

John M. Steiner collection
Interviews with former members of the SS, other Nazi officials, and witnesses to Nazi Germany
RG-50.593

The following is a draft English-language summary of an interview in German from the John M. Steiner collection. The translation has been not been verified for accuracy, and therefore, may contain errors. Nothing should be quoted or used from this summary without first checking it against the taped interview. Moreover, the description of events in the summary may not match the sequence, time-code, or track number of the audio files.

Interview with Dietrich Wolff

In this interview, SS Obersturmbannführer Dietrich Wolff talks about his life, his family, his opinions, and experiences.

01:04 Wolff was with the Waffen SS from 1934 to 1947. He was born in Heidelberg on April 23, 1915 to a very religious father and grandfather. He completed his Arbitur (advanced high school diploma) in 1934, but never studied further despite his hopes and his family's expectations to do so. Other details about his parents and family background.

01:34 Talks more about his parents and neighbors. Many generations of his family were soldiers and Wolff was accepted as an officer on Oct. 1, 1938 but enlisted in 1933.

02:35 Recalls various memories about entrance exams for the elite SS group. Also tells about very high unemployment in the early 1930s and how impressed his family was that Hitler wanted to do something about the unemployment. As an 18 year old in 1933, he had no job so he applied for the military and was mentored early on by Himmler, a friend of his neighbors. Himmler invited him to dinner at his home and Mrs. Himmler liked him and suggested her husband Heinrich mentor Wolff.

04:28 In 1934 he was sent to Berlin for months of training, where he did well enough that he was selected for additional training to become an officer. He learned discipline by being locked for 3 days in a cellar with nothing to eat or drink and then put alone into another cell for 20 people and had to make all 20 beds each day and do other menial tasks as part of lieutenant training. Tells a lot of details of his training experiences. The training ended abruptly after four months.

7:19 *Strange noise starts which blocks vocal clarity; becomes unintelligible. Noise continues for the rest of the recording, with only random parts understandable.*

12:30 Tells experiences during very rigorous training exercises.

13:30 *Noise - unintelligible.*

15:00 Opinions on soldier training.

16:00 *Noise - unintelligible becoming increasingly garbled after 20:00.*

26:15 *New set; still unintelligible except for random words.*

40:00 *New set; still unintelligible except for random words. Generally about the end of the war, the camps set up by the Americans and his experiences. Noise overwhelms his words all the way to the end, at 49:00.*