

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr Collection. This is an Interview with Mr. Stottke, conducted by Roswita Breckner on April 4, 1999, in Munich, Germany. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible.

Translated by Ed Swecker, March-April 2006

Duration: 3 Cassettes

Notes:

I=Interviewer

P=Stottke

[Tape 1/3, A]

I: So, I think..

P: So and so, what time I was born, do you also need the time?

I: No (laughs slightly), I don't need it but could you tell me the date?

P: But I, I have my birth certificate. I still have it. Recently I went upstairs to the attic and found many, many documents.

I: I'm all ears, so...

P: So my name is Wolfdieter, one word (spelling) S-T-O-T-T-K-E, born 2/10/1920 (October 2, 1920) in Stettin.

I: I'm just going to first listen to you and make a few notes and then ask you...

P: My father, yes, my mother at the time an operating room nurse in the First World War, had married my father on August 1914 who returned home from the war without any wounds. And then we lived in Stettin, in Gutenberg Street, number one. There I spent my childhood until being inducted into the armed forces in 1940. Otherwise, I was then a very, very big player of sports. I started school at the primary school in Bugenhagen, for six grades, then went to the "Unterschule" where I graduated ("Mittlere Reife") with an overall average of "very good." Then shortly afterwards, that was 1939, I joined the armed forces shortly afterwards. Exactly on my twentieth birthday I was then inducted and sent to Schwedt/Oder as a combat engineer. And then went later to the combat engineering school in Dessau/Rosslau and from there I left to take part in the Africa campaign. I arrived in Africa by airplane and took part in the big battles, The gate of Serenika and later, the battle for Tobruk. All that was in the year nineteen hundred and three...thirty three, thirty four, wait, thirty four, thirty five (sic). Then I was wounded. I have to look in my military record. I don't know in this moment...Then I

returned to Germany, then to Crete and from Crete, in Crete we have then..., German soldiers as..., I went back again as a combat engineer to Dessau/Rosslau and there I was commissioned an officer. I was then, that was (silently counts to himself) nineteen hundred, thirty nine, forty, forty-one, forty-two.**Error**. In forty-two I was commissioned and then in forty-four I was promoted to captain, to first lieutenant and 1945 at the end of the war promoted to captain. And became a prisoner of war in the spring of 1945, a prisoner of the Americans. And then from there, from Schwerin sent to the concentration camp, not concentration... reception camp in Schleswig-Holstein. And in Heiligenhafen I was discharged as an officer and went to Bremen. In the meantime I got married and came back to Bremen. In Bremen since I spoke English I was sent by the Americans to Bremenhaven and had to help unload ships. And so you got through the times then. Yes and then after '45 I attended a university and graduated and then entered the construction business. In other words I lived through this postwar period, with all the ration cards and such at the time, reconstruction and so forth, went to school in Bremen, the Engineering School in Bremen and then, well, looked for work and then came here to West..., well I was also then, parts in West Berlin, my parents were in that respect in West Berlin. I visited them in West Berlin. And what is there left to tell about my childhood? From my childhood that I was involved in many childhood pranks, I know. Broken windows with a ball, slammed against a hard curb with a scooter, I cut my eye above here, my mother, you know, bandaged it. She was an operating room nurse. My father was a banker. And so during my childhood, during vacations we spent them near water, did a lot of rowing and sailing and so forth. And I have very, very many certificates, some from the Hitler Youth. I myself was never a Hitler Youth member but only in the Jungvolk (trans. note: for younger boys, similar to our Cub Scouts). In Hitler Youth competitions I won a district championship ("Gaumeisterschaft"). In all of Germany I was ranked fifth among the best gymnasts, after Helmut Blansch who won the silver medal for the high bar at the 1952 Olympics in Sidney. I grew up with him. I have there..., I'd say I have found up there all the certificates which I..., my mother saved them all. She was so proud that I..., that she was able to save them. Because that was certainly not a treasure, but she was proud of her son. I must really say, my father did not acknowledge me but rather wanted a three female household. I was supposed to be a girl but unfortunately that didn't happened. And he acknowledged me for the first time when I came home as an officer. That was the first time he acknowledged me, otherwise not. Otherwise I only got punishments and I was always the bad boy at home, was always in a certain sense the black sheep. Despite that I was very active in sports and trained very hard but in my parents' home itself, I have often thought about it, I had parents like ravens (trans. note: i.e. uncaring), you know. I'm really frank, that was often in my inner most thoughts..I mean I did some pranks, I admit it. Here in our, in our child's room I took matches and threw them into the air. I could have ignited the whole house. And then the old man came and then he took a whip. This..., it was called in the past a whip for beating. I was this, with these leather straps and they had four sides, and he hit away, in other words, I got many blows at home and if my mother hadn't intervened, then he could have killed me with the blows. Really, I mean they were stupid pranks. I never smoked in my life, almost never drank, absolutely nothing. So I lived my life very, very solidly but, well, through sports I achieved a lot, I got through all these rounds. I was in this school, there was smoking and I never smoked and didn't drink either. My old man, he

went now and then in the evenings to a bar to play cards (“Skat”) and then I had to fetch him from there. My mother sent me there. I had to fetch him home in the evenings and then he went home with me and well, that, that.. I was good enough for that but otherwise.., I’ll tell you (emphasizing) I repeatedly got hit on the ears, it was always something. I had done some pranks too, I admit **Error**. We lived upstairs. Downstairs was a barber shop. It was wonderful outside, a large box with lighted advertising and what would I do then. Just before we left on vacation, with an axe, you know, both window panes, what was going on, my God, my God. That was a lot that a person did. I was a rascal. I played a lot of marbles. Somehow I wasn’t exactly full of luck but I played a lot of marbles, or with spinning tops. Those were all our games, with a ball, with a scooter, with a.., what else, with the “Hollaender”. In that respect I ran into the sister from behind with it, broke her collar bone and everything. So I was a stupid kid and did a lot of dumb things. In school, I remember, the school had been freshly painted. Everything “picobello” in color and I like a rascal had a ball in my hand and threw it against the freshly painted white walls, you know, really nice, the “all mighty”, I had to report to him. My old man didn’t learn of it. Otherwise that could have..., my mother handled it. My father never signed the report cards. Only my mother did everything. She sat there and I sat there and when something had happened, then she hit me down under with her foot. Because the old man could also creep around the table..He was similarly raised at home by his father, he was raised like that, it was a hard regime, there were twelve children there and it was a hard business. And his children had to endure it, well I got through it and grew up. My father lived to be eighty-eight, my mother to eighty-seven, both very old. They had lived a very healthy life, mainly with a lot (knocks on the table) of fish **Error**

I: Was there an experience from your childhood that you remember especially?

P: A special experience? I remember especially when there were elections, the screaming, the Communists. My father at that time was not nationalistic, not nationalistic but rather (ponders) but there was this national **Error** war tax, you know and then there were always fights in our neighborhood in Boelitzer street. And we kids were always down there in the midst of them. But (clears his throat) otherwise, what do I still remember? Riding on the streetcar with a ticket, absolutely. Carrying on my bike the laundry for my mother over to be ironed. Auto (sic), well, I was always into sports, I won my sports badge, earned the life saving badge. I earned the death’s head badge for distance swimming, in other words, I did everything in sports (knocks on the table in the normal way. **Error**

I: Can you remember anything from your time in the Jungvolk?

P: Remember something from the Jungvolk? Well, I didn’t have any kind of uniform, I have..., we were only designated..(.....) for the sports club and otherwise no...That was in our case, was..my father, I said, was a German nationalist and he didn’t like through...I freely admit, he didn’t like the National Socialists, he was completely against them and in our house you were not permitted in no way to somehow discuss it, and not at all either that my sister wasn’t drafted into the Labor Service. She was too small. She didn’t go

into the Labor Service, also not into the BDM (trans. note: Initials stand for the “Bund deutscher Maedel”, the main Nazi Women’s Organization). Not at all. In our house there was nothing political. Politically no word was spoken, nothing.. When Adolf came to power there was no way that it would be celebrated or such. There was nothing at all. It was..., everything was taboo. No one was either who was some relative. I know one of my father’s brothers was somewhere in the Party. He was in Ahrendswalde, in the Party, he wasn’t permitted at home. My father was just a soldier and philosophically a German nationalist and that was it, period. And in that respect we weren’t allowed either and he never allowed himself into any kind of discussions. Absolutely not. He certainly had to participate in the first of May marches for the reason that at that time he had to participate as a bank employee. He had to at that time, but otherwise he was in nothing. I also was in no...I’m saying also in school there was no, there was no class in the sense that we were at that time only boys, no girls. The girls were extra, in the Elizabeth school. There the courtyard was divided, one half on the left for girls, and one half on the right for the boys. It wasn’t like today, boys and girls in one class, no, absolutely not. And it was also in school..I never anyone.., in our class, we met together later. They were all already officers and I was still an enlisted man. They went immediately into the armed forces and they were all killed for the most part. In other words also at school no one was permitted to appear in uniform. That was so strict at school that no one, you know, could appear somehow in uniform, no one. In other words it was consistent, whether that came from the school’s head, he was the head at the time, I don’t know. In any case, somehow in regards to the school there was nothing much, like in ’33 and later, not a lot, with flags and such, nothing at all. Everything was completely normal I can’t remember that we somehow, even afterwards as children, we played normally, we didn’t [say] you are in the Jungvolk, you are in the Hitler Youth, no. I remember no marches, nothing, didn’t participate, nothing at all. Nevertheless I had some privileges because of sports. I was in Sweden, I participated in a sports exchange. I traveled throughout Pomerania at the time. I came, I traveled to Stuttgart, to Cologne, everything, you know, but only because of sports, never because of the.., National Socialism.

I: What are your earliest memories about sports?

P: My first memories about sports are as follows: My old man was a passionate swimmer because he had lived up there in East Prussia with his grand parents on the Norad river. And there as a young man he had participated, you know, in a lot of sports. A lot of swimming and that’s what my father did with us. We had to learn swimming and it was good that way and then he had the reeds, we went somewhere to a lake and there were these reeds, and they would be bundled into two rolls on the left and right and then in the middle and then we would lie on top and they supported us, and we were there like “Kalmus” (?) and so forth, and there we learned to swim. That was in Pomerania, up there on the Island of Usedom “am Achterwasser” (?) and there I learned to swim and have then..I just found upstairs the certificate for swimming freestyle for fifteen minutes, swimming freestyle and then I had so much fun with that and then I went to an inside swimming pool in Parnitz, that was a branch of the Oder river and there I put in the required hours. There was one person there at the school whose name was Ehle. He told me to come with him, that we would first swim for one hour and then would go see the

swimming instructor and we did that and then we swam in open water in the Oder River, this branch of the river for one hour. Then we qualified for the "death's head" award which they had at the time. And he did it even for two hours and received the "crown" award. And then I said, "good" and then from the sports club thus... And then, then I joined the Ross- (hesitates) Ross, corner, pool and there I passed the test for life saving. I have my gold sports pin upstairs, everything is upstairs. I passed the test the first time. I wasn't more than eighteen years old at the time. I have the certificate for it and that was for normal life saving. You had to do these special things and then stay under water for so and so length of time and save someone from danger and so forth. I did all that because I had trained hard for it and it made me happy. That helped me a lot in my life. Afterwards it had even helped me a lot in the army. They could do anything with me in the army what they wanted. I could always put one over on the non-commissioned officers and I got through it too. I'll be honest, probably had luck that I returned home safe and sound. Despite being shot through the lungs by the Americans in France near St. Lo., on July 5th, 1944. I was seriously wounded. The shot went in here. I was already an officer then. I was supposed to mine a cross road with personal compression mines and when we did that early in the morning, we certainly didn't (.....) from the Americans (.....) we were then retreating and then they got me. It wasn't supposed to be that yet. And then all that they showed of Rommel at the time, here on television, Hitler with his generals, that's not all correct, it doesn't correspond to the truth. Because I had known Rommel at that time in Africa. He had awarded me the Iron Cross, First Class at that time, and during the French campaign we met again and responding to his idea we discovered and invented the Rommel asparagus which were kind of round mines (....) mines in this (.....) mine there were a lot of small ball bearings on top was a (...)mine explosive fuse with five such, a five, yes five such, five or six such small..They stuck out fuses and when then, Then there was a peg through it and this, this (..) mine (.....) then was a wire stretched there and when it was raised, you know, then or when it was stepped on, then lightly stepped on, then it took off, you know and you would be wounded because of this explosion and because of these eleven ball bearings. That was it at that time. We ruined whole fields with these Rommel asparaguses. At the time in connection with the invasion. I was also part of the invasion battle. (.....) we met each other. I had just reported to him about my company and then he saw that [I] wore the Africa [insignia] and then he asked me if I had been in Africa and I said yes and then I said who.., I'm still going to remember the words how they said at the time, look at me, when I undress, I look the same as you. Therefore you don't need to be nervous. I am the exact same human being as anyone else. Those were his words. He was in other words then a very big and good army commander. It was at the White House in the (.....)Africa. Shortly before Tobruk when we were positioned before Tobruk at an altitude of three hundred and fourteen.

I: There you were awarded the Iron Cross, First Class or there youRommel...

P: What?

I: That was where you met Rommel for the first time?

P: That was when Rommel awarded me the Iron Cross. At altitude of three hundred and fourteen, you know. (.....) you could look down from there at (.....) but it was a night attack. That was when my training officer was killed, Lieutenant Adamis. I was at the time his runner. He said, "Stottke, keep your ears open." "Yes, yes, Herr Lieutenant" I said. And he was also such a daredevil, let's go, forward and they got him immediately. Ach God! Now and then down there. Then we didn't have any real soap. We went bathing in the Mediterranean Sea where today all the vacationers are. We went bathing there and we had received this submarine soap which was for washing in salt water. Otherwise we had nothing. Oh the food was all monotonous. The sand storms.....

Tape 1/3, Side B

P: A wonderful time. It was exciting and today, today when I hear here over and over on television at the time 1945, '46 we sat up there and stood and said, never again would a German mother cry for her son and what do we do today (bangs on the table) today we're fighting again, we're in it again. They don't know how war looks and how hard it is. (loud, emphasizing) People never learn and whoever is the dumber one, the worker or the dumb one, the poor people in general. You definitely see that today in Kosovo**Error**

I: Let's maybe go back to your childhood. You have already mentioned that you took a lot of trips because of sports. Could you remember one especially?

P: Yes, what did we have then? We were in Sweden, in Oslo at that time and there we stayed in a tent camp and in the tent camp we normally played sports. That was in other words kind of like pathfinder life, you know, or something similar. There were big pots of goulash, you know and it would be cooked and then fed to us and so forth. Otherwise, nothing and anything else and where I was all of us lived on the playing field, in tents and then normally there was only either you took something or you got something then from the cook pot. You received tickets for food. In other words it wasn't the same as today. There was only food and shelter. Today they receive money for every sport. Then there was nothing. There were only medals and ribbons then.

I: Could you then remember an award that impressed you in particular?

P: Yes, the one that I have upstairs. I have (emphasizes) such pride, everything the first winner, everything **Error** The one, the only one, you know, which is interesting is the district (trans. note: Literally "Gau" which was the Nazi term for small divisions into which the country was divided) championship which I won. That meant that of all boys there I was the best gymnast and the best participant in light athletics. And district champion with a certificate to that effect and then the most wonderful and best was then [the championship] in Stuttgart in the Wilhelma [Hall]. I still remember the names, one after the other where we had matches. And there we won fifth place in Germany. It was definitely at the time, the preliminary preparations for the Olympic Games and we were supposed to be training for them. There was also then Olympic eliminations like during the Olympics, the black man and whatever they were all named. So it was supposed to

be too, our gymnastics team was supposed to go there too and I would have certainly been there. The war destroyed everything. (.....) Blanz (trans. note: presumably one of his teammates) survived in tact and for that reason he probably was able to train again, afterwards he was selected and was then an Olympic champion in Sidney on the gymnastic horse and on the high bar. With him I have, I even have a picture that he is on...

I: Can you still remember the Olympics of '36?

P: What I remember, I was in Berlin, didn't participate in the marching in but did march in front of the Olympic Stadium, on the Olympic field in front. I was in the Black Forest open air theatre, but I myself did not take part in the competitions. I was only at that time, I remember it today, I was beginning to collect postage stamps and at the time had collected Olympic stamps at the ticket offices. I can still remember that, also the radio exhibition which occurred at the same time. But all the marches there, for me there was only physical exercises. We were from a club then, I was at the time in the Stettiner Gymnastics Club/Cooperation. They were represented there with a delegation, but otherwise personally I was not part of it, only like that.

I: How did you decide to do gymnastics? You told me before that you learned to swim at an early age from your father and did you at first..

P: Early,. in other words may I say in that respect I know the following. In elementary school we played a lot of kick ball ("Schlagball") and I played this game very intensely, throwing with balls and hitting with a bat.**Error**

I: Can you remember a situation which was especially bad for you?

P: Yes, my old man hit me, what it was about, he somehow hit me, what it was...

I: Yes and is there any other situation you remember?

P: I know one. The situation was, my mother was sitting there and my sister before the head of the table and I said across and up front at the head sat my old man. Mother always set the table and there was something to eat and then my mother (.....) whether there was fish or something, I don't know. In any case she laid, put a bowl full of salad in the middle of the table. The old man was served by my mother also. And we children, or in any case, didn't get anything, whether we received nothing or whether there wasn't anything more in it I don't know. And what I know is I sat there and then took a fork or a spoon and took some salad from my father's plate (excited, hitting the table). Well you wouldn't believe what happened. I got my ears slapped on the right and left side. There were screams, my old man screamed and such and then hit me. I wasn't given any more food and so forth. That I know that as a child, and then, you know, there were two incidents with matches that I still remember when I said (.....)why don't I get any salad? I did that, I took the salad directly from his plate (laughs). That happened, but today no longer. You can't do it

today any more all of what we experienced then in our youth. Growing up today like they do, the young people. I didn't have that experience. Then there was war. Then I didn't experience, then I didn't learn to dance, I learned nothing. I'll say I only had sports, and then I went into the army, nothing more. In other words, those were the things, really the worst that I experienced. My old man was a big fisherman and we went fishing very, very often, almost every Sunday, out to the boat, then rowing. So then I got into the rowing club, in other words, everything. I really participated in numerous sports except soccer. I played hand ball, inside hand ball, except soccer which I never played. I played hockey, played a little tennis because that was everything in, in the, or at the "Ruehlkampfbahn" which is what it was called then, the sports facility. And then I can still remember my old man was a big hiker, that is in other words (emphasizes) hiked and hiked constantly **Error** you know, he wanted to see things, you know. He favored anything that was new. At that time, the old man was, really for things today. He would definitely have been at that time for computers and everything that works today. He was for everything that was innovative. He had also modernized everything in the apartment. There was at that time a kind of electric boiler, it was advertised, and then he looked at it and got one, he was in other words, in things he was somehow (hits the table) for anything progressive. But otherwise for children, he didn't have much interest. With my sister he was really, that was a female, but not me, I was just (.....) You can't imagine. I had such a very hard childhood, a very hard childhood. I experienced many, many things but I always got through it. And one thing I still remember. At school the rule was put your fingers out and then be hit with a stick, or the ears pulled or your nose twisted. That doesn't happen today at all. One thing I still remember. I was somehow, I had done some sort of stupid thing somehow and I still see him today, my class teacher, Herr Wagner, "Stottke come up", and I was in good shape from sports, and I was ordered to bend over, you know, and then the teacher's lectern, right (.....) was removed and I had to grab under the desk and hold out the bottom of my pants and then he wanted to hit me. So then I told him, I don't know it was the class teacher or Herr Wagner, if you hit me, then I am going to hit back. So he didn't hit away. My mother had to come [to school]. I was supposed to be thrown out. Well, I was already a rowdy but maybe it was perfectly as well. Mother had raised us to be very proper and very clean-cut. We didn't do any dumb "hundestreiche." We [didn't] go off on a crooked path. We were (hits the table) orderly people **Error**:

I: What do you mean by "Hundestreichen?" Are they tricks with dogs?

P: No. "Hundestreiche are just like I have said, [throwing] a ball against a freshly painted wall, you know, or bothering girls whom..., then we played cops and robbers and so forth, all this..

I: How did you, in other words what changed then for you when the National Socialists came to power? What changed for you? What do you remember about that?

P: Really nothing, because I have told you at school nothing about it was discussed and absolutely nothing at home either. We have..., I only know, I still remember the ninth of November, I went through that. That's right. The..., they were burning synagogues in

the rear, in the “Gruene Schanze” (trans. note: presumably a specific city site). That was where the synagogue was. I saw that.

I: Could you tell me in more detail what you saw?

P: And then I had, you know, the old man had to because the bank, the Pommerian Bank, you know, was near the parade grounds. Then we went down there along the things, along the bulwark, and then up to the “Gruene Schanze”, there we passed this synagogue which was burning at the time. That was really everything and in our house...

I: Can you still remember what they said at that time when you had seen that?

P: No. I only remember, you know, in our building there lived (knocks rhythmically on the table) on our floor, we lived in the middle [apartment] and on the right side **Error** was a Jewish family, named Kora... The owned downstairs a clothing store and they demolished everything there. And they were very, very sad but people in our building did not talk ill in any way of these people. Or I have, I mean I was, well afterwards when this whole show took place, right afterwards I was no longer living at home, I was in other words in the army when they were supposed to be deported afterwards.

I: You heard that they were (hesitated) deported?

P: My sister informed me at the time or told me. They were taken to Aachen and from Aachen they somehow disappeared.. My mother kept everything going very well.

I: The contact to this family...

P: I also have to say that, people talked about it. My mother, or..., yes my mother had a serious case of food poisoning from meat. Nothing helped, nothing at all. And then Dr. Kuck came, that was a Jewish physician. He came and at the time then there wasn't yet the thing about the Jews, rather he gave her then Rixinusoel (emphasizes) and the woman was cured in the shortest period of time. And we children also had to **Error** go to him all the time, to his office and were examined and such. Jewish doctors were in our surrounding area because mother still had a lot of contact, you know, with Jews, rather with physicians from the war, General von Hammerstein and however they were all called. She knew many, many of them from the war that she could call on and the physicians, we had them then, I remember, when we children needed help, I freely admit, but we were never seriously ill. We received all the inoculations, we received one for diphtheria, scarlet fever and so forth, already in those times. That was in other words everything that people think of not only today as modern but it existed then too, you know. We had no measles, we had no scarlet fever. We had no diphtheria, nothing. (sighs softly). There were already inoculations for everything then too, and to be precise, to be inoculated. So that was life.

I: And you said that you were not in the Hitler Youth?

P: No.

I: I imagine that many of your generation went into the Hitler Youth.

P: They had to.

I: They had to.

P: But well, we would like to say, to get out of school. I only know, we met again later and they were all normally never somehow enthusiastic about it. None of them were really enthusiastic (.....) and so nothing at all. It was all with us somehow very, very neutral.

I: Can you remember whether you talked with your school mates about the Hitler Youth and how the relationship was with you who was not in the Hitler Youth and...

P: No, no we were really one class. We were really one class which engaged in a lot of sports. That was really a class. We played handball in the school year with other classes (hesitates), held sporting events**Error**

I: Do you remember anything else?

P: Yes! We lived through everything, right, and we weren't allowed to go downstairs then.

I: You weren't allowed to go into the street?

P: No, no. That was, that they were smashing things then down there.

I: Do you still have a concrete picture of what you remember that happened?

P: Yes, yes. I can. I can remember it exactly. They came up Birken street from Birken alley, marching up the street with their scarves and red flags and then they entered Gutenberg street, they went in (.....) that was where the street ran and then they collided here and there. Exactly the same too—

I: And what happened then?

P: Exactly the same too, when my old man went to vote, we went along too and then we had to sneak away because there was always fighting at these voting places and, I have to say it too, nevertheless my old man went often to the inn, there was never any kind of talk about National Socialism or, or nationalism, nothing. They were all peaceful there; he played cards a lot and often there and there was never any fighting or arguments or that he came home any time with a bloody nose. Never. He never got involved in any way in such situations, never, never. And he also honored and despised the war equally but also these—He was afterwards, in terms of the war that I know, then he was because he was

able to organize things so well, he was an air raid warden, I know, then you know , at home, you know, he had organized everything but never in any way on any Party basis. Then he had to get his fishing license from the fishing club, then through the Party and that he somehow refused. Then he went fishing illegally and he was against all such matters, completely up into his old age. He emphasized it over and over again, said. The same with mother, all of it. There was never somehow..., mother was neither in the Women's Aid Society ("Frauenhilfe") or whatever. She was...mother was ready to help out indeed (knocks on the table). As a nurse she was always ready to help**Error!**

I: Can you remember then whether you had Jewish pupils in your class?

P: Yes, yes.

I: Can you tell us a little about them?

P: One of them, his name was Udes, he was half Jewish but he was never attacked, nothing, nothing at all.

I: And what do you remember about him? Do you remember any event concerning him?

P: No, no. He was, he was, you know, at that time, he had that, not at the beginning and when things happened on the ninth of November, you know, it somehow came out, "I'm half Jewish too," but he was (hitting the table) never attacked.**Error**

I: What happened to him later?

P: No idea what became of him.

Tape 2/3, Side A

P: ...that he somehow was drafted into the army. He had a Jewish mother, was half Jewish too but a terrific sportsman. We played handball together a lot. Well, about this whole Jewish persecution, we were in that respect, you know, my old man was very neutral in any case in these matters (hitting the table) experienced absolutely nothing**Error**

I: What was known?

P: What –It was known, as they say, it was known that our neighbors were Jewish

I: Do you remember an event concerning your neighbors?

P: Yes, yes. We got around this time of the year at Easter, we went—Between our two balconies was a dividing steel wall and then we went around it and then we had an Easter bouquet and then we said, "Get up, get up Easter rabbit, if you don't give me an Easter egg, we'll chop your shirt in half." Then we went to Aunt Cora and then we got our

Easter eggs from Aunt Cora. That was in other words also—She was very, very considerate—That was a terrific, if I can say (laughs slightly) a solid woman**Error** Today we would say a fat woman. Such a bust (laughs slightly out loud and incredibly solid (enthusiastic) Ach! (laughs out loud)

I: Did you enjoy that?

P: That was Aunt Cora, yes, yes. Even when there was something, was something special then I went to the store for her or fetched something, like coal from the cellar, right, and then she pressed a few pennies into my hand, they were incredibly in need of help and they were very, very considerate and they loved us children very much. They were in other words not somehow—and I know of him because he had a clothing store downstairs, I was dressed up by him for First Communion. My mother went there and bought for me my confirmation suit. That was at the time cheaper at his store than at Karstadt (trans. note: a large department store) or at...well Karstadt was there at the time. Karstadt was already there, you know. The broad street running down.

I: Can you remember when you saw the Kora family for the last time?

P: Yes, 1940 I saw them for the last time. They moved out then. Namely they had a sister and they joined her, she lived at the time in Aachen. They moved to Aachen But not somehow- they were not, my sister told me because I asked her where the Koras were. Yes, they were not, you know, sent (emphasizes) to a KZ**Error!**

I: Can you explain that a little more exactly?

P: Yes, we were when, when—we had to at that time, I was at the time assigned to the High Command Reserves (“Fuehrerreserve”) in (knocks on the table) Zossen (trans. note: headquarters at the time of OKH and OKW, south of Berlin) **Error!** Passed by the notorious Oranienburg [camp] (emphasizes) and at that time the gates were open**Error!** They had—We still had weapons and they took them (quietly) they basically disarmed us and used them to fire around**Error!**

I: You had to give up your weapon?

P: I only had a pistol. No, no they had, they didn't, rather the ones behind us, the support company, the cooks, there were infantrymen there, they simply—my company they didn't disarm. We quickly marched away and then they probably couldn't hold us up because of their numbers. But behind us were those with the cooking gear, and it was said that they had disarmed those behind us. Well, for the ordinary soldier he didn't care afterwards, it was all the same for them. They just wanted to stay alive, they didn't want to bite the bullet three days before the end of the war. Everyone wanted to get home. Because behind us was Himmler with his SS unit. I still remember that. You know, still behind us and my commander, that was another wild man, a crazy person who desperately wanted to gain the German Cross in gold. He was killed somewhere in the woods, killed somewhere in Mecklenburg. (emphasizes) And I almost got killed**Error!**

On the Malchin road to Schwerin, we were attacked by American, by Russian dive bombers on the road. And they mowed everything down. I had to make myself so flat there between the potato mounds so that I was like a flounder on the floor. Well three times I escaped death. Once in connection with my (.....), a second time with my heart operation and a third time with my heart attack. I was already, in the middle of my heart operation I was already dead. That was here in, in (.....) at the heart center headed by Pro---Professor Sewenik. He operated on me and with the heart attack in '95 in Portugal. Then I almost ran into a bus. But that was not supposed to be. One day I'll be killed somewhere. I want to experience once more what young people today experience. Take the young people by the hand and get enjoyment from their life. Above all I can only tell anyone, there is nothing more beautiful than to be young. Afterwards when you are old, then you don't get much from it. Then comes (knocking) one little pain after another**Error!** Because now you consume a lot of vitamins. We didn't need them at all at that time. It was automatic that we had salads every day and fish every day too. All that which they prescribe today, you know. It was all there at that time and today it is normal and we were not overweight. My old man was not fat, my sister was not and my mother not either. They all reached extreme old age. For that reason I envy the youth who have such... We didn't have any youthful period. That was taken away from us by National Socialism. I freely admit it. You weren't allowed to do anything. You weren't allowed to express yourself. If you did, then you would be taken away immediately. But that I must again, I will say that among my playmates and teammates no one denounced anyone in any manner, no one did anything at all. Everyone was satisfied, everyone was happy, and we all enjoyed life like we (emphasizes) could**Error!** Anything else we didn't do. Are you satisfied with me now?

I: (agreeing) Yes, yes. You mentioned your sister. Can you relate a little about your sister?

P: My sister? Yes, she was born in 1919. She is now 80. On the 19th of March she became 80. Yes and then something—She had written a diary about the flight. What all she went through. She wrote in a diary; she lived in Echingen, on the “Waldweg” number 3. And she cared for my mother and father until their deaths. And otherwise, you know, she learned to be a designer in the field of arts and crafts, and actually is in the process of depicting the genealogy of all the kings and such, she has done extensive things like that, you know. Yes and otherwise she was professionally trained. She has done photogravure work, completed the normal training as a book binder and for arts and crafts. And she cared for her parents until their deaths. And the sister...

I: You have said that you completed basic schooling (“mittlere Reife”), in another school than an elementary one. Can you remember the time when you finished school?

P: Yes, I played sports right after leaving school. And then '39 and '40 I was drafted into the army.

I: And in the time in between could you tell me a little about that time?

P: And then in that time in between I wanted to become a locomotive engineer and that is not..., in that case I had to take a test with the German Rail Company ("Bundesbahn") which I passed, but then the doctor determined that I had a heart valve defect and this heart valve defect afterwards caused them to conclude that I had an enlarged heart, that of a sportsman because of all the sports I played in my teen years. Then a year later I was tested again and was accepted because they somehow found nothing, I passed the test without a problem. And then I worked for the railroad for a short time at the ticket counter in Stettin and I worked helping switch rail cars. In other words, I had to work through the whole range of middle-level employee jobs, all those total like it is today too, when you are somewhere, you have to get through every piece of shit. I did that then. And then came the draft notice for the army and then I went into the army. Then the Bundesbahn, then called the Reichsbahn, wanted to make me exempt, they didn't want to lose me but they were unsuccessful and I went nevertheless, you know. And specifically the reason I went was because all my other comrades from school were already in the army, had participated in the Polish campaign and I didn't want to be the last one and so I went too. That's the way it was. And then I remember exactly that my old man took me to the army barracks and we passed by the prison there and he said, "Boy, here, when you look inside there (lowering his voice), that's where there are those condemned to death by hanging or by beheading" **Error** Well, you can imagine I was disappointed too. And then afterwards, after a year it was determined that that wasn't the case but rather the...

I: And when were...What were you disappointed about?

P: Well, that I, that I somehow had a heart defect, because she as a nurse knew what that meant, you know..

I: And did that then also..., in other words, have other consequences when, that you did not pass the test?

P: Other consequences, there were none, zero. I continued to play sports and also afterwards in the army it was also not easy, with the army combat engineers to carry these heavy (.....) beams and such. I never had, never (knocking the table) my whole life long had any problems at all with my heart, never, only now, here **Error**

I: And you said you still played sports after finishing your schooling. What was it, gymnastics and light athletics or what was it that you did at that time?

P: Also only, only running as a sport, gymnastics and running. I didn't only just, I was only into light athletics but rather I also did gymnastics in addition.

I: Did you then...

P: I was a competitor in multi-disciplines. In other words I didn't give up sports in any case, you know. I engaged in sports into my old age for a long, long time. I went swimming for hours. You know, when today I go to the Woerth Lake and sadly have to

look into it, I can't swim the real way any more. Can you believe that; when you have spent so much time in sports like I have, I was always in good condition, always.

I: And in the time before you went into the army, did you take part in any competitions?

P: Yes.

I: Can you still remember especially one that you participated in?

P: Before my time in the army, you know, it was like it is today, soccer games every, every weekend somehow at some sports field (.....), in any case somehow our sports club assigned their members there to a game and you didn't question it whether you could participate or whether you wanted to but rather you simply went there because you thought it was fun. I mean upstairs I can..., I have that stuff upstairs in the attic. So I can document the dates. Every Sunday there was a game. Every Sunday in the early hours my mother made and wrapped (knocking the table) the sandwiches**Error**

I: Yes, and as I have understood you, you began training with the railroad a year later then?

P: A year later. I went to the doctor again, I had taken the test and passed and then when I went through the variety of jobs for middle-level employees, I was designated an apprentice and then I had to experience various departments. In that respect I was (knocks the table) at the ticket counter**Error**, then I was (knocks the table) a train dispatcher**Error**. In other words everything in bits and pieces.

I: I understand and the training was not yet completed when you were drafted into the army? I understand.

P: It wasn't finished but rather the Bundesbahn had to release me. At that time it was such that certain installations had exempt contingents, they didn't need [to send] the people. Unfortunately they were powerless and so I had to go into the army, in other words I wasn't made exempt. After the war after I had finished my studies in Hannover I wanted to revive it but I didn't do so, to revive it.

I: Your career with the Bundesbahn. I understand.

P: I didn't want to revive it.

I: All right, good. What was your first memory of your time in the army?

P: The first? (laughs) The first one was when I was sent to Schwedt/Oder as an army combat engineer. There was a table as long as the one here and there (laughs slightly out loud) I fell asleep.

I: (laughs) You fell asleep?

P: and then the corporal (in the ton of a military command) “Get up.” (imitates tiredness) hahaha. And then he came to me and said since you’ve trained so much in sports, then take the others right away and make them do sports and then they fetched me and then I had to make them do sports and I did gymnastics with them. That was my first [experience]. And then I went to Dessau Rosslau. And Dessau Rosslau, that’s what it was called then (in a command voice) “three, four, one song and so forth**Error** (.....) and because I always stuck my nose out front and always joked around, I was always stuck in shit, was always the person down there in shit and when anything also (.....) when there was anything to do with the army, then I was the dumb one. Then I had to carry the flame thrower, this heavy sledge. In other words to be truthful I did everything in the army. I steered an attack boat, I drove a tank, a truck, in other words I completed a number of training courses they had in the army. It was a wonderful time, it was very hard, it was wonderful, I have to say truthfully. The food, well so-so.until afterwards I was transferred to become an officer. I received my commission as an officer in Dessau Rosslau but.

I: What did you experience there in Dessau Rosslau, what do you remember from that time?

P: I can’t at all. I only remember the second button from the top (?) (in an excited tone, knocks the table) I was allowed to be the escort of the general’s daughter. And then I got afterwards (.....) a hit on the head.

I: Why?

P: Well, how did that, probably because I wasn’t a good escort.

I: No, but how did it happen that you even, that you escorted her.

P: How did that happen. I was (knocks the table) ordered to do so. Then it was said Lieutenant so and so or cadet so and so you are ordered to see me and then I did so and then he took her with him**Error!**

I: What happened next?

P: Nothing at all.

Tape 2/5, Side 2

P: Eventually the shot to the rear actually...

I: In other words you had to be very careful.

P: In that respect you had to be very diplomatic (laughs slightly out loud). But (.....) his wife was also there. Then you had to behave well, you know.

Then you had to be very careful, because otherwise----. Well, yes (laughs softly out loud) and if she is in a bad mood (laughs slightly), the lady was affected by something officially, you experience it too. That you can notice looking at the cadet, things didn't go right. You could get the reaction exactly. Yes, that was Dessau Rosslau.

I: All right and what happened next? What occurred after Dessau Rosslau? What happened?

P: Well, then I went, then I was transferred to Berlin and from there I went to the invasion front in France.

I: Could you tell us a little bit more about Berlin, from your time in Berlin?

P: In Berlin I obtained in the what'll I call it, what's the corner there Joachimstal, you know, coming from the Kudamm into Joachimstaler [street], there is the army store for officers and there I bought all of my duds. That was Berlin. And then I went, you know, as an officer to France.

I: Yes and what did you experience there?

P: What 's it called then, the grenadier reserve company 353, grenadier reserve company 353, as combat engineers. And then we did these Rommel things, you know, and then I was wounded, severely wounded due to a shot through my lungs. And then I was sent to Ange and in Ange I encountered my cousin. He was a physician on the general staff and he operated on me, not operated but rather had me in the room..., here I was lying and then he came and said, man, don't you know who is lying there next to you? No I said I don't know. There is a certain Herr Schulz. O.K. I said and so what? Well, you certainly know him. O.K. I said and who is then Schulz. Well he's Rommel (softly). Ach so I said **Error!** I can't straighten it, it's so stiff. And then my mother said go to the pump and get some water. And I held the bucket there (emphasizes) and all at once the arm became straight then **Error!** That was Rommel. That was the cousin, Riemann, doctor Riemann who also got me out of there and then in.. Do you talk to your colleagues so long?

I: Yes.

P: Do you like to?

I: Yes.

P: Yes and what.., and what do you get from it, what do you take from it now?

I: It.., first only for documentation. In other words it will not be..(.....)

P: You don't cut any of it out?

I: No, no.

P: (laughs slightly out loud) Will that be played on a large tape?

I: Well, that stays, that stays in.., on this..

P: It stays like that?

I: Yes, it stays on these tapes...

P: Well, then no one can listen to it or does anyone demand...?

I: There is some interest in it.

P: All right, who is interested in it?

I: Scientists, partly, partly also specifically teachers who want to use it for pedagogical purposes. Different things.

P: Will that then be worked into a book.

I: Potentially yes.

P: Yes.

I: In other words, potentially yes but there is no concrete interest there yet. When someone says he is interested in writing a book about something specific and we can offer him an interview for his exploitation, yes.

P: Do you then get that to read afterwards?

I: We can...

P: When someone requests that now, do you get to read it then. Now someone requests the cassettes...

I: Yes, yes,, we have...

P: Well, how do you make that public then?

I: In which we inform certain institutions that we have added it to our archives, so that we have added such documentation as such.

P: Right, yes. Well must someone then be there to listen to it?

I: In other words we write about it after we have concluded the interview, we write a little summary in which we state that this and that is told and what the main points are. And then it will be documented and archived and whenever someone comes and says that he wants to do something about this or that subject, whether it is with his students or whether it is for his own purpose..(.....)

P: Well, however we want to just say that most of the people of my generation all experienced that.

I: Well, that is still sometimes different for each one.

P: A lot of things overlap.

I: Partly yes, partly that happens but also each person always experiences something different then.

P: What do you think?

I: That is something that I will learn when I (.....)

P: Well, in any case, the teen years that we have experienced, the large part of my generation have experienced like that because at that time there were no discoteques, no dance cafes, nothing.. None of that. I know in other words in our street, in the Gutenberg street I didn't know of any café anywhere there, also not in Poelitzer street.

I: There where you lived in Stettin.

P: I only know (knocks on the table) here there was **Error!**

I: Herr Stottke, I would very much like to ask you a little about your experiences in Africa. Should we take a little break before we continue with my questions or...

P: No, you can ask, just ask me.

I: Yes? In other words what I still don't understand is how did it happen that you were sent to Africa?

P: I can tell you the following about that. Specifically in the year 1940 I arrived in Dessau Rosslau and then the order came one day, "Step out (murmurs) step out (emphasizes) go to the doctor" **Error!**, to the carbolic shack to get a shot for malaria.: No, not malaria but to take quinine pills and then to return three days later whether there was anything, no and then away we went, uniformed to the next company, the ninth company. I still remember today, to the ninth company, uniformed, "you're going to Africa." So then away to Dessau Rosslau where we received tropical helmets, all the clothing gear was already there, tropical helmet, complete khaki uniforms and so forth.(.....) and then away. All the vehicles of the engineers, we were fully motorized, the gear was fully motorized. We then went to the Dessau-Rosslau train station, loaded the vehicles and then after two more days we were off in the train and then we went by train over the alps and I still remember it today we landed in Verona and there we were enthusiastically received because we all had Africa uniforms on, so were enthusiastically received. And then we continued by train always southward. I remember I met a girl in Verona and we corresponded for a very long time. She sent little packages, wrote me a long time and we then came down further to Sicily. And in Sicily we had to unload the vehicles, then we crossed the Messina straits to Messina. And from there down under to

Catania. And at Catania at the beach there the trucks were taken away somehow and it was, and then it didn't take long; they came again fully loaded with oranges and they dumped them on the beach and we had something to eat and from there further (.....) we were loaded again on trucks and taken to Syrakrusa. There we toured the ancient sites in Syrakrusa and from there back again. And then one day we received orders for the airport, then, no, not to the airport but rather to Catania, the ships, the vehicles were loaded on the ships, the vehicles with our baggage were loaded on the ships and we then were driven to the airport and we flew on JU 52's, with JU 52's over Lampedusa to Tripolis. And in Tripolis we landed and from there we went then into the desert. There at that time were some kind of barracks and then we went there..., no, then a few days passed and then shi..., then there were ships there, we had to unload trucks again and then we were transported by the trucks into this camp and as is the case with soldiers, it's not right without exercising. I will never forget that in my life. "It's not right." At that time I was a messenger for Lieutenant Adam, as I have already told you and at that time I had also..., I was a machine gunner, for a heavy machine gun and then we went really into the desert. The desert is right behind Tripolis. And, and the way it is normally provisions were [distributed] for the march. There were some small cartons, blue cartons. In these small blue cartons there were cigarettes inside and they were called (knocking the table) "Spit fire"**Error!** And then as was the practice after exercising a pause in the march was ordered, a pause for smoking (draws in his breath), Skottke had never touched a cigarette, never smoked one. I don't know who reminded me of it. In any case someone encouraged me and said, go ahead and smoke one. Well, I didn't light one myself but rather I got one already lit and then I just did, I took a deep pull on it and so forth (.....) no idea how to do it, such an idiot and then (slowly emphasizing) I got dizzy, I spit bile, green and blue bile (.....) back into the hospital and so forth. Then I had a serious poisoning from these spitfire cigarettes. I have never again somehow...I'm telling you, never again in my whole life have I smoked a cigarette again. That was such a horror. Even when I felt sick or was hungry or something, I have never such...and I still don't understand today how men and women can smoke when it is so unhealthy, well. In any case from there I then spent a couple of days in the hospital and then was up and out. Then there were these vehicles with these, with these cardboard things and there we had these small combination vehicles covered with a fake shape out of cardboard and then we took off. And then it was double time, double time as fast as we could, down the via (.....) which was good for that time, it was really an extended asphalt street, and then we came to the gate which (.....) and at the gate which (.....) we came under the first enemy..., in our first contact with the enemy and from that I realized it was serious. Well, and these, these dummy shapes on top, they appeared in this desert under bright sunshine like tanks. Like a mirage. You didn't believe that at all, it was really so when you put them in the desert and, the sun and the shimmer, it looked like there were heavy tanks there. In that way Rommel, you know, beat back the English and from there we drove further on to (.....) the fighting, beating back the English and then we came down to Togo or before the gates of Togo and erected out tents down there on the beach and didn't have any further enemy contact. And we weren't bothered either by dive bombers or anything else. And we stayed down there until this attack then on Togo, at the white house. So that was Africa.

I: You mentioned earlier the first enemy contact. Could you explain that a little more exactly how that was?

P: The English began to shoot and we fired back. Like it happens then in such chaos, you know, no one at all knows in that moment where it is coming from, you know. I only know still, here is the Zireneika gate, that huge white thing of marble, you know, or of sand stone, a huge monument, right where the Via Valvia goes through and we were positioned on the right side in front and then they said (louder) "enemy" and then everything around the vehicles, around us happened. There haven't ever been many wounded among us, and so forth only there was shooting and then it was quickly, rather quickly over and we could continue marching further...That went very, very quickly.

I: You mentioned earlier that you were awarded the Iron Cross First Class, in Africa, the campaign, how did that happen?

P: How it happened? Yes, that occurred in..., during this night...almost all of us were awarded it, during the night attack. It was a night attack and the English, the English (knocks on the table) had barricaded themselves and then it went down there to Tobo and we were supposed to through this position. [to make] a gap for those behind us, you know. We were of course combat engineers. They are, excuse me when..., when I now say, we were always a piece of shit in the world, that what we were always. You know, we were always just dirt, a pile of dirt. We always had to clear the way for the others everywhere. And so that's the way it was here. And in front of us was a bunker which you hadn't seen during the night. Afterwards we saw it in daylight for the first time (knocking on the table) and the English were hunkered down in the bunker **Error!** And they had machine guns and everything else and we stormed it and tossed hand grenades at it. We stormed it and Lieutenant Adam was killed then and I was just behind him and that was later submitted by the commander, by the..., not by the commander but rather by the head of the company, you know. "Whoever that was receives the Iron Cross? And so forth. That wasn't any special award, no. That was no special award. No Knight's Cross or such.

I: Can you still remember the situation when you were awarded it?

P: What?

I: I mean directly the situation of the award ceremony..

P: (.....) we had to stick it on us, that is we had to present ourselves and then Rommel came and pinned it on each one simply like that. That was in the desert, the son was shinning up high and you are hanging there (wanting a drink), being thirsty and all. That went very fast, a flip of the hand. That..., well..

I: How did it happen that you left Africa again?

P: Well, because I went afterwards to Dessau Rossau as an officer candidate.

I: That happened after Africa?

P: I came to Africa , you know, as an officer candidate, right? I was detached there. Then I came back to Dessau Rossau to my old company.

I: And there you completed your training as an officer? And then?

P: Well, then you take the training, you know. Everything would be tested and questioned and....

I: Yes, and what happened then afterwards?

P: Commands and so forth (.....), commands, map reading and so forth and so forth. What you had to do as a combat engineer. Then I had earlier driven tanks, vehicles, trucks, used flame throwers, the whole mining operation, surveying in general and so forth, it was everything, it was everything, you know, and leading men, bravery and so forth. It was everything.

I: How long, how long did the training last, in general? Can you still remember?

P: It didn't last long and specifically the reason it didn't last long was because you hadn't come there as (.....) you hadn't come there somehow from school but rather you already had experience at the front. I believe it lasted one half or three quarters of a year.

I: And where did you go next after this, directly after this training?

P: After the training I then went to France, to the invasion front.

I: What did you experience there except for being wounded?

P: There I saw to it that I didn't any more.., that I would return home with my skin intact (laughs slightly). I had, I still remember, driven an amphibious vehicle then, an amphibious vehicle. Then I was... I was in Morly and Chateauleng and in Quimper and there I had somewhere... combat engineers always had precedence..., and there I had (emphasizes) the honor (.....) of the army. The engineers receive that, that was always so. We had black, we always had black piping. I know, I don't know any more from whom, I think the battalion commander gave me the amphibious vehicle. That meant that I could drive it in other words on the street and into the water. It had a propeller on the back.

Tape 3/3, Side A

P: It was always better with my mother (laughs out loud) You would be spoiled, didn't have to do anything.

I: Yes, and you said earlier or no, turning it around, you came back wounded from France and were nursed by your mother., or so as I understood it, and what happened afterwards?

P: After my being wounded? Then I was married and there I began studying at the engineering school, you know, did the test, was accepted and studied there, you know, in Bremen.

I: Was that after the war or?

P: After the war.

I: You said earlier that you were also in Crete.

P: Only for a short time.

I: Only for a short time, right. Could you tell me a little bit about your experiences in Crete?

P: I don't have a lot to say about that. Yet I do have also (laughs out loud)..., yes because you just mentioned it, I did experience something too. In Crete where we were I arrived there still an army combat engineer, then I went to Athens and from Athens I flew by airplane, the JU 52, to Larissa on Crete. And in Crete now where they describe here in these beautiful newspapers these beautiful places (Regimon) and (Kania) and so forth. I was down there in (Regimon), situated at the school and then because we were combat engineers we had to somehow build a bridge in the vicinity of the Idage mountains and we built it and at its dedication the sergeant said we are now ready and I was then, must I lie or not, (pondering) I was still a ..., I was still a cadet or was I..., in any case I was still that. Because they came... (My wife is coming.) Then I came then... "We are going to have a little party." And they roasted something or other...(.....) and then they have...."Here just taste that." It looks as though it's a rabbit, it's not though. They told me later then. That was the first time in my life that I ate a cat. Have you...(laughs out loud)?

I: Hello. Good God (laughs slightly)

P: That the lady from Berlin... Yes, I had for the first time, they told me later that they had caught a cat and roasted it. And so for the first time in my life I ate a cat. That was Crete. When I continue to read that today in these periodicals (.....) I always think then about it or (Kania). I always think about it, you know. There you have it, you know. I just tempted you. So that was Crete.

I: Do you have any more memories of Crete?

P: No. I then came back again, flew back again.

I: Was Crete before France or afterwards?

P: Before France. There was something else (a radio was turned on) There was something, but nothing special. Then I was...I don't know (hesitates) I was then, I was..., from Crete I went to Athens. In Athens I was put in the hospital. I had somehow an infection of the stomach lining. And from there I had to then..., or with a truck or

something or like.., because that was no longer our unit, over the [mountain] pass to Saloniki and then in Saloniki or was it Larissa, no, it was Saloniki. And from Saloniki I went then by train to Germany and then I know, I had a heavy....That was a heavy pack and everything and so forth. And then I had somewhere afterwards (.....)always again whether it was in Vienna or already here in Germany. I just abandoned my baggage because I couldn't carry it any more. That I know. And then I went again...., well, then I went again to Schwedt, to the Oder [river]. Then I arrived, you know, in Dessau. Then from there I went to Schwedt/Oder again. Because I know at the time the bugs flew out of the ceiling and they bit me to death. That was really bad, in the barracks. The bugs were flying around there, they had fastened themselves to the ceiling, to the wooden partitions and so forth. No, but then I didn't go home any more. I didn't go home any more. In that way we had....

I: And what happened then, when was your war then..., when was the war over for you?

P: The war ended in '45, '45 and specifically in May '45.

I: And how did you experience that?

P: I experienced that in Ital., in an American reception camp near Heiligenhafen.

I: Can you tell me more exactly how you became a POW?

P: Yes (clears his throat). We were in Schwerin at that time. We had fled from the Russians. Just not to be captured by the Russians but rather by the Americans and the Americans were in Schwerin. And they divided us up immediately, the officers to the left and the enlisted men to the right. And then the officers who went to the left, they then were sent into a large reception camp there in Schleswig-Holstein near the town of Eutin/Heiligenhafen. And left there in the open, not somehow in barracks but rather out in the open. It was lucky that there was no snow or anything, rather luck that it was warm. And then it was like this in Heiligenhafen and in Heiligenhafen an American officer appeared and said, you, you, you, you, yes and then I reached the discharge office. And then Stottke has nothing (.....) I personally stamped it and discharged myself. I was discharged within (emphasizes) a very short time**Error!**

I: Did you still have to go through a denazification procedure?

P: That was done afterwards in Bremen. Everyone had to apply. I have that also upstairs (.....) Denazifica....or is denazified. Didn't belong to any party and was denazified. Hitler Youth was extra, you know. Everyone had to get a stamp But you were very proud when you got that paper. You could always show it and say I wasn't in it. It was an official office from the court in Bremen, you know, which processed that. You had to hand in everything.

I: You said earlier that before you returned to Bremen you got married Could you tell me a little about that?

P: (softly) I did that through an advertisement.

I: Otherwise there was nothing. You had nothing at all. You couldn't go anywhere. You went nowhere.

I: And did you get married during the war?

P: (.....) I told you there were no cafes or such, none of that existed. No bars, nothing like today, the discos, all that didn't exist. Nothing was at hand. They robbed us of our youth I already told you that. (yawning)**Error!** Oh, now we have been talking for three hours.

I: Yes, is there something I forgot to ask? Something that was important to you, that was important for your life, which you haven't mentioned yet?

P Well.

I: Is there something still which I haven't asked?

P: I've told you of my illnesses. That is really fate, a matter of fate. Otherwise it's really (pondering)..., '33, no '33 and before I have told you about my youth. I've told you about the stupid tricks I played, about my sports activities, the army period. Actually that is my life's story, rather summarized. Can you put that together and give me a copy?

I: Yes, yes if you want, I can give you a copy of the tape, we will do it and....

(End of Interview)