

Interview with KNUD DYBY
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Q. Today's Wednesday, June 6th, 1991. I'm Judith Backover of the Holocaust Oral History Project, interviewing Knud Dyby at Congregation Beth Shalom in San Francisco. With us today is Tamara Reinen.

Hello, Knud. I'd like to ask you to start by telling us where and when you were born.

A. I was born on the Peninsula of Jutland in Denmark, in the city of Randers. It's a town that's about 70,000 population at the time I was born in 1915. It was probably about 40,000 people. My father had a print shop and after formal schooling in Denmark, I became an apprentice in typography and general printing and advertising. And during that time I was also -- we also had a night class, a school at night -- technical high school -- actually five years.

My hobby at that time, between looking at

ladies, was to do some yachting. I had a very nice small sailboat called PUFF-- PUST in Danish, and I had something like 22 silver cups before I was 21, for sailing.

At the age of 18 or 19, you have to appear in front of a military commission for compulsory service in the Army or Navy and I must have looked pretty good to the Commission because they chose me for the -- to serve the Danish King as a Guardsman in the Guards Regiment. And there are only two out of every county that serves in that Regiment.

So one day I had to meet in Copenhagen at the Guards Regiment, and it was -- I mean we also -- not only, it's not only a Guards Regiment, it also serves as a -- like a military service so the schooling is quite hard because we have not only to learn all the military technicalities, but we also have to train in the service as Guardsman in guarding the King and the castles. And of course we were proud the day we received our beautiful uniform. And it was quite a treat to walk down the street of Copenhagen with a full music of the band and to be 24 hours every three days at the various castles where

the King was.

It was at that time King Christian X of Denmark. And the royal family -- we were almost -- I won't say treated like family, but we were very much loved by the royal family. The Queen would sometimes come down in the garden and talk to us at night. And I remember a couple of times I had to lift the grandchildren of the King Christian X up to the King on his very, very big horse and you know, he didn't smile often, but when he saw his grandchildren, it would be like any other grandfather in the world. He would smile even to the Guardsman.

I'm telling this because at that time, all -- I got to tell a little guard story and that was -- in 1937 I served. In 1938 we were called in again because the Germans at that time, they invaded Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia and Alsace Lorraine. And we were called in again to have a full force of Danish military at that time and we were quartered about 20 miles north of Copenhagen in the beautiful seaside village. And it was my privilege to be invited into the office of Karen Blixen, the author of Out of Africa. And she would sit at night and serve us sherry, her good sherry, and crack nuts, and

tell a story from Africa.

But the Germans fought on and on and I found myself being in the printing trade, and there wasn't too much to do because we didn't have any merchandise to sell in Denmark. The Germans had already robbed us of that by the invasion of Denmark on the 9th of April 1940, just one day before they went out and invaded Norway. So I didn't have much to do and they asked for more Guardsmen of the Danish Guards Regiment, whether we would like to join the state police. And I thought that might be a nice thing to do, and I joined the state police department after a short schooling in the police academy.

The first two or three years -- no, two and a half years in Denmark there were fairly peaceful because the Germans wanted very little trouble in Denmark. They needed our food products, they needed our -- they needed transportation of their people up to Norway, and also they needed a place for -- as a good example and also for rest and recreation, and Denmark was ideally suited for that. And also I think in some respect, Hitler and Goehring, even Himmler, they kind of snapped for the Nordic race and they, I think, wanted Denmark as a

good example, and they gave the Danish government in 1940 non-aggression law -- a treat at this where we had our own government, we had our own judicial system, we had our King. So the first two or three years in Denmark were rather peaceful. We had enough to eat. We didn't have coffee, we didn't have enough sugar, we didn't have enough of the niceties of life, but we did have enough to eat, and it wasn't a bad time at all in Denmark.

But we didn't like to be occupied. In fact, we never cared too much or we didn't care too much for the German under the Nazi and it's a historical fact that Denmark had been invaded by Germans in history many, many times. So we didn't have any great love for the Germans, not even before they became Nazis because -- it's different today where we have a fantastic exchange of trade and also all kinds of cultural exchange between Denmark and Germany today.

But at that time we, and I say "we" --- a few courageous Danes started to fight the Germans in sabotages. And in the beginning, small things I remember as a policeman in uniform, we would drive down the street of Copenhagen and we found a

recruitment office of the -- for the Nazi party and we would throw ^{bricks?} pimens through the window and then we would drive around the block and then we would come back and make a report of some absolutely impossible troublemakers, what they had done, and we, of course, sent that into the chief of police that we had found out that some troublemaker had spoiled the windows of the office -- the German recruiting office.

But later on, we started on a part of the -- even a part of the police department, but more so younger people started many, many sabotage acts. We could help them in some respect by getting instructions and also supplying weapons where we could find them. And we also -- the Danish government were forced to have some Danish guards at the various factories that produced merchandise for the Germans and we knew about them and we would contact them and sometimes even pull them aside when sabotage act was planned. It's a fact that sometimes you would -- we would be careful not to have the saboteurs spoil too much of the machinery in the various factories because we knew that some day the war would be over and we would probably have to pay dearly for the sabotage they did. So we suggested to

some of the underground troops to -- not to spoil the machinery, but to spoil the generators outside that supplied the energy to the factories. And that was a very good, very wise way to do it because the Germans had you very shortness of what you call magnetic steel to make generators from.

And that brings me to a point that when I -- in 1946 and 47, we're sitting at an import company in New York, some of the Danish companies asked us whether we could get some magnetic steel for generators. And in 1946 and '47 it was absolutely impossible to obtain any but we, my friends and I, we sent a letter to the Allegheny Steel company's president, and told him that we were the ones that had sabotaged the generators during the war in order to help the Allied and he should help us get some of the magnetic steel back to make generators from. And we got an allocation.

Q. If I could ask you to tell me -- it's now about 1942 by your reckoning, and if I could ask you, Knud, to tell me when you started knowing what the situation was elsewhere in Europe and what sort of reports were reaching Denmark about the Nazis about --

A. About the concentration camps?

Q. All of that, yes.

A. Yes. You know, I would say Denmark is a very cosmopolitan place and we would like to have our information. We would not only pick up BBC from London and we would have radio and also in Denmark, in total there was something like, besides daily newspapers that were still published, but were controlled by the Germans, the underground made something like 700 different underground newspapers from duplicated little sheets to actual printing. So we were -- in Denmark, we were really informed, and you even trust one of these little underground newspapers more than you trust your daily newspapers when they are controlled.

And our information in Denmark, we could not or let's put it this way -- the editors of the underground papers could not find enough damaging material on the Germans. So they -- I'm sure that we got all the details of what happened all over Europe, not the least of the camps and the way the Germans treated not only the Jewish but also the gay, the gypsies, and more than anything, the Polish people that they kind of called "the second class mankind."

So we knew everything that was going on and also the underground newspapers would tell us of all the sabotages that were made and what were actually spoiled.

Also at that time, the Germans, in order to stop the sabotage, of course they were not sitting idle, so they made contrasabotage. They would, they in fact blew up part of the Tivoli Gardens. They blew up some office buildings of well-known Danish companies, some apartment buildings and some very innocent people of well-known and outstanding individuals would be killed at night as antiterroism to the sabotage acts that were done by the Danes.

In August 1943, they were so mad that they wanted a different Danish government and they wanted to -- they wanted the police department to arrest and to stop the sabotage acts. And they made a curfew all over Denmark. You had to be out and away from the streets from eight o'clock in the evening to six o'clock in the morning.

And here's the first -- not the first, but here's a very important point that maybe sets the Danes away from the other parts of Europe. All of Denmark striked. We stopped everything and that

means included electricity, water, supplies, everything. You've never seen a country so absolutely thinking one way about how to reply to the Germans and to the new rules that they wanted to put forward. And the strange thing was that the Germans after -- and the German head commands under the -- under, I think, at that time, Dr. Best, actually gave in to the Danes.

And we kept our -- we changed our government, but we kept our government. But we still kept our police force. But a few days later, the Danish Army and Navy were interned in the Danish camp in the southern part of Jutland. And the weapons were taken away from them, but unfortunately the Danish Navy succeeded in sinking their own ships because they didn't want to give it over to the Germans. So they put them on the bottom of the sea except for one or two that found their way over to our neighbors, to Sweden.

In Denmark there's this beautiful story about King Christian X carrying the Star of David on his uniform. He never did that because they never asked the Danes to carry -- the Danish Jews to put on the Star of David. But the King, on a request from a

representative of Denmark from Hitler and Himmler that Germany would like to solve the Jewish problem in Denmark, the King replied, "We don't have a Jewish problem in Denmark. We're all Danes." And on a telegram from Hitler on his seventieth birthday, the King just wrote a telegram, said, "Accepted. King Christian X." And that made Hitler absolutely, furiously mad.

But regardless, the sabotage got more and more intense and the Germans found out that they couldn't trust the police department, but that's a little too early on that.

In October, in 1943, the first of October, I was in service, I think. So very, very well-trained German Gestapo and police troops came up to Copenhagen to round up the Danish Jews. We had been informed not at least by a German. A German that was in charge of sea transport by the name of Duckwitz and he informed the Danish prime minister of what was going to happen and the Jews would be arrested and sent to Germany in the concentration camp. And it spread like -- the news spread like wildfire all over Denmark and in just one or two days, all the Jews -- I mean, some 7,500 in

Copenhagen were out of their homes and into the homes of friends, into farms, any hospitals, any churches, away from their home simply. And the Germans at that time, rounding up everybody, have gone driving all over Copenhagen and having the -- that was from the -- from the synagogue, the main synagogue in Copenhagen where they had stolen the lists. They only caught about 340 Jewish people. The oldest of them being an old lady of 102 and the youngest one being a child of two years old. But the last of the Jews were sitting in with their friends, neighbors and in the hospitals where they would be put to bed.

And, I mean there's a story from one of the hospitals that one of the nurses said to the doctor, "What do we put on the bulletin here above this patient?" And the doctor just left and said, "Why don't you put German measles?"

But they were protected and from there on -- I'll have to change a little bit of my story in this respect, that being in the police department, we heard it, too. And we did what we could to inform people about what was happening. And one day, a friend of mine came over and said, "Hey, Knud, we got to have some Jewish people, my next door neighbor, a

merchant from Forsder ali by the name of Valdemar Jacobsen and his family. They have to get out of their apartment and they have to go to Sweden and you know your way around the harbor because you know some fishermen from the time you fixed our boats. And can you please take them out?"

I said "Naturally. However, I'm in uniform. I got to go out and ask the police commissioner that I can take a few hours off."

It was in the evening of October 1st and I went up to the police commissioner by the name of Benson. I said, "Please, commissioner, my grandmother died again and I need to take a couple of hours off." And he knew what was going on and he said, "Don't you think your grandmother would appreciate that you had one of the police cars?" I said, "No, I don't think that's a good idea, but thank you anyhow."

And I met in the evening -- I met lots of old people and I only knew one of them and there were children and they had lots of luggage with them, so they looked like a better tourist group instead of refugees. But we had to relieve them of some of the baggages. But I went on the way with them like a

tourist guide and instead of taking the taxi or police car, we split up and took street cars and on a prearranged meeting place, I would gather all of them again and get them down to the harbor which is right in the middle of the Copenhagen harbor. It's called Nordhavn or Northern Harbor, and there we would hide the families in the shacks that were normally used by the fishermen for their nets and for their tools and equipment.

In the meantime, naturally we had to be on the guard not to run into any Gestapo or the German soldiers and also fortunately, Denmark had a Coast Guard, but that was manned by the Danish police force. So being a policeman myself, I could approach colleagues of mine, contact the Coast Guard or Police Guard, Harbor Guard, and every time a German patrol boat would go north, we would send our boats south, and vice versa.

Unfortunately in October, the weather can be pretty terrible. In fact, sometimes it is all clear year round and especially it was our luck that the evenings were not the beautiful clear nights that you have in the summertime in Denmark. But it was pretty bad weather and this way we could hide the

boats that were sent off to Sweden.

Don't let it sound as if I'm the only one. There were many, many people doing the same thing all the way from Elsinore up north and down to the southern of Sealand. There were many, many people helping out and I don't think it took more than between 14 days and a month before all the Jews were in safety in Sweden where they were well received by the Swedes.

Of course, Sweden too had to be very careful what they did because they were a neutral country and they had to be careful not to tread too hard on the German feet because they didn't want to be invaded. So we had to be very careful. They didn't allow us to get any weapons out of Sweden and there was other things that we had to be careful with.

But in the meantime, the Danes that came into Sweden and not only the Jewish people, but also saboteurs, journalists, politicians that were -- that would have been arrested by the Germans and preferred the safety of Sweden, got enough money together, mostly by Jewish -- Danish Jewish donations so that in Sweden the Danish -- the Danes we had sent over

there first would buy their own boats so that we could meet halfway at the Swedish-Danish territorial waters. We didn't have to send our boats all the way into the ports of Sweden. There they could be reported to Gestapo that they had been in there. So we had a fantastic arrangement with our friends in Sweden, and the Jews were in safety.

And we, at that time, my own work would be more to gather information letters, photographs besides getting saboteurs over to Sweden and also Allied airmen that might land after the trip to -- over the Danish waters or country where, after shooting in Germany, they would crash in either at sea or in the Danish countryside. And before the Germans caught them, we would try to get them over to Sweden and we transported about -- and when I say "we," that is the Danish-Swedish refugee organization that had the headquarters in Sweden actually. But I had an office force in Denmark where I stayed all the time. I didn't take too many trips myself on the sound, although I was a sailor and I liked it very much -- sailing. But I found that I knew too many people and too many things and too many names and I didn't want to be caught by a Gestapo and

receive the treatment before you could tell them anything.

You know, I really did not know a lot of the Jewish people I took care of and I didn't know a lot of the saboteurs I sent over to Sweden. I found that it would -- you know, first of all, you wouldn't have any photographs. You wouldn't have any written material and you did not want to know more than absolutely necessary. The only thing that was of any value was to save these people and to get them off. It didn't matter who they were. You didn't want to see them in concentration camps.

I think that some credit that we got to give them beside saving 97, 98 percent of Danish Jews but as soon as they, the 340 and later it was up to 400 people that were sent from Denmark -- Jews that were from Denmark, to concentration camps. They were sent to Reichenstag, and although the Germans protected -- and many times the Danish government went down right away and insisted that the Jews in Reichenstag were treated better than the rest of the Jews were treated.

And when it was impossible for the government directly to interfere and send material

down, the Red Cross and private persons were absolutely sure to send packages down to Reichenstag. We know that many Danish people in concentration camps could help other people in the concentration camps with a little bit of food that they had.

Only 30 or 40 people of Danish descent passed away in concentration camps and most of them were actually by old age or would normally be sick. When they came back to Denmark, no, I mean -- I'm jumping a little bit, but I'd like to point out that when the Jews that were sent to Sweden came back to Denmark, they would find that their stores, their factories, and their apartments had been protected by Danish organizations, not the least by women's organizations in Denmark that would actually go in and clean the apartments. And the Jews came back. There were cases where the neighbors would have a full meal waiting for them in their own home, so they didn't suffer any great loss in Denmark in that respect.

Of course the sabotages in Denmark from 1944 until the end of the war in '45 got absolutely worse and worse. And in -- on September 1944, the

Germans had sent up a ship to the part of Copenhagen, ship called KOMITA. And on the morning about -- oh, yeah, in the morning about 10 or eleven o'clock, they blew an air alarm all over Copenhagen, all over Denmark so to speak. And they surrounded all the Danish police stations by German soldiers and Gestapo, the machine guns and cannons and they arrested between 17 and 1,800 of the Danish State Police. And unfortunately sent them down to Neuengamme and Flossenburg where many died.

To me it's still unbelievable that we would have all kinds of information before the Jews were arrested, but our own police force were really surprised. And I have a suspicion that maybe the police all thought that like the military, the police department -- the policemen would be sent to concentration camp in Denmark. But this time they were sent to Buchenwald and Neuengamme and were not treated very well.

And after that the Civil Air Patrols in Denmark established a kind of a civil police department and things calmed down in Denmark, but with lots of sabotage and German counter-sabotage. There were about 700 railroad sabotages in Denmark to

stop the German transport of soldiers either to Norway or from Norway down. And you know, we knew that the days of the Nazis were almost over and we got more and more courageous and we did more and more sabotage and more and more anti-German activities until May 5, 1945.

For many, many years I didn't -- we didn't speak much about what we did during the war. It wasn't very popular to talk about it because the people that participated, maybe five or 10,000 active saboteurs, everybody said, "Well, we all did something." And many, many people did something and the ones that didn't do anything, for them it was not a nice subject to discuss. And so we didn't. For many, many years you didn't talk about underground activities.

But now everything comes out of the closet and everybody's talking about -- the survivors are telling their stories, the rescuers are telling their stories. And the reason I'm telling stories is the fact of the gratitude that I have met with some of the Jewish people. I had a few cards in Denmark by -- thank you notes, but it's only the last five or six years that really -- we are -- some Jews, people

really came out to find the people that had helped, the so-called "righteous rescuers."

I have made a few speeches and again I met so much gratitude. I mentioned before there was an article in the Pacific Sun about me and a gentleman called up. Mr. Sugarman called up and said, "Knud, I read about you in the newspapers. I'd like to send you a gift for what you did."

I said, "George, you cannot give me a gift, but we can have lunch together."

And we formed a friendship. In other places I made a speech, in Washington, D.C., an alumni teachers' conference -- and one teacher invited me to Virgin Islands and another one introduced me to his wife and said, "Any time you're in New York, we have a hotel and we want you to become our guest any time you are in New York."

A month and a half ago I received an invitation to go to Israel, everything paid by an attorney in Chicago who has a home in Rancho Mirage, in Chicago, in London, and in Israel. And he took 27 rescuers that had not been, like the rescuers in Europe were over the years, invited down to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. And somebody forgot that some

of us had immigrated in the meantime so Sarner & Company found a lot of people from -- not a lot of people, but 27 people from Canada and United States and we were the ones invited to Israel on an absolutely fantastic trip. Some of them met some people that they had saved and we were all on the -- by a fantastic occasion at the Yad Vashem where they put the flag with our names on the Avenue of the Righteous -- of the Nations, that will be there forever. And we received a medal from the Yad Vashem, but it was a fantastic experience.

Again, and the gratitude is something that I want to thank for, and I don't think I did anything that was unusual, anything I shouldn't have done and I just feel happy for the little things I did -- for the gratitude that I met.

Q. How many Jews were brought from Denmark to Sweden on the boats?

A. Jews of Danish descent -- there were about between 7,500 and 8,000, most of them out of Copenhagen where most of them lived. In all, total, we had 19,000 Danish refugees in Sweden, saboteurs, politicians, army officers, policemen, people that had to flee from Gestapo.

And I should talk to you a little bit about some of the fishermen because that was quite a -- you know, some part of the sound between Denmark and Sweden is only 15 miles of seaway which is easy to control. But also some other parts are 30 miles of sea. One of the reasons that the Germans didn't stop the traffic totally was the fact that they needed food products, and the fishermen, we had to force them even the ones that took refugees over, to do some fishing so that the Germans would not find the boats without fish in them. One of the fishermen, though, had a cut fish that he kind of favored. It had been in his boat, in his water -- what do you call it? -- the dam where they would have some fresh fish and they would have a steady water supply, and this particular cut fish was sold with antique old hair or at least seaweed and he actually had to buy some of the fish in Sweden to bring over to Denmark in order to -- because he was too busy taking care of our mail and our various things that we sent over to Sweden.

And a lot of the mail to Sweden would actually include money that the Jews or the Danes in Sweden had transferred to Denmark to live on and also

to assist the rescue operations and the underground operations. And this is another place we had to -- the Jewish people, the Danish Jews that went to Sweden donated a lot of money to the underground.

Another -- we had a lot of problems when we had to meet the German boats -- no, Swedish boats on the border, the territorial border between Denmark and Sweden. And we had various ways to send letters and messages over with positions where we should meet the next day or the next week. And one other way we sent it over was on a German military transport that went over the city of Malmo in Sweden. And on the second or third car of each train underneath we would have a message to our people that would pick them up in Sweden. For some time, another way we got messages was that the Germans still had diplomatic airplane service to Stockholm and we found that the most idiotic thing was that the stop blocks in front of the wheels, you know, on a windy day they put blocks in front of the wheels, we had them hollowed out so we could put messages inside. Of course no pilot in his right mind would ever think of putting a stop block inside the airplane and take-off with it, but no German ever thought that that was a completely

idiotic thing to do.

But this way we got a lot of messages over to Sweden for sometime. Other ways we would, on fishing boats, we would hollow out the masts. We would put things down below the floorboards, paste it to the floorboards and when the Germans knew naturally that some saboteurs were leaving Denmark for safety in Sweden. And they would, at one time, Gestapo would train specific German sheperds to sniff out whether there were passengers hidden under the floorboards in the boats, and we had one of the laboratories in Copenhagen concoct a powder with dried blood, albumin and quinine and many other things that would absolutely stop the scent of the German sheperd. Their noses would be filled up with this powder and for months and months they couldn't see whether there were any passengers or anything down in the ships.

For any own part, when the Germans surrounded the Danish police stations, I was sent home at six o'clock in the morning and I heard the air alarm. And it was a law, a rule in the police department to have at least two contingencies of men in an air alarm. So it was a rule that I had to go

back in the police station from where I had left at six o'clock in the morning. But I took my good time because I thought everything I'm going to do is to write out lists of who's coming in and who's not, so I wasn't in any particular hurry. But passing through the streets of Copenhagen, I thought, what was going on? And I saw some police stations, and not the least my own, being surrounded by Gestapo and German soldiers, cannons and machine guns. And at that time, my poor colleagues had already been put on trucks and transported down to the ship in the Port of Copenhagen.

At the station, I knew that we had, not a house, used for storing equipment for the police station. And that was not surrounded by Germans and I went in there and I knew we had all kinds of printed material, forms, identification cards, passports, driver's license, everything was stored together with all the stamps that were necessary to make out identification. So I put everything in a great big sack and unfortunately, it was too big, I couldn't have it on my bicycle. So I went outside and I hailed a taxicab and I am dangling my sack, driving down one of the streets in Copenhagen. And

all of a sudden, the chauffeur, the driver, turned around. He said, "Do you have your identification?"

I said, "Yes, I have 400." And did he stop fast. He said, "There's a rush going on down here. The whole street is guarded by Germans. So first of all, let's put your identification papers up on the top of the car and second of all, let's see whether we can find our way around the Nazzia." And we did.

For some time, the underground would use all kinds of identification that I had put in the sack. There's copies of it at the Danish Freedom Museum in Copenhagen.

As a Dane and also as a Danish policeman, I have been starting -- what happened to somebody that I feel deserves more credit than he has got and that is Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden. He went down and had a meeting with Himmler. He went down several times, but he had a meeting with Himmler in Lubeck in 1945, in April. At that time, the Germans knew that they didn't have many days of fight left in them and Himmler was kind of negotiating with Bernadotte whether he could send a peace offer to London. In the meantime, Bernadotte, as far as I'm

concerned, had the idea that he wanted to save some of the people in concentration camps from being shot or blown up in the last minute. So he suggested to Himmler that he pick up, during the meeting, the Danish people from the concentration camp and bring them into Sweden. And he organized the right buses on the Red Cross, hundreds and hundreds of buses and he picked up all the Norwegians and all the Danes from two or three concentration camps.

And as a policeman, even underground, I saw the poor people that came out of concentration camps and came in over Denmark. They had to be ferried. The agreement with Bernadotte, between Himmler and Bernadotte, was that they had to be transported to Sweden. In fact, it's quite a joke on Himmler that he told Bernadotte that if Germany won -- when Germany won the war, Bernadotte had to bring the people back to concentration camps again. But we saw what Bernadotte did and we saw the people he saved and not only was it the Danish and the Norwegians, but he saved a lot of other people from the concentration camps. And it was unfortunate that he was killed later.

And I'm not pointing at anything, but

some called him pro-Palestinian, which he was not, but Bernadotte was killed. Nice thing -- I think that he deserved more credit than somebody has given him.

The other, Wallenberg, it's my pleasure to -- when he was in Budapest, it's my pleasure to know Per Anger, who was his secretary in the Swedish Legation and who helped Vanderberg make out all the passports for the many, many Jews in Budapest that was saved by Swedish passports.

Q. I'd like to ask you to talk about a little bit about your nom-de-guerre, as of Carlsen, and what you did under this identity and how you got it. And a little bit more about live in the underground and not as a policeman above board.

A. Actually, you know, in order to be a saboteur and a member of the underground, I think you have to be even an adventuresome -- or you have to be an inventor, you have to be a little bit of everything. Also a fighter. And of course, you have to have a certain kind of mislike of the occupiers -- of the Germans, of the Gestapo, and so it was very easy to make anti-German activities.

Fortunately, some smart people in the

Danish Finance Department took care of us that even after the police were arrested and sent to concentration camps, the rest of us -- the balance that weren't interned -- we still got our salary every month into the bank which the Germans never stopped.

But actually on April a bookshop owner had reported me for anti-German activities to the German general Von Hanneken, so I knew I had to be underground and I lived probably about 16 or 20 different places in Copenhagen. I remember many times you had to -- I actually had a steel plate inside my door, but even that wasn't enough. So I would crawl out of the window and crawl over on the other side of the hallway and sleep in a place there. I mean, a storage room where I had made a cot. So that even if the Germans had come into my apartment, I would still be away from it. The most difficult part of it probably was that I had to urinate out the window which wasn't easy.

But I stayed many different places and in fact, I was invited to stay with the -- not only that I met Karen Blixen, but later on, I was invited to stay with a relative to the Blixen Finecke family in

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Copenhagen and I stayed many, many places. And if people knew it was a dangerous thing to have somebody like myself as a guest, I had no trouble finding places where they would take very good care of me, giving me room and board. And whatever the best a house could supply would be supplied.

It was not a lovely experience in a war time. There's no gray, either white is white or black is black. Either you have an enemy or you have a friend. And fortunately, there were more friends than enemies.

Names -- I don't have a good memory today and I didn't have one at that time, and so I had many, many different names and sometimes I was afraid that if I had been arrested by the Germans, I probably would have been mixing up the names. So I always chose something easy like Paul Petersen, which would be two Ps and then I would be on the force March 1915. So it would be three, four and five. Because I knew my own limitations in that respect and I still do. So I had to make things easy. And fortunately, I could make my own identification card.

That brings me into another -- a little

story where one of my colleagues in the underground, together with another Dane -- no, in fact he was a German that lived in Sweden by the name of Marx. And he was one of the Danes -- was on his way in a boat to be couriers to the underground in Denmark and they were supplied with not only a Swedish but also a Danish identification and of course, they would, when they were bordered by the Germans, they would absolutely insist that they were Swedish people. And they were a little out of their normal route. And then all of a sudden Marx he thought, wait a minute. I got my Danish identification card, and he asked the Germans whether he could relieve himself over the side of the boat. And he got the permission. And he said, "In the meantime, I had to eat my Danish identification and the worse part of it was that the photograph -- it really tasted very, very bad." But they were arrested by Gestapo anyhow. But fortunately, they were let go again because they could prove that they had come from Sweden.

All right. No more stories.

You asked me before about -- more about the Jews people and I actually forgot what I wanted to talk about. Yes, I like to compare because at

Sonoma State where I made a presentation lately, there was a Dutchman that claimed that the Dutch had a -- in comparison to Denmark -- had a pretty bad -- what do you call it -- story because they only saved about 50 percent of the Jews in Holland. Of course, they had 160,000 Jews. It's not like Denmark. They only had 8,000, but it was much, much more difficult in Holland than it was in Denmark to save them.

I would not compare to my participation to sending the Jews over to get them out of their homes and into a car, into a small boat and send them to Sweden. I would not compare it to what it was for the Dutch people to have somebody in an apartment where they had to hide them either in a cabinet or behind, below the floorboards. Not only to hide them, but to get enough food for them, to get medicine for them if they were sick. And I feel the same thing about the Polish peasants and the Polish people that had to hide some of the Germans, not for -- like we did, for months, but for years and years out.

And in Denmark, fortunately most of the people were anti-German. We didn't have much anti-Semitism, very little, and we could trust, in

most cases, we could trust our neighbors. That wasn't the case in Poland and wasn't the case in Holland or in France, and I feel that I have to -- I'm humble in my help to the -- it's nothing compared to the people that had just in their apartment for two and a half to three years and took care of them.

Q. What brought you to the United States?

A. First of all, when you have been occupied and when you have been kind of imprisoned in your own country for five years, you like to come out and see what's going on outside your own country. And the economical situation wasn't too happy right after the war. There was a shortness of everything. So I heard that in this country, you have everything. So I had a patent on photo engraving that I thought would be beneficial to the whole printing industry. And after I had a few replies from somebody in this country, I was kind of invited to come and show them what it was about.

I came over on a visitor's visa and later on, in fact a year later, a Jewish Congressman, Emmanuel Celler in New York, had it changed to an immigration visa which was actually one of the first gratitudes I met from the Jews people.

Later on, I made some other patents or inventions, but it's not a commercial program. So let's keep it like that.

Q. Did you work in this country in your chosen trade?

A. I worked as a typographer and I worked in New Jersey -- New Jersey City for Fortune Magazine and the telephone books. Later on, I married a Danish lady who was sent out from the Danish Foreign Ministry; and when she was moved to San Francisco, I thought it would be just as well that I move here, too. And I became a foreman here in a print shop and several places later until I retired -- early retirement.

Q. Do you have children?

A. I have one daughter, Suzanne, who is probably expecting her doctorate in entomology and microscopy from the University of Texas in Austin. She's coming back today from Denmark. She speaks fluently, Danish and English, naturally.

Q. As a much younger man and even as a child in Denmark, were you aware of -- you've mentioned a couple of times that you didn't think there was anti-Semitism in Denmark as a whole. But were you

aware of who was a Jew and who wasn't a Jew? Did you ever think about it?

A. I never thought about it. We weren't even aware of it. I only remember now many, many years really after, I remember that we even had in my home town, there was a synagogue and there were several Jews and they had their own cemetery next to one of our parks. And instead of anti-Semitism, I found them interesting because we are a very homogenous society and I think they were very interesting, very intelligent and I liked them. So as far as I'm concerned, I didn't know what anti-Semitism was, and my parents neither.

I think one of my uncles married a Danish Jew, Nathanson, in my home town, but she was just accepted as well as anybody else. And we didn't -- we're not a very religious people. Maybe traditional, but not religious. You wouldn't find 500 people in churches on Sunday morning in all of Denmark. Maybe I put a little extra, but the moral -- I mean the goodness of people is still there. Maybe from the old tradition of religion, but it's still there, without going to churches.

It's not a -- I don't want to be

anti-rereligious, but I'm finding that the countries with the least religion were actually also least anti-Semitic. But that's my own personal finding and it's not a study.

Q. I've been noticing, Knud, your insignia on your breast pocket. I was wondering if you could explain to us what that is.

A. We are very proud of having served the King because we feel we are better looking, better soldiers than anybody else in the world. Of course, a lot of people disagree with us, but we have our Danish Guards Society and for years and years one of -- our president was Lauritz Melchior, the Wagnerian tenor. And I was very often a guest in his home. He was so proud of his time as a Guardsman. We all are, and we have an organization all over the world with about 15,000 members. We normally have a small pin -- I'm sorry I didn't bring mine today, because if we are Guardsman and meet another Guardsman and we don't wear our pin, we'll be fined. And so we're very proud of that service. I'm sure that the British Guardsman guarding the Queen Elizabeth will do -- are feeling the same thing because it may be because the service is pretty tough. Then we get --

we've formed such a friendship that it's worth it to keep ever after. So whenever we meet a Guardsman right away, "What number were you? What year were you in? And who was your captain?" Et cetera, et cetera. But I had met Guardsmen all over the world, many of them.

It was, in fact, when the Germans invaded Denmark on the 9th of April, the King was at his palace and the guards were only supplied with their normal guns -- no machine guns. But they still defended the castle long enough for the German head command to decide that they really did not want the King to be imprisoned or caught. So the guards protected the King long enough so that another came for the Germans to stop. At that time, there were several of them that had been killed by the Guardsmen.

(A photograph is being shown.)

This is a picture when I was a Guardsman in 1937.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

And as a policeman in 1942.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

And this is the way I dressed as an

underground person -- always very well-dressed because that made more impression. I didn't want to look -- to go around in a dirty trench coat and color my hair. But I went like a substantive businessman and maybe that was one of the reasons that I didn't get caught by the Germans.

Q. Who took your photograph?

A. I don't even know.

Q. Why would you be photographed in your disguise? Isn't that a little dangerous?

A. No, not at that time. It would not --
yeah.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Tell us about this one, please.

A. These are the shacks at Nordhavn owned by the fishermen where they keep their nets and the tools and this is where the Jews were hiding from Gestapo until they got the chance to go down to the boat. You can see some of the boats down on the right-hand side.

Q. Okay. And what year was this photographed?

A. That was in '43.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Okay. And this, please?

A. The same thing, the same small shacks.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Okay. And this, please?

A. This is a boat at very early in the morning and inside this boat is the editor called Borge Outze. He was the editor of the most -- of the famous Danish underground called Informasion. And he's down under the floorboards and on the way to Sweden in five minutes.

Q. In which boat?

A. In that little white fishing boat.

Q. On the bottom center there?

A. Yeah. On there you can see my white coat, my light coat, down on the pier.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Still the shacks.

Q. Okay.

A. From there --

Q. Same thing?

A. Same thing. But you see more the fishing boats out of Norhome. These are fishing boats that were about a little less than 30 feet long, but very sturdy. And they actually supplied a lot of fish to

Copenhagen and to the Germans.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

These are the boats that we used out of Sweden to meet the Danish boats. You can see there's two Chris-Crafts that we used over the waters and sometimes going on very, very low waters at great speed where the German Navy or patrol boats couldn't follow them. All the boats here were auctioned and the money went to support some French children that had suffered during the Second World War.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. And this, please?

A. This is one of our very, very sturdy ships out of Sweden that were used many, many times for the transport and it's called MAREIT.

Q. Was this taken during an actual operation?

A. That's taken during an actual operation, yes, from the Swedish side.

Q. Do you have an approximate date on this?

A. No, no.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Underground mail is going to Sweden from Denmark.

Q. When was this mail going from Sweden to Denmark?

A. And inside might very well be a small round package with microphotography from the Danish Navy showing the -- actually an intelligence microfilm showing the Danish -- no, showing the German transportation of ships in the Danish waters. We had 80 films from the Danish Navy Department to the Allied.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Okay.

A. It's the first day of the liberation, the 5th of May 1945. We had the pleasure of going with one of the speed boats over to meet the Swedish Navy and police officers that had been such a great help to our organization during the whole transportation of materiel and passengers.

Q. And you are which person?

A. On the far right.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Okay.

A. On the top, you see Mr. Hendil who was the leader of the whole Danish-Swedish refugee service in Sweden. He was fantastic and he was

actually given the American Metal of Freedom for the work he did for the Allied. Next to him is the -- at that time the president or director of the Tivoli Gardens. We are having a party celebrating ourselves for what we did during the war.

Q. How soon after the end of the war?

A. It was only a few weeks after the war ended.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. And are these his metals?

A. These are -- first the armband that the legitimate underground people would use after the 5th of May. And it was only the ones that really could prove that they had participated in the underground. There's a German -- what do you call it -- a dog tag -- what do you call it?

Q. Indicate now with a pencil in front there and look at the monitor.

A. Okay. Oh,, it's the German dog -- what do you call it -- dog tag that the soldiers have on --

Q. Dog tags?

A. Dog tag.

Q. I see.

A. In fact, there were five Germans -- they were international circus artists and they certainly did not want to go to the ocean front. So they asked the underground whether we would send them over to Sweden. And we did after we found out that they would be better off over in Sweden than at the Russian front. We thought at this time we would help everybody by not having five soldiers over there. In fact, they came to me and they said that we could probably use their whole uniform and everything they had. So we had five lovely German uniforms that we could use in the underground.

Q. How could you tell whether someone's a legitimate or an infiltrator in a situation like that?

A. You would, like anything else, you would ask their friends and neighbors and you would very easily find out who -- what side they're on.

There are stevedores, mostly metals from the Guards Association and the police department. And on the right-hand side the golden one is a member of the Freedom Fighters Veterans where we have a fantastic international organization where the president is in France.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

I'm in the middle and the gentleman in the white shirt is the inventor of the helicopter, Mr. Sikorsky, who also was the first one that made the airplane with the four-motor cylinder. This is at his factory in Fairfield, Connecticut.

Q. What year is this?

A. That must be in 1946.

Q. And why were you --

A. -- '46 or '47.

Q. '47 or '46.

A. The gentleman that's to the right of Sikorsky made some of the parts from the -- at the helicopter and when he heard that the two of us were Freedom Fighters, we were invited to go on a trip on one of the first commercial helicopters. This is Mr. Sikorsky.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Tell us about this, please.

A. I met in 1945 -- of the absolutely fantastic underground fighters that had been sent down from England, Mr. Lillelund.

Q. And where was this?

A. That was at the -- very close to Little

Mermaid in Copenhagen. Mr. Lillelund is probably one of the biggest names of the underground in Denmark.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Tell us about this.

A. No, forget about that.

Q. Is that you in one of your uniforms?

A. No, no, it's a police commissioner out of Copenhagen that paid me a visit.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. What about this, please?

A. In Sweden, all the Danes made a special force that would come home and help in the case that the Germans in Denmark would resist the peace and keep fighting. So they came in on the 5th of May, very early in the morning, and they had been supplied beautifully by the Swedes and they were in very good training. Fortunately, the Germans gave up easy enough in Denmark. And only for very, very few cases of resistance, there wasn't too much resistance and the people from -- the Danes from Sweden didn't have to get into a kind of serious action, but they were well-prepared.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. Let's see. These are --

A. Oh, forget about that.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

This is the Danish Queen in the middle.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

This is a picture of Ebbe Munch who was the -- actually he became the representative of the Danish Freedom Council in Sweden and he negotiated with the Swedish authorities about what we could and could not do. And he was also representative with large influence from our communication with the Allied in England and in America. He later became a gentleman-in-waiting for the Danish Queen. And unfortunately, he passed away a few years ago. He was also a Greenland explorer.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. And this, please?

A. Same fellow, same man.

(Another photograph is being shown.)

Q. This, please?

A. It's a photograph of a gentleman that I sent that was a saboteur and I sent over to Sweden, probably in 1944, and he sent me a photograph of himself in the Danish Brigade uniform. And with a thank you note for saving his life.

Q. Do you recall --

A. I don't remember his name.

(Notes in a photo album are being shown.)

Q. Tell us, let's see. We have a whole page of written notes here. There's the whole page. Maybe you can tell us a little bit about this.

A. This is some of the few written notes that I got either during the occupation or right after, with a thank you note. One of them especially is interesting because it's a note -- no, not that one, this one -- is a note to me that they just wanted me to know that the family came well over to Sweden. They have well arrived in Sweden.

Q. It seems like they knew your real name here, too.

A. Yeah. That was after the war.

Q. After the war. And is there anything you can tell me about this one?

A. No, I forgot. Yeah, just in memory. I can't read it.

Q. Okay.

A. I was invited to the French.

Q. French Ministry?

A. Foreign -- Minister of Foreign Service.

Q. In Copenhagen. Okay.

A. And there I think I have another name, Poul, and had a receipt from somebody in my pocket at that time. I think I went over under the name of Berg and I was a photographer and I had a receipt then. Being a photographer, you can always be around and do things. So that was a very good underground position to have.