

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Oscar C. J. Hackbarth
Cryptographic Technician, Signal Corps, Army, World War II.
1995

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Hackbarth, Oscar C.J., (b.1920). Oral History Interview, 1995.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Abstract:

Oscar C.J. Hackbarth, a Sun Prairie, Wisconsin resident, discusses his experiences in the Army Signal Corps as a cryptographic technician with the 95th Infantry Division, 3rd Army during World War II. Hackbarth was born in Richfield (Wisconsin) but grew up in Watertown (Wisconsin). After high school, he attended the Milo Bennett School of Linotype in Toledo (Ohio) to become a typesetter. Hackbarth explains he worked as a “two-thirder” apprentice printer for weekly newspapers in Dunn County (North Dakota), Lodi (Wisconsin), and Neillsville (Wisconsin). Hackbarth reveals he was drafted in 1942 while working at the Clark County Press in Neillsville. He comments he was eager to go to war as young men are “gung-ho for anything.” Hackbarth discusses his training, which took two years. He was inducted at Camp Grant (Illinois) and then went to Camp Swift (Texas) for basic training with the newly formed 95th Infantry Division. From there, he trained with the Signal Corps at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio (Texas), followed by Camp Coxcomb (California), then Indiantown Gap (Pennsylvania). Hackbarth mentions there was diversity in the ages of men in the 95th Infantry but that most were Midwestern high school graduates. Hackbarth reveals he married a woman from Wisconsin when he went home on furlough and that she lived with him for several months in an apartment in Indiantown Gap until Hackbarth was deployed to Europe in 1944. Hackbarth describes taking the *USS West Point*, from Boston (Massachusetts) to Liverpool (England) where he stayed in drafty Winchester barracks. In September 1944, he landed on Omaha Beach (France). He explains the 95th Division was attached to Patton’s 3rd Army and supplied the frontlines using drivers from the Red Ball Express. Hackbarth describes his first combat experience in October 1944 at Metz (France) which lasted six weeks; there were heavy losses in his division with 500 killed and 2900 wounded. Next, Hackbarth details his role as a cryptographic technician with the Signal Company. Working in the message center, he decoded messages on special “Enigma” machines and transferred them up and down the ranks from ground troops to the headquarters. He states cryptographers had twelve-hour shifts; when he was off duty he explored the towns and countryside where they were stationed. Hackbarth also describes how the Signal Company often commandeered civilians’ homes or businesses to use as message centers as the 95th Infantry traveled across France and Germany. Hackbarth discusses the code machines, security procedures, and a few lapses that occurred in the message center, explaining that the code machines had to be guarded at all times and shipped very carefully. Hackbarth details other combat experiences. The 3rd Army relieved the British at the end of the Battle of the Bulge then headed to Germany, capturing an important bridge to penetrate the Siegfried Line. According to Hackbarth, the 95th Infantry Division ended up in the

Ruhr Pocket on V-E Day. Always interested in history, Hackbarth laments that historical areas in the Ruhr were destroyed. He also touches upon recreation and military life. Hackbarth received a pass to visit Paris, which he did not enjoy very much. He states that most GIs went to Paris to sell Army-issued cigarettes to the French on the black market. Hackbarth comments on his interactions with French and German civilians. He recalls befriending a Polish family who lived in Metz; the mother of the family knit clothes for Hackbarth's newborn son. Hackbarth mentions his parents spoke German in the home in Watertown, and he studied German in elementary and high school. He comments that his loyalty was never questioned, but a Finnish-American friend was not accepted into the Signal Company. Due to anti-fraternization rules in the Army, Hackbarth explains he had to be careful when talking to Germans. He reflects upon relations between the French, Germans, Americans, and German-Americans. Near Warstein (Germany), Hackbarth met a German girl and her family after Russians stole her bicycle. Hackbarth portrays her as resentful of the Americans and says she blamed Hitler for the theft of the bicycle. He also discusses German attitudes towards war crimes. At the Warstein prisoner of war camp, Hackbarth describes how German civilians were forced to dig graves for 200 massacred Polish prisoners. He reports the Americans used tanks to prevent former Russian and Polish "slave laborers" in the POW camp from rioting against the German civilians. Despite the precautions, a German doctor and policeman were assaulted by Polish POWs in retaliation. Hackbarth recalls confirming the news of Hitler's death for the German girl and her mother who said: "Now we hear how bad it was, the treatment in the camps. One must be ashamed to be a German." However, Hackbarth states he "couldn't quite believe that the German people were totally innocent of the camps." After V-E Day, Hackbarth returned to the U.S. on points and was discharged in October 1945 at Camp Shelby (Mississippi). He reports he returned to Watertown and used the G.I. Bill to finish training as a printer. Housing was the biggest readjustment problem for Hackbarth; he states they lived with his wife's parents until they could move into a G.I. quonset hut. Next, he describes a difficult employment situation at the *Watertown Times* that prompted him to move to the *Milwaukee Journal*. Hackbarth reveals he moved to Sacramento (California) in 1958 to work on the *Sacramento Bee* under improved work conditions but moved back to Wisconsin after three years because of he was concerned about drug culture and the school system there. Hackbarth mentions he did church work for twenty years and joined the American Veterans (AmVets) Milwaukee chapter. He attended several reunions of the 95th Infantry Division but comments it was "mostly for the infantry line troops" and that fewer Signal Company men attended.

Biographical Sketch:

Hackbarth (b. 1920) was born in Ridgefield, Wisconsin and grew up in Watertown. He attended the Milo Bennett School of Linotype in Toledo (Ohio) and worked as a typesetting apprentice for newspapers in North Dakota, Lodi, and Neillsville, Wisconsin before he was drafted in 1942. Hackbarth served as a cryptographic technician in the Signal Company of the 95th Infantry Division attached to Patton's 3rd Army. He landed on Omaha Beach in September 1944 and fought at the Battle of Metz (France), the Battle of the Bulge (Belgium), and in the Ruhr Pocket (Germany). He also liberated a prisoner of war camp in Warstein (Germany). After the war, Hackbarth returned to Watertown (Wisconsin) where he completed his journeyman printer training using the G.I. Bill. After briefly working for the *Watertown Times*, Hackbarth spent nine years working as a printer for the *Milwaukee Journal*. In 1958, he moved to Sacramento and worked at the *Sacramento Bee* for three years before moving back to Wisconsin. Hackbarth has attended several reunions of the 95th Infantry Division and is a member of the American Veterans. He is also involved in church work and currently lives in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, 1995

Transcribed by Karen Emery, WDVA Staff, 1998.

Transcription edited and abstract written by Darcy I. Gervasio, 2010.

Interview Transcript:

- Mark: Okay. Today's date is October 19, 1995. This is Mark Van Ells, Archivist, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, doing an oral history interview this morning with Mr. Oscar Hackbarth of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, a veteran of the European Theater in World War II. Good morning.
- Oscar: Good morning.
- Mark: Thanks for coming in. I appreciate it.
- Oscar: Good to be here I guess.
- Mark: Okay. I suppose we should start at the top as they say and have you tell me a little bit about where you were born and raised and what you were doing prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.
- Oscar: Well, I was born in Richfield, Wisconsin—it's a little out of Menomonie Falls, a little town—April 16, 1920. My dad was a cashier in a small town bank there and we moved in 1926 to Watertown, Wisconsin for educational purposes and went through grade school and high school there and was interested in become a typesetter for newspapers and that's what I did. I went to Milo Bennett School of Linotype in Toledo, Ohio. Came back and looked for work in weekly newspapers as a "two-thirder" they called them.
- Mark: What's a "two-thirder?"
- Oscar: Well, getting to be a journeyman printer. So they referred it to that. It was really an apprentice. And so I worked in some weekly newspapers. First it was Dunn County, North Dakota for a year. Came back and worked at Lodi, Wisconsin for about a year. And then half a year up at Clark County Press in Neillsville, Wisconsin. And then I was drafted and went into service out of Jefferson County.
- Mark: Now, this was during the Depression when you were floating around.
- Oscar: Yes, yes.
- Mark: Is that normal for a printer to be going to paper to paper or was that part of the Depression sort of thing?
- Oscar: Well, that was, as an apprentice or "two-thirder" as they called them, yeah, you usually ended up in a small weekly newspaper then try to get into one

that's in a bigger city and so forth until you acquired enough experience to get into a journeyman role with a union.

Mark: But you remained gainfully employed?

Oscar: Yes, yes.

Mark: That wasn't a problem for you in the Depression.

Oscar: No, no.

Mark: So when the attack on Pearl Harbor came you were where? Going around somewhere.

Oscar: Yeah. I was here in Wisconsin at that time, yeah. And I got my first draft notice. At that time I was up at Neillsville, Wisconsin waiting for a summons.

Mark: When you got the greeting in the mail, I'm interested in your reaction. Was it something you thought was going to come or were you surprised?

Oscar: Well, I was sort of waiting for it because I had been classified once as a 4F with a heart murmur. Then later on I got the new classification and so I was sort of expecting it and willing and waiting, you know, just like every young guy at the time.

Mark: So you weren't fearful of it? Because you were getting established in a profession.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: Sort of getting going with your career and suddenly the Army comes along.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: I'm a little surprised that you didn't feel a little apprehensive about it.

Oscar: No, again, because, you know, at a young age like that, 19 to 21, you're gung-ho for anything, you know.

Mark: I suppose that's true. Okay. So you go in the Army. If you would, let's walk through the steps of where you go from the courthouse in Neillsville or wherever to the camp you trained in.

Oscar: Well, like I say, I was drafted out of Jefferson County so I came back here from Neillsville and went down to Camp Grant and was inducted there and

stayed there for a couple of weeks until a big bunch of people were sent down to Camp Swift in Texas.

Mark: In Texas.

Oscar: A new camp and a new division being formed. Most of the people were from the Midwest as it developed. So we did our basic training there.

Mark: And how long did that last?

Oscar: Well, we stayed there until we were transferred to Fort Sam Houston, the whole division, and trained then out of Fort Sam Houston, and we stayed there, again, a short time and of course went to _____ maneuvers, and after that went to Camp Coxcomb in the California desert, then went to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania for further training, and then some troops of the division went to West Virginia for mountain training, and then we headed finally over to Miles Standish as port of embarkation.

Mark: That's a lot of moving around.

Oscar: It was. And, well, it took two years.

Mark: Was this all with the 95th?

Oscar: All with the 95th. I was in it from the beginning until the end, after we came back from Europe.

Mark: Did you find basic training a difficult adjustment? Did you find it difficult to adjust to military life? The regimentation, the discipline, all that sort of stuff?

Oscar: I think not at that time, no, no. I think, again, you're willing to be, as a young person, willing to be led or formed, you know, to a group although a lot of stuff that you did first of all seemed kind of boring. And it's a new division; there's no organization yet so the first couple of months was pick up sticks and things like that. Doing a lot of police-up work in the area.

Mark: Real exciting stuff.

Oscar: Yeah and how.

Mark: But I suppose eventually you had to move on to weapons training, maneuvers, and that sort of thing.

Oscar: Yeah. Well, I was in the signal company so it was a little different. I took tests for radio work and things like that but I ended up in the message center

of the signal company. The signal company had a message center, and radio and telegraph, construction, and headquarters company so I got put in ...

Mark: How'd you wind up in that?

Oscar: Well, I ...

Mark: They pulled your name out of a hat? Or was it testing procedures?

Oscar: I think it was volunteerism. I got on a train, he says "Anybody have printing experience?" "Sir, I did." So ...

Mark: There you go. I'm interested in the sort of mix of people in the 95th division, and the training, and then I assume we'll get back to that when we get overseas. I mean, as you mentioned before they're mostly Midwesterners.

Oscar: Yes, yeah, yeah. And we had a good mix of, I mean, a mix of younger persons and also older persons which surprised me. Fellows that were in their mid-thirties already. But some later on did not go overseas because of that age thing.

Mark: Oh, is that right?

Oscar: Yeah. But, again, others of that age group did go overseas which was unusual. Why they got there, I don't know.

Mark: Did you get a sense of their educational level or professional experience? Like you for example, had started to become established in a profession. I imagine there were a lot of guys who, especially the older ones, who are already progressing through college or something.

Oscar: Yeah, getting established, yeah. But most, I think most of them too, the younger ones, were basically high school graduates, maybe some had, at the beginning probably not too many had college, but later on just before we went over we got a lot of replacements come in from the ASTP program and then we had a lot of college students, younger ones.

Mark: Now, in your travels around during your training, did you get much time to get off the post and go see the sites in town sometimes?

Oscar: Yeah, mostly I think it would be in Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio. And, of course, it being an old Army town it was, and of course the town being very old and the Alamo and other things there, we took in a lot of that stuff. At least I did. I was always interested in history. Usually ended up in town looking at something, you know, historical. But otherwise in other cities,

well, not too much because we were usually out in the field until we got to Indiantown Gap. Then I had become married during that time and went home on furlough, had a weeks' furlough and got married, came back to Indiantown Gap with my wife and we rented an apartment in town so I usually had to catch the bus early in the morning to get out to the base, you know. So that was unusual there. But that lasted a couple of months and I had to send the wife back home, of course.

Mark: You were going overseas I imagine.

Oscar: Yeah, that's right.

Mark: And so I suppose it's time for us to make this journey overseas then. Did you leave from Massachusetts?

Oscar: From Boston Harbor, yeah. We went over on the *USS West Point* which was a converted, you might say, cruise ship, the *America* in peacetime and that was transferred into a war thing. It had been all over the world at sea. The ship had been transporting troops from Australia to the European Theater and things like that all over the place, yeah. We went over without a convoy, just by ourselves.

Mark: How long did it take?

Oscar: It took, I think, five days.

Mark: Well, they got you over pretty quickly.

Oscar: Yes, yeah.

Mark: And what was that trip like?

Oscar: Well, it was, for me it was rough because I got sea sick very easily. I was down in the bunk most of the time.

Mark: I take it you weren't alone though.

Oscar: No, yeah, there were others. So, then of course they had drills and so forth on the ship, you know, for submarines but none appeared. They were just practice rounds and stuff.

Mark: Yeah. As a young enlisted man, what sort of accommodations did you have?

Oscar: Well, you know, just really rough, the bunk and that was it, you know. Layered up three or four layers. That was it.

Mark: Pretty cramped quarters I take it.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: And so you landed in England somewhere?

Oscar: Yeah, Liverpool. Liverpool, England, yeah.

Mark: And what happened after that? You had to ...

Oscar: Our division was there for a couple of months in training again. We were quartered in Winchester so we got to see some of the old sights there, too. But Winchester barracks was an old barracks, English barracks, British army barracks. There was no central heat in the place and stuff like that. And so we stayed there a couple of months and trained and then in September we ended up at Omaha Beach, you know. From there we were quartered on the, for another month, in the area.

Mark: In Normandy.

Oscar: In Normandy. That's our, as Patton needed more supplies the division was sitting there but the drivers of all the big trucks, they were in the Red Ball Express. And so for a month they did a lot of that supply Patton on the way to Germany.

Mark: And so when did you get attached to the 3rd Army then?

Oscar: Yeah, during that time we were headed for the front and were supposed to be attached to a different unit but ended up with the 3rd Army and with Patton's divisions.

Mark: So, from the time you landed in France in September, how long was it until the 95th division was involved in actual combat operations?

Oscar: Middle of October as a relief for the 5th Infantry Division so that they could get some rest. They had men scheduled to attack Metz from the south and it went really bad for them. They suffered a lot of casualties making headway so the division relieved them for a couple of weeks and gave the division troops your baptismal fire, you know. And then after that the 5th Division came back again and we were assigned to their left flank on the northern part of Metz and the 90th Division was on our left and then the attacks began, of course, on Metz. Metz was captured about the middle, 24th I think, of November they surrendered. But it was a rough deal because rivers were swollen and over the

banks and stuff like that. The Moselle was over its banks. And a lot of agony, of course.

Mark: So, in a combat situation as a cryptographic technician, what was your role in the combat operation? You weren't a rifle man but you were still in danger I would imagine.

Oscar: Well, we were usually anywhere from five to six, seven miles behind the lines.

Mark: Oh, is that right?

Oscar: Usually connected with the division CP so it was mostly, for the support troopers, it was mostly routine stuff, you know. The messages were sent, you know, from division to higher headquarters in code and received by us in code. And messages to lower units were just handed by written messages, no encoding or decoding. So for our signal company, and especially this message center, we were on, mostly like office, you were on 12 hours on and 12 hours off and a couple shifts, you know.

Mark: As the combat operations are going on.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: And if there was a lull in the combat I would imagine there wasn't nearly as much message traffic.

Oscar: Yeah, that's right. Most of the messages we received were routine. I don't recall anything exciting that we encoded or decoded except just one message and I'll mention that a little later.

Mark: Okay.

Oscar: But during the times we were off, different shifts, then I would take rides with the messengers and then I got a little closer to the regimental battalion headquarters. A lot of times we went and saw things and got lost a couple of times and things like that.

Mark: Now, as you read military history one of the, about World War II, one of the things that historians have often mentioned is that as you get closer to the front the sort of military discipline sort of relaxes a little bit.

Oscar: Yeah, the formality.

Mark: The famous Army term "chicken" and "feces."

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: And so I'm interested in how things may or may not, in your experience, have changed when you actually got involved in the combat operations.

Oscar: Yeah, for the division and for our support troops, too, you know, it was more casual and you just salute the officers and stuff like that but it wasn't as formal. Dress was sort of informal, too, you know, although we had certain rules and regulations.

Mark: Now, I'd imagine in your position you weren't exactly in with the _____ and grow a kind of beard or anything. You had to be a little more—

Oscar: Well...

Mark: Of course, you were under Patton, too.

Oscar: Yes, yes, yeah. Well, we saw him when our division first got into the front lines and he met with all the officers at a staging area and our message center was right there. So we got to see him, heard him talk to the officers about, you know, marching fire, what sort of fox holes you dig. Keep on shooting and just advancing he said. Then he talked about, again, the thing he was famous for, you know, about what's the term "battle fatigue," you know, things like that. He wasn't really too convinced that it was a thing. Our division, too, was, our general was General Twaddle, Harry Twaddle, also from the beginning to the end of the division, he commanded. And the assistant division commander was General Faith (sp??). Twaddle was a pretty good friend of the Secretary of War Simpson so I think he got a little pull that way as far as assignments.

Mark: Now, as time went on, I would imagine there were significant casualties in your division.

Oscar: During the Metz campaign there were about 500 killed and over 2900 wounded. And during that time they asked for volunteers from the service troops to go into the line troops. Except for signal company, they were exempted from that.

Mark: Why was that?

Oscar: Well, the number of people we had all stretched out in different communications lines. To me it was always a curious incident, which I didn't know until our division, at the end of the war, had an association and we meet yearly as a reunion. And then at one of the reunions Twaddle spoke and he spoke about some unusual incidents. And one that I always remember was at

one of the reunions he spoke about one time during this time when they were low on replacements, calling up for volunteers. There were two brothers, and I'm not sure if they were twins or just brothers but it seems to me they were twins, from the ordinance company volunteered and then one was killed in a patrol one night and then as we-- after the Battle of the Bulge and our division was sent up to Belgium and on the way on the convoy, we were strafed by German planes and the only casualty was this other brother. So I always remember that as an unusual incident.

Mark: It's something you wouldn't forget.

Oscar: That's right.

Mark: So, as the casualties mounted I imagine there were replacements coming in.

Oscar: Yes, that's it. And again, more of the younger people from the ASTP groups, too.

Mark: Yeah, I was going to ask how the division may have changed as time went on.

Oscar: Yeah, yeah.

Mark: You were getting more of these ASTP types?

Oscar: Yeah, yeah. And more younger people and, well, they fit in real well with the division of course and that, but they were just, you know, they got their basic training in some replacement depot and were shipped out and ended up as, you know, veterans you might say. I remember one incident, too, that when we were in the States there was a, in Camp Willis, we were training there on maneuvers, you know, and I remember one time I met a guy who was sagging behind and lagging behind and his company was way ahead and he couldn't make it. Overseas, I met this person, he had been commissioned as a second lieutenant. To me, what a change. I guess under fire you do things, you know, and get control of it. When he was in the States he was lagging behind.

Mark: Not something you would have expected.

Oscar: And how, yeah, yeah.

Mark: So, as you mentioned, you went to the Bulge then.

Oscar: Yeah. After it was all over with, yeah. But really, not to relieve anybody there but just to pass through to relieve the British, we were assigned to a British area. And we stayed up in Belgium and all through Holland for a

couple of weeks to help the British realign their lines after this battle of— what's that?

Mark: Arnhem?

Oscar: Arnhem, yeah. Stuff like that. So we were out of the 3rd Army, into the 9th Army at that time.

Mark: So, as time went on and as the allies moved farther and farther towards Berlin did the combat change? From your perspective anyway? I mean, did the Germans, did their defenses loosen up some more? Were they not as effective? Did the Americans get more effective? Did they remain tough?

Oscar: Well, probably not as tough as it was at Metz. And division went also from Metz, they advanced right into Czar and their Seigfried Line. The division also captured a bridge intact that wasn't, you know, as noted as the one at Remagen, you know, but it was a bridge that got into the Czar and into the beginning of the Seigfried Line and there was stiff German resistance there. Then as we got up to the Ruhr, that was where we ended up eventually, there was pockets of resistance but it was already crumbling a bit. And there were a lot of divisions really stacked on top of one another so there was, we moved every three or four days it seemed, yeah. So there wasn't as much time to sit in one place like we were in Metz for almost six weeks or two months. But then after we got to the Ruhr area it was a change every couple of days, moving in and out, you know, to new locations.

Mark: And that was in the Ruhr? That's where you were when the war ended. In Europe, anyway.

Oscar: Yeah. Division was part of the group, divisions that was assigned to eliminate the Ruhr pocket. And of course, being a _____ area there was a lot of stuff there but it was the most bombed out area we saw during the whole war, you know.

Mark: I'll come back to that. I'm going to back-track a little bit and ask about some of sort of leisure activities you may have had. Did you get to have any leave at all?

Oscar: Yeah, unfortunately I was one of those picked to go to Paris. **[laughter]** It was a long train ride. First of all a long truck ride and then you got to one place for the train, then you got on the train to go to Paris for a three day pass. Ended up in the Red Cross area where they had a lot of things going where you were quartered and so forth. Looked over the area but most of the guys, I think, that went there went there for one purpose and that was to sell cigarettes.

Mark: Quite a black market in that.

Oscar: Yeah. So I got in thing too. My pockets were filled with cigarettes and stuff like that and guy, a kid, contacted me on the street and told him, "Yeah, I've got some." He says, well, he didn't have enough money on hand so he says, "Come along with me." And I was sort of hesitant and finally I did. We went into a big building and up a couple of flights of stairs, into a big room. There was about half a dozen GIs sitting around there drinking and talking. So I told the kid I didn't want a part of that, I want to do business away from that. And so one guy at a table says, "Well, of course, you realize you're under arrest." But he says, finally he says, "Oh, I'm just joking." We were all there for the same purpose. So I got out ...

Mark: Nothing to joke about.

Oscar: ... no. I got out of there in a hurry though. Guy says, "Well, stick around and have some drinks." I thought, oh, that's a good way to get fleeced so I got out of there in a hurry, went back. I really didn't, like I say, I didn't enjoy the three days in Paris.

Mark: It sounded a little stressful.

Oscar: Yeah, that's right. I got down to the Eiffel Tower and a few things like that. And I was getting acquainted with the subway system but I think it wasn't like I anticipated.

Mark: Did you have much other contact with the French civilians as you were going through? Or the Germans as you got into Germany?

Oscar: Yeah. Not in France so much but when we were at Metz and we were quartered, during the fight at Metz, we were quartered in a town called Moyeuivre-Grande. It was on the Moselle River. And there we got into, we were quartered in a tavern, or said it was in a tavern. A lot of the people from the area just came in and we made friends with a lot of people there, mostly laborers in the mines. Not necessarily French people. The family I got acquainted with most was a Polish family. Really got acquainted with them and the whole family, small kids and so forth. In fact, when our son was born and I told them about that the mother knit a suit for our son. I kept track of the people after we came back to the States for a couple of years but then, of course, it vanished, you know, after awhile.

Mark: Yeah. Things like that happen.

- Oscar: Yeah. And when we got further up, after we left Metz, that we quartered in another town called Roupeldange [Germany], a little farm community, you know, with the typical European houses in that area, along with the cattle in the fields, out in the fields, you know. And there we were quartered with a number of really French, German, ethnic. You couldn't really tell. But this one fellow we were quartered with, he said when his son was about five years old and ready to go to school, speaking French, you know. And when the Germans came everything was German, you had to learn German. So he said now his son, he says he was really dumb. He didn't know either language. It sort of amazed me. But the division had, in that city, or little village, stayed for a couple of, about three weeks, made a lot of acquaintances. I know the company commander went back there after about 20 years and remarked in our division journal about his trip going back to that small village and seeing the same people that are still there, children are grown up, and stuff like that. Not too much movement.
- Mark: Yeah. Now, of course, the French were our allies. As you got into Germany, did you have much contact with Germans? And if so, how would you characterize that?
- Oscar: Well, of course non-fraternization was on, so we really couldn't do too much.
- Mark: That was the rule. But was that actually followed?
- Oscar: Not necessarily but we had to be careful because we had a couple of warrant officers in our company that were really sticklers for carrying on as procedure, so it was difficult. But we did, you know. I had a couple of instances like that, you know, that I was able to contact people. But there was always that fear, that you've got to be careful because these officers might be around, and these warrant officers were not too well liked to begin with. They were sad cases, anyway, in our judgment. But I remember going into one home that we were quartered in and passing through to our places that we assigned, you know. When we get to a place to set up our CT we would commandeer buildings and say we're going to move in and the people usually either went in the basement or upstairs or somewhere. We just took over what we wanted. I remember one guy saying, I told him, "Is it okay if we do this?" And he sort of smiled as if to say, "Well, you're the victors. You can do what you want." And another time there was an old general reading his Bible. I would have liked to talk to him but we had the warrant officer in our area so I was afraid, you know, if I talked to him I would, you know, get pulled over for a fine or something like that. So I didn't do that. Then in another place we were quartered some of the guys had set up a photographic unit to develop pictures and so the woman of the house, she wondered about what kind of business that was, of doing secret work, you know. Of course, we strung her along with that, you know.

Mark: So I imagine the name Hackbarth is a German name?

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: I don't know if you have any sort of, how ethnic your household may have been. I mean, in Wisconsin that's not unusual at all. I don't know. Did you know any German?

Oscar: Yeah. I took German 8, really 12 years—elementary and high school. And when my folks were younger, you know, when I was growing up they would always talk in German and we would answer in English, you know. I always wondered about that, too, getting into this cryptographic work because you had to fill out a form, you know, to be challenged—not challenged but tested—

Mark: Checked out.

Oscar: ...checked out, you know. And with my German background I wondered about that because I passed no problem. But we had a fellow in our company who was of Finnish origin and he was denied. I don't know why. Strange.

Mark: Strange, yeah. Now, there was one message you were going to tell me about.

Oscar: Well, when we were in the Ruhr area, like I said there were a lot of divisions around and we got one message one night and we—messages always had, when you received a message it already had been paraphrased from the other end and you had to re-paraphrase it again—and when we got it we wondered about its contents because we thought, gee, that's an unusual message so we thought, well, what should we do with it? We went to the division headquarters and asked somebody in the office there, I don't know if it was G1 or G2, but he said, "Well, send it on." Well, the message was just to inform the general of the 75th Division that he was relieved of his command. So we never knew what happened after that; we just sent it up. I've often wondered about that; for what reason, you know? Was it just a change of command or was it something that he had done?

Mark: He had done. I suppose that sort of thing can be checked.

Oscar: Yeah, yeah.

Mark: The bearer of bad tidings I suppose.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: So, in May of '45 you were in the Ruhr when the war in Europe ended. Do you recall hearing the news?

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: Do you recall your reaction and those around you?

Oscar: Yeah. Well, really I don't think it was elated because around that same time there was, you know, peace rumors and stuff like this here, and already there was news in the *Stars and Stripes* that three divisions were going to be sent back home to be sent across the Pacific and ours was one.

Mark: Oh, is that right?

Oscar: Yeah. So we were one of the three divisions so we really left, well, by the time we got the news already in June and units were already heading back home, we ended up that way with three divisions going back over, going back home for furlough. And, of course, VJ Day came and so the division just sat in Mississippi waiting for release, you know. But really I don't remember anything unusual, at being elated or anything like that. Just you might say, like other guys, happy the war was over, we could go home and resume life, you know, and stuff like that.

Mark: So when the war ended, you were in Mississippi?

Oscar: Yeah. That is VJ Day.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

Oscar: ... go home and resume life, you know, and stuff like that.

Mark: So when the war ended, you were in Mississippi?

Oscar: Yeah. That is VJ Day.

Mark: Right.

Oscar: Yeah. The whole division was at Camp Shelby, then according to the point system, you know, you waited there to be discharged, but those who had their points high enough were sent to Camp Chaffey, or the 44th Division, for waiting for their number to come up, you know.

Mark: And I imagine yours is pretty high.

Oscar: Yeah. It was.

Mark: You were in since '42, you were married.

Oscar: And a child, yeah. So I was discharged in October of '45 from Camp Chaffey.

Mark: Now it's at this point that a lot of people's war histories end, but I want to go a little farther and talk about some of the other sorts of readjusting back into civilian life.

Oscar: Okay.

Mark: As you got out of the service, what were your priorities in getting your life back on track?

Oscar: Well, of course, being married and with a child already, the thing was trying to get work, you know, and having had, you might recall, "two thirder" standing with the unions, I was looking for further advancement. I had worked as an apprentice [?] printer at the daily newspaper in Watertown so I thought I'd go back there and talk with one of the fellows who I knew was high up in the American Legion. So I talked to him and I said, "Well, if you know of any openings around." I didn't really think of Watertown itself, but maybe some other newspapers around. But then he approached the boss and the boss said, "Okay, we'll hire you." At the same time there were two other returning veterans who were also hired and that was a little unusual in one respect because we were all under the GI Bill of Rights, getting training there, and with the number of people they had working there, really, according to the rules, there were too many apprentices for the number of journeymen.

Mark: Oh, is that right?

Oscar: So sweetheart deals with people that were made. And so we finished our apprenticeship there after four years. We got credit for service time, not service time but previous work as an apprentice.

Mark: When you think of GI Bill you think of the campus and that sort of thing.

Oscar: Yeah.

Mark: But there was a lot more to the training aspects of the GI Bill than that. In your experience, there was a provision where you would, where the government would pay your company for your training?

Oscar: Yeah, that's right.

Mark: Is that how it worked?

Oscar: That's right, yeah. And then we got a salary, too. Get a portion of a, not a salary but some government fee, money. We also went to Milwaukee Vocational for one day a week, too, for lessons. But basically, again with the number of people, journeymen there compared with three apprentices, we really didn't get too much training. We just picked it up on our own. Again, I think sweetheart deals were made in those situations where they allowed this to happen. Then, of course, it was just getting ready for new processes, too, you know. So our, *Watertown Times* are noted for not being a union paper. It was-- they had tried to organize a number of times but really hadn't made. There were strikes and stuff like that. So when we're ready to finish our apprenticeship, the publisher really had to have equipment, teletype equipment at his home ready to be brought in because he had already-- we were trying to organize again and so he fired one of the guys that was just going to get his journeyman card. When he came to work the next Monday-- he did it on a Friday-- the next Monday we heard about it so I went up to him and I gave him my key. I said I didn't think that was right so I says, "I'm going to quit today, now." And the other fellow, the fired fellow, he already had received a job in Illinois so that ended that. We went to Milwaukee to look for work, this other fellow that was fired, and we got hired by the *Milwaukee Journal* and we worked, I worked there for nine years. The first year we drove back and forth with this fellow. He had a car; I didn't have a car. Quite burdened by bus, not business but family things, you know, and he was single so he drove me in and we worked nights at the *Journal* for about three years but realized it was too much so we finally moved to Milwaukee, bought a house there, and worked for the *Milwaukee Journal* until 1958. Then moved to Sacramento, California to work on the *Sacramento Bee*. Then came back, after three and-one-half years feeling that—the company we worked for was just the opposite of the *Journal*. The *Journal* liked to brag about its employee ownership but it was a tough place to work. So we went off to California, worked for the *Sacramento Bee*, beautiful company, was just like heaven. But I didn't like what was happening in California, the school systems and things like this.

Mark: What was happening?

Oscar: Well, the change in discipline and stuff like that. Drugs was already beginning and stuff like that.

Mark: Yeah. This is early 1960.

Oscar: Early '60s, yeah. So we moved back. At that time, too, I was, our church had developed a training institute, a bible institute for people who would be interested in going into church work, and that's what I did as our convention decided to start the school in Milwaukee. And so I did that. Took an AA

degree from that two year bible institute and then went out into church work for 20 years. I really was in a printing business for 20 years and also served in our church for 20 years and then retired from there.

Mark: Managed to stay busy.

Oscar: Yes, always busy. And still busy.

Mark: And so after the war there wasn't, you didn't have too much difficulty finding work.

Oscar: No, no. Business, all businesses were expanding, you know. And the *Milwaukee Journal* was adding people right and left and growing like mad. And when we were thinking about moving, we went on a summer trip to Denver and Salt Lake looking for work in those places. And work was available there, too, but when I came back home somebody said, well, Sacramento is a good place to work. They were adding new people there and adding a seventh day; they were only publishing six days so they were adding a seventh day. And so we went out there, called up the man, he says, "Come on out." And so we got out there and started working right away. My first job was to print the text of Governor Brown's acceptance speech when he became governor out there. That's all I had to do that night, was just set up that in type and then go home. And it was a beautiful place. You worked seven and-a-half hours but if work was only six hours, you got paid for seven and-a-half and you went home. Beautiful situation.

Mark: Now, as you mentioned, you bought a house. I don't want to ask too many questions about it but I'm wondering if you used the GI loan to finance that?

Oscar: No. That's the strange part of it. It was in Watertown, the first house we bought. I had an uncle, really not an uncle, second cousin who loaned me the money at a very nominal rate and when we paid off the interest every six months he always gave a little rebate. He was single himself. He didn't really have too much but he had a pretty good job so he had money. After that it was always on my own. We bought a house in Sacramento, too, and after we left there we rented it for a couple of years but then we were in Illinois so it was difficult—we had a friend of ours that kept track, collected the rent and all this, but it got too much so we sold the house for what we paid for it. About three, five years ago we met a friend who at the same time left Milwaukee for the *Sacramento Bee* and he had just one more year left on his house payment which we would have had, too, if we would have kept it, you know. And he said he always went to the bank and they always laughed because his house payment was \$100 a month.

Mark: Boy that would be nice I tell you.

Oscar: Yes and how.

Mark: Now there were other readjustment problems some veterans faced. Psychological, emotional adjustments. Now you weren't involved in the combat situations so those might not have been as pronounced as an infantry man, but did you have any sort of personal adjustments to make?

Oscar: Well, adjustments where living at this time because when we first came back we lived with her parents for awhile and, of course, they had still children at home so it was just, we were just living in a bedroom you might say.

Mark: Which for a grown adult, a veteran, must have been kind of tough.

Oscar: Yeah, kind of, yeah. So the city of Watertown had housing, too, like a lot of other cities were putting up Quonset homes. And so got a pool, you know, the editor from the newspaper got a pool with the people involved, and so we got housing in a Quonset hut. Two families in a Quonset hut, you know. So we lived there for a couple of years until we bought this house in Watertown. So the first couple of years were kind of stressful. When we moved to Milwaukee we rented, too, for a couple of years before we bought there and that was interesting because we rented from an old German guy, too, who had been in America 25 years and still had a heavy accent. He worked as a chef for the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Very good landlord. But then we wanted to be on our own so then we bought a house in northwest Milwaukee in the town of Granville. We bought a nice, small house in the country.

Mark: Sounds nice.

Oscar: But now in the city of Milwaukee, yeah.

Mark: Now.

Oscar: Yeah, yeah.

Mark: I've got just one last area I want to cover and that involves veterans organizations and reunions and that sort of thing. As you mentioned, you've gone to some reunions. When did you start doing this kind of thing? Right after the war? Or was it a while after?

Oscar: Yeah, right after the war, it was a couple of years after the war. Our association is 46 years old. So they, almost immediately after the war they organized which was about I think about 1950 really before the first one. It was in Chicago. I went to that one. Got a number of friends, you know. It came to Milwaukee and I went to that one. And then one other in Chicago.

And didn't get to one for many years until Green Bay here about 1989. And then there were two at Green Bay. And now this last one in Chicago.

Mark: What is it that possesses you then and now to go to these reunions? How have they changed over time?

Oscar: Well, really the reunions are mostly for the infantry line troops. They have stories to relay, to tell over and over again. The camaraderie that they had, you know, really continues on. Line service troops, probably not as much, you know. I keep track with about half a dozen guys, you know, at Christmas time and about that. I usually went to see who would come to them. From our company, very few. Maybe half a dozen. This last time in Chicago, there were ten. That's the highest it had been.

Mark: Is there kind of a division between the riflemen and you guys in the back?

Oscar: Yeah. Well, ...

Mark: Even at these reunions? You travel in different circles?

Oscar: Yeah, sure. A lot of them also have their reunions just company size, you know, and they get together. Then there are some chapters in Ohio and Pennsylvania that the whole regiment can get together. And the field artillery, too, battalion sometimes get together. I read of them in their 95th Journal which we get about four times a year. And there's a lot of good stories in there, too. People that are, like this where they recount their experiences to them. So they're always interesting. But our line troops, we're— thank God that they can do this at this age yet.

Mark: And what about veterans' organizations. Groups like the Legion, that sort of thing. Did you ever join any of those groups?

Oscar: No. I joined Amvets years ago when I lived in Watertown.

Mark: So it was not too long after the war.

Oscar: Yeah. They formed right after the war.

Mark: Now, why did you pick that group over some of the more established ones?

Oscar: Well, I think, again, being a World War II veteran, I think that was the main thing. I wanted to get in with the people that knew, on the bottom rung you might say. We developed a pretty good organization there, the Amvets. They were pretty active for the first couple of years.

- Mark: What sort of, I mean, what was your involvement? Did you attend the meetings and that sort of thing?
- Oscar: Yup. We were real active. I was one of the officers for a couple of years but then after we moved to Milwaukee I sort of lost track and never joined a group after that. But always interested in. I still get Amvets material and stuff like that and support them with donations and stuff like that. That's about the only activity with organizations.
- Mark: Well, that's my line of questioning.
- Oscar: Okay.
- Mark: Is there anything you'd like to add? Do you think I've ...
- Oscar: Well, a couple of things we can mention. Like our division when it was in the Ruhr, there were a lot of what they called "task force." A division was assigned to another group or another groups was assigned to our division and they were given a specific objective, you know. One of these "task forces" in our division was the one that captured _____ Popins (??) area, his womb. So we were there, just happened to be there when the general met him and there were a lot of photographers around and taking pictures and he soluted him and offered him a cigarette but those pictures were never printed because later on we heard that the higher-ups were really peeved at the general for doing that. So that didn't sit too well with the higher-ups, yeah. Well, like I say, in my area of code work we had a lot of interesting things happen. When we first went overseas, first of all these code machines were large like a four-drawer filing cabinet except there were two drawers and they sat on top of each other, and they were heavy, real heavy metal, and the machine was called an Enigma (??). It was a typewriter-based machine with wheels in the back. You could take off the wheels and those were the letters on there, then they were inserted into the machine according to the code for the day. Only people who were certified for code work could go into this room or to the area where this machines were, you know. And so when we got our machines before we left port of embarkation there always had to be a guard so on the ship we always took turns, our message center people took turns to guard them. When we were ready to debark at Liverpool the stevedores, the British stevedores were allowed to take them off but the guards had to be with them but I remember one guy saying he thought that's where our money went, to pay the troops. So the bottom heavy trunk was two handles on each side and they were a couple hundred pounds each. To lug those in and out of trucks all the time was really tiresome.
- Mark: Yeah, it must not have been an easy task, you know, if the division was picking up and moving on.

Oscar: Especially towards the end, yeah. And so the bottom was filled with the code stuff and the top was the machine so you had two sets of those. That's where they're always in or off the trucks. But when we got over to France and became a little more lenient even though the code procedure was take them off the trucks, put them, set them up, have your guards, and you had to be in a room all by yourself, could be no other part of message center there, and if you couldn't have a room like that, you had to curtain it off so nobody else could see. And so one time after the, during the Battle of the Bulge there were a lot of what do you call it? Paratrooper sightings, people coming ...

Mark: German paratroopers?

Oscar: German troopers landing, so our good old warrant officer, he said, "Let's get a 50 caliber machine-gun and put it in our room here." You wouldn't have been able to operate that thing. A lot of people really were on him for that, yeah. But when we got into Ruhr, of course we captured a lot of, division troops captured a lot of cryp so after, in Germany we had a lot of extra vehicles that we put the machines on the vehicles and kept them there, then we had guards keeping them in the truck themselves. But we always had monitors from corps Army and so one guy finally said we can't do that, and so we had to pick them off the truck and set them up every time we were out. And especially after one division lost a truck with their code equipment in it there was really hell to pay because they really were concerned about that. I never heard if they found it or what happened, you know. After that security was pretty tight.

Mark: Now, in your experience was there any security breeches? I mean, did you ever find someone trying to spy on you? Or just sort of lapses ...

Oscar: Mostly lapses in procedures, yeah. But we had, well, an interesting one but after the war, just after VE Day, there was a lot of reassignments and moving of the troops and one of our regiments was sent to Bremen to do port duty and they also wanted them to establish communications with them up there, so one of our radio troops, or groups, were sent up there to establish radio contact with them. But then they also wondered, it was still necessary to encode messages, so they required one of our warrant officers to go up there and establish a code machine. They would provide the code machine and then he would be in charge of that, but that was over 170 miles away from where we were quartered and during this time I would go up with one of the drivers to the regimental CP and when it came time for the warrant officer to go and pick up the equipment from Corps, no driver was available. So I said I would volunteer to go up because I had been up there in the daytime, I thought I knew the way. By the time we got started it was mid-afternoon, it was dark by the time we got there, and on the way got lost a couple of times so I ended up

in a British command post. Either British or Canadian, never realized really which way, but then they gave us directions and we went out of town and it wasn't it so we came back and got more directions, headed a different way out of town and just as we were rounding a curve we got a shout, "Stop!" and some, three soldiers came out and says, "Where are you going?" and we told them. He says, "Well, 20 more feet and you'd have been in the river." We'd gone out, bridge was there, if they wouldn't have called us we would all gone into the river with our truck and code equipment and everything. So I was thankful for three Canadian soldiers. I owe my life to them in a way.

Mark: Well, that was very interesting.

Oscar: Well, maybe as the ending here I can say, in some of the, after our division liberated a lot of the Ruhr areas, we encountered, of course, a lot of slave laborers and prisoners of war, so maybe we could end with something like that, that some of the reactions of the troops and some of the reactions of the people there. Well, I'll start with this. When we were at [unintelligible] I went out on all the runs to see the country. The bridges were blown over most of the rivers and a tank destroyer battalion had a time when Polish bodies were dug up from graves at Warstein, which was in their area. Lieutenant Reeves (sp??), Swenson, Wooder (sp??), and Sword (sp??) and a few others went down to view the scenes and take pictures. The photographers also were down there and took some 300 feet of film plus a dozen still shots. I was working when they came in and told us which sites corresponded with what the boys from the message center saw. It required two tanks to keep the Polish and Russian slave laborers quiet while the people in town were made to bury each person in the grave from the 278 people that were dug up with the slave laborers going into the woods getting branches for clubs to use against the German civilians and so the civilians were marched home with the tanks accompanying them to avoid a massacre. The bodies included men, women, young and old, and a baby they estimated a couple of months old. All had been shot, with the baby having it's skull crushed. They had been dead from six to eight weeks. The German policeman approved by the military government was beat up by the Russians who claimed he was one of the guards at the plant they were working at and had a hand in putting people through there. A civilian doctor was also beat up for some reason that I can't remember right now. Displaced persons were still being rounded up and put in camps to avoid fights to hurry up the process of sending them home and yet there were many still wandering on the roads and every time they saw a German civilian riding a bicycle it was just too bad for the civilian because he was relieved of his bike. I was taking a nap one afternoon when I heard excited voices outside, and the fellows called me out. There was an old man with a place, and his daughter. They had gone to the next town and were stopped by Russians who demanded their bicycles. They didn't have an alternative so they gave them up. The girl was talking rapidly and excited, on

the verge of tears, and so it sort of struck me funny that I couldn't help smiling at her and she really got peeved but she continued her story and I translated for the other guys. After they were without bicycles they stopped a jeep and an officer helped them look for the Russians with the bikes but no success. The Lieutenant had to leave and a jeep with MPs came up. The girl offered them two bottles of wine if they would help her find it so the MPs took her to the house, got the wine, and drove away leaving the girl dumbfounded. I told her to go to the MP headquarters and she did. The next day, again, she tried but no luck. We were walking, talking to her about it in the afternoon, and I really got a kick about her attitude. She blamed it all on Hitler. This was the first time in years she had had the bicycle out and then she had it stolen, and then to blame it on Hitler. Now that he was reported dead, every little thing was Hitler's fault. The girl's mother was a small white haired woman, very meek and tired. They naturally asked a number of times when we'd be moving. I told her I didn't know. She said they were anxious to move back into their home. In the daytime they stayed in the little summer kitchen and slept at nights in a neighbor's house. The girl answered quickly, "What can we do?" Her voice gave no doubt that she was quite displeased at our being there naturally, but her manner, tone of voice and looks seemed to say "I hate the Americans" and wished they would do something about it, wished I could do something about it. I never met another person in Germany so resentful as she—old or young. When it was announced that Hitler was dead, the old lady came and asked if it was so. I told her and she said "Now we hear how bad it was, the treatment in the camps. One must be ashamed to be a German." I agreed with her in part of the last statement; however, I couldn't quite believe that the German people were totally innocent of the camps or were without knowledge of what was going on.

Mark: Do you think that's true today, after 50 years?

Oscar: Again, it seems that maybe some, there are some that feel that way, yeah. But I think pictures and stuff like that just tell the tale and history gives it out.

Mark: Now, as someone who grew up in a German-descended household, what was your reaction to all those? Or did you give it much thought?

Oscar: No, because I think, you know, growing up here and seeing what Hitler had done it was really necessary to do something. It was really, it would have been really necessary _____ to have already done something in the '30s, you know, to keep him from growing like he did. And we have the same thing now you might say, in Bosnia and so forth like that. But my parents, like all other second-generation Germans, you know, were really concerned about that, that Hitler had gotten power and was really upsetting the German people even though they were looking for better times and he had promised them, you know, the world and stuff like that because my, the fellow that gave me the

money for my house, he was in the First World War as a German soldier and he came over the America in '27 and he was one of those that Hitler enticed back, to come back to Germany but of course he didn't go, you know.

Mark: Oh, is that right?

Oscar: But we had a couple of families in Watertown that did go back with their children, two boys, especially the Loeffler (sp??) family boys. Well known in Watertown. They went back with their families but they were fortunate again to leave before the war started, they got back to America, because when they got there they realized what was happening. But I think most the old, first and second generation Germans, while they may have had some leanings towards the German nationalism I think they realized that ...

Mark: This wasn't the way they wanted it.

Oscar: Yeah, that's right.

Mark: You've got some other spots marked off.

Oscar: Well, let's see here. This one is just a story about running off the bridge. This one here is, the town of Soest was severely battered from artillery fire. It was an old-time town dating back to the 1300s.

Mark: That's S-O-E-S-T?

Oscar: Yes, yeah. A French officer— prisoner of war camp was located there as well as a Russian camp, plus thousands of slave laborers. The French were dressed up as if they had come there with us. They didn't seem underfed, they looked well-dressed and stood in the streets just staring. The French were the best kept prisoners that the Germans had. I believe it was meant that way. The Germans wanted them to be on their side. They tried to influence them so that when they got back to France they wouldn't say too many bad things about the Nazis. My opinions of course. And I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of Frenchmen were just a little bit satisfied with their _____. The Russians and other slave laborers were going hog wild in town. In the post office they were going through letters for money. From a bakery they were getting sacks full of flour and carting them off. In clothing stores they were getting everything they could fix, put their hands on. I saw a couple of them leading a calf towards their camp. Along a creek they were washing themselves and cooking and putting on new clothes. We moved into a house at the edge of town where the civilians had been ordered to move. We only stayed there from April 8 through the 10th. The house was a message center headquarters and the house was a German naval officer who wasn't home. There were no lights or water but the people had filled the bathtub full and that came in

handy for us. After throwing our stuff in the house, setting up a cot, the race was on to who would get the best places there. Rick and I decided the cellar would be the best place for us. With flashlights we went down to their bomb-proof shelter in the basement. It was heavily constructed. The doors were like on a ship, iron doors with two handles as latches. Inside there were four wooden beds, a trunk, and a small line of clothes. We were all, all we could find for military necessity was a few candles and a picture of Adolf Hitler which was annihilated. We tore it up. We headed for the attic on the heels of two other fellows and they were the ones who found a Luger pistol and two fancy swords. The house was full of Nazi books and the usual array of pictures, picture books of the 1936 Olympics, the party meetings, Hitler's life, and a picture of every occasion that somebody made a fortune on, especially Hitler's personal photographer who had the rights on all the pictures. There was the usual propaganda.

[End of Interview]