major **Blunek** and was subsequently transferred to another Lithuanian battalion. He continues that there he received orders to retreat toward **Polock [Polotsk]** and to burn down everything on the way [*he gestures to imitate shooting an automatic weapon*] with incendiary bullets. He tells of the time when a Russian bomb carrier crashed in the central square of a small city, though he does not remember the name of the city. He explains that there were Danish soldiers serving with them; that one of them died in the bombing, and how the battalion was ordered to retreat because they were being bombarded by the Russians. He details the route of the retreat, though he sometimes struggles to remember exact names and locations, he mentions the following: they marched toward Daugavpils (in Latvia), near the Gauja river, then they were sent to the north toward Limbaži where they were attacked by Russians; he explains that he was on horseback and the soldiers marched on foot. He continues to say that the Russians pushed them back toward Saulkrasti (Latvia), the battalion passed through Rīga [Riga] and was then sent to fight the partisans and then ordered to go to Rytprūsiai (East Prussia).

Box 1, Tape 2

[02:] 00:40:12 – [02:] 08:38:18

00:35 – 08:53

He explains that his battalion was sent to **Paviluostas [Paveluostas] Pāvilosta** (Latvia) for an exchange of weapons, though when they arrived and stood in formation, they saw tank barrels pointed at them through a fence. He remembers how some Prussians came over and imparted the

04/20/1998

following sentiment: that the German state was spilling blood for a new Europe and that the Lithuanians had made a mistake, then the soldiers were taken to a prison camp and the officers were arrested and made to surrender their weapons. He explains that he was allowed to visit his soldiers in the prison camp and that once someone offered to him and to Captain Armonas an opportunity to escape to Sweden, to take a Latvian sailboat to Gotland and then a Lithuanian boat to Sweden; he says that he refused to go because he did not want to leave his soldiers behind, although, several men from the company of Lieutenant Vainauskas were able to escape up until the point when a Latvian, who did not make it onto the boat, went to the Germans. He explains that the Germans searched for the culprits, that Lieutenant Vainauskas's troops did not betray him, though eight or ten men were arrested, interrogated, and then seven were sentenced to death. He explains that the Lithuanian soldiers were to carry out the death sentence and he talks in details about the execution. He goes on to say that the battalion was sent to Bartuva (Lithuanian) [Bārta (Latvian)] to relieve the Germans in February or March.

[02:] 08:39:21 – [2:] 12:28:15

08:54 – 12:53

He confirms that the battalion was surrounded during the march and there was no way to escape. He then talks about an incident in a town near Bartuva [Bārta], near the river that flows into the Liepaja [Liepājas] lake with Russians on one side of the river and Lithuanians and Germans on the other side, and when the Russians tried to ford the river and the Germans beat them back; explains that lower ranked soldiers who were presumed culprits were sent to gather up the corpses, that the gendarme, the war police kept a careful watch over everything. He explains that they were in this location from February until May 9th, when they were told to wave white flags, to surrender. He remembers that near that river there was another Lithuanian Wehrmacht battalion and that he heard that Lieutenant Kamičaitis perished there.

[2:] 12:29:16 – [2:] 21:45:02

12:54 – 22:32

He continues saying that after the battalion was told to raise a white flag, to surrender and give up their weapons and become prisoners, they escaped toward **Paveluostas [Paviluosta]** Pāvilosta (Latvia), that he came upon some Germans who offered to take him along on their boat, but he again refused because he did not want to leave his troops behind, and they continued to run away. He recounts another incident when he came upon a Russian officer who apprehended him and took him to be questioned where he was then set free; he explains that after this inspection he was taken to the city of Saldus (Latvia) where he pretended that he had never served in the army, said that he was digging ditches at the front lines; he points out that during this inspection process his name on his passport was written incorrectly- Stanislovas Jokūbauskas, and then he was set free.

[02:] 21:47:04 – [02:] 29:32:06

22:35 – 30:39

He continues to talk about the journey from the city of Saldus (Latvia) to Lithuania: he stopped in Ylakai (Lithuania) at the home of farmer; he describes in detail how he rewrote his correct name in his passport- Norbertas Jokūbauskas. He notes that his German medals were never found and never taken away from him. He then continues to talk about the journey back to Lithuania, to his mother's birthplace in Lenkimai, that he was stopped on the way by a soldier,

04/20/1998

but he successfully reached Alsėdžiai, where he was then apprehended and told to relocate to Telšiai. He remembers an incident when he exchanged shoes with a Captain.

[02:] 29:32:15 – [02:] 36:20:15

30:40 – 37:44

He returns to his life in Telšiai, lamenting that he did not know anyone there, but that a friend from school helped him get a job as a teacher. He then explains that he had to travel to Kretinga to confirm his war billet where he stated that he served in the army, in the clerk's company, with a commander's rank, then he was let go and went back to Telšiai, where he was then elected the chairman of the district. He remembers when he was told about the trial of the partisans in Telšiai, Captain Simaškas was sentenced to death, though perhaps he was not executed, and that another one of the partisans was sentenced to 25 years. He expounds on his duties as chairman of the district.

Box 1, Tape 3

[03:] 00:40:13 – [03:] 10:47:24

00:36 – 11:09

The conversation returns to the topic of the ghetto in Kaunas. He asserts that as he was guarding the ghetto, he did not know in advance that the Jews would be killed; he states that the mass killing at the Ninth Fort took place in October or November of 1941, that the Jews had to undress before being shot, that he was stationed at the pile of clothing to guard it so that soldiers would not steal the clothes. He remembers that a young Jewish girl recognized him because they had danced together while at gymnasium (high school, gymnasium indicates this was during the period of Lithuanian independence), that she asked him to rescue her, that he does not remember her name, but he could not save her because there were German Gestapo walking around. He also remembers another Jewish woman who recognized him and gave him her earrings and rings. He continues to describe how the Germans ordered everyone to undress, even elderly women, that the Germans forced Lithuanians to do the shooting, that someone suggested that he take a few shots, but that he refused saying that they could not give him orders because he was an officer. He describes the size of the graves and the process of the killings: the pits were very large and long, that the Jews were made to lie down in the graves and then were shot from above; he expresses that this was all very horrible. He then goes on to describe in detail the public execution by Germans in Kaunas of three local NKVD Soviet security force/Soviet secret police (Народный Комиссариат Внутренних Дел) and the size and behavior of the crowd that had gathered to watch the execution.

[03:] 10:49:22 – [03:] 18:25:01

11:11 – 19:05

He maintains that he was at the Ninth Fort on two separate occasions; he explains that Lithuanian soldiers led the Jews from the ghetto to the Fort, that he stood guard over the pile of clothing at the Fort, there were soldiers stationed around the Fort, that the Germans ordered the Jews to undress; he insists that he did not give any orders, that he just guarded over the clothes so that the soldiers would not steal them; he remembers how a German officer violently beat an old woman and forced her to undress. He talks again about the Jewish woman who gave him her pearl

04/20/1998

earrings and two rings, and how she told him that he was a good person; he reveals that on his way home that day he tossed away and shattered those earrings and that he got very drunk that night. He suddenly remembers the name of another Jewish woman he recognized at the Fort: **Sore [Sore] Alperaité** who was also called **Sonia**, who was a student at the gymnasium, and that he danced with her. He then goes on to very crudely and vividly express his opinions about interactions between men and women.

[03:] 18:25:03 – [03:] 30:24:13

19:06 – 31:34

He explains that he does not remember exactly when he found out that the Jews were going to be killed at the Ninth Fort, that the morning of he was ordered to go along and to guard the pile of clothing; he explains that the distance from the ghetto to the Fort was about three or four kilometers; he repeats that he does not remember when he was told about the killings, that he was not ordered to shoot, that the site of the shootings was not visible from where he was standing because it was behind a hill. He presumes that the Jews knew that they would be killed because the shots were clearly audible. He talks about the behavior of the Jews: they did not resist, they undressed calmly, went along like a herd of sheep; he states that he did not know if any of the Jews had been beaten, that the guards were armed with guns, that he was just carrying out the command from the Germans to watch over the clothing. The interviewer tells him that he is the only surviving person who was present at and saw the Ninth Fort. He continues to describe what he saw: the people undressing; he states that he does not remember if Lithuanian soldiers or the Gestapo led the people to the killing site and he does not know the number of Jews in each group that was led over to the site, but he estimates that there were 100-200 people in a group; he repeats that the company commander, Anatolas Dagys, told him to guard the clothes. He comments that the soldiers did not want to shoot people because they did not receive anything in return, that there was talk among the soldiers that those who did the shooting would have to be imprisoned, that it was advantageous for the soldiers to guard the ghetto because in the sale and exchange of goods between Jews and villagers, when they let them through the fence, they received something in return, though he insists that he did not participate in this and only saw evidence of it. He explains that the Germans gave Jewish goods and clothes to the soldiers. He goes on to explain that there were several small piles of clothing where the people were told to undress, that he went to take a look at the graves which were about 50 meters long, that many people fit inside these graves, that there were not many shooters and that several of them ran away but they were not punished for running away from the shooting; he talks about how one officer told him to go “clean his pistol” by firing a few shots, but he says that he refused to do so. *[a man appears in the frame and adjusts his microphone]*

[03:] 30:29:24 – [03:] 36:20:15

34:40 – 37:45

He explains that there was one road to enter into the Fort and one location where people were undressed; admits that he didn't know whether Germans or Lithuanians drove the Jews; explains that the shootings went on from nine or ten o'clock in the morning until about four o'clock in the early evening, only during daylight hours, that the people had not yet arrived when he went to stand guard, that there were about 100 people in each group. He says that he does not know if the pile of clothing and belongings was gathered up and taken away, insists that he did not notice whether or not the pile of clothes was large, that the battalion did not take any of the things, but

did receive things from the Germans. He comments saying that the soldiers did not want to participate in the shooting because they did not receive anything in return, though there were those monsters among them who did willingly participate in the killings. *[takes out a cigarette]*

Box 1, Tape 4

[04:] 00:12:04 – [04:] 10:09:13

00:00 – 10:27

[a conversation is taking place while the tape card is being displayed] He explains that he was present at the Ninth Fort on two occasions: the first time during the mass killing and the second time when people who were not from Lithuania were brought to the fort, that he saw Jew with an Iron Cross and through that the Germans would let him go, but they did not. He says that he read somewhere that there were about 500-1,000 people killed that day, but that he does not know specifically. He says that the people were not speaking Lithuanian. He explains that a few weeks went by between these two killings during which he was stationed at the same place both times. He talks about the Tūbelio namai (Tūbelio manor in Kaunas), in Žaliakalnis (a neighborhood in Kaunas) where Jewish girls were brought to service the officers sexually, although he insists he did not go to this home. He then expounds on his own experiences with women and again very crudely expresses his negative views about women. He remarks that beautiful Jewish girls did not end up in the ghettos because they were taken to the Tūbelio namai or to Germany for the officers; he tells a vile anecdote pertaining to military rank and the sharing of women; he says that was told that the beautiful Jewish girls were separated from the rest of the group at the Ninth Fort; he then speaks rather unclearly for a while and it is difficult to understand if he admits to having visited the Tūbelio namai out of curiosity.

[04:] 10:11:15 – [04:] 18:23:12

10:29 – 19:01

He then talks about the second mass killing at the Ninth Fort in which he participated; he explains that the victims were not from Lithuania, that he does not know where they were brought from, he guesses from Austria, France, and Czechoslovakia. He explains that the commands came from Karl Jäger, though he did not see him, and he repeats the phrase in German “an order is an order.” He explains that some of his soldiers were among those who did the shooting and that several ran away from the shooting. He adamantly insists that he was not interested in seeing any of this because this sort of murder is incomprehensible and also he insists several times over that he is not lying. He says that he got very drunk after the killings and then returned to his home on Utenos Street; he talks about his situation as a military officer. He explains that he wore a green German uniform with a Lithuanian flag on his left shoulder, that he was a part of the “Litauisch battalion” and the Lithuanians commanded the battalion, the Germans were the commanders of the Wehrmachte regiment.

[04:] 18:26:18 – [04:] 28:14:21

19:05 – 29:17

He talks again about the second mass killing at the Ninth Fort: explains that the Germans ordered people to undress, asserts that he did not issue any commands and that he does not remember if there were any children. *[he stands up to go to the restroom, there is a pause and a cut in the*

04/20/1998

filming, then the interview resumes] He insists that he is telling the truth saying that at his age there would be no reason to lie; he admits that his battalion shot seven of their own, one of whom was from his father's hometown. *[lights a cigarette and starts smoking]* He contends that it is very difficult to recall details after so many years have passed, that he cannot say from where the people who were transported hailed, guesses that there were about 500-1,000 people, and says that he does not know where the corpses were put. He repeats that he does not remember if there were any children among the victims, or if the groups were of mixed gender, that he did not participate in the killings and did not give any orders. He again talks about the Jewish woman who gave him her earrings and told him that he was a good person. He mentions that it was cold that day, that the sun was not shining, that people's fears were greater than the cold. He talks again about the German who ordered an elderly woman to undress and beat her; then he discusses the responsibilities of a soldier and rambles on for a while.

[04:] 28:14:21 – [04:] 36:25:18

29:17 – 37:48

He admits that he told his classmates about the Ninth Fort, that he filled out a form stating that he was present, that he read an article in a newspaper that mentioned his name stating that he was there. He explains that there were both Germans and (Lithuanian) soldiers at the killing site, but the he does not know who did the shooting and how. He says that he would not recognize the Fort if they drove to it now, that many years have gone by and he doesn't remember; he begins speculating about the size of the graves and continually repeats that it is hard for him to remember because so much time has passed, that he viewed it for only a short while. He discusses the issue that people don't believe him, also stating that the Soviet secret police did not believe him and asked him why he didn't shoot people. The interviewer asks him if he went to take a look at the killings in the beginning or at the end, he replies that he was the first one there, then when he is asked this question again, he says that he walked over to the killing site in the middle of the day. He says that he read somewhere that 10,000 people were killed.