

Transcripts of the Audio Files, A B C and D
The Four Files are continuous, not divided in this transcript.

DISC 5

Q: Disc 5 side A about 40 minutes.

My name is Howard W. Vogel. My serial number was 17048335. I was in the Army during World War II. I was in 910th anti-aircraft and anti-tank battalion division. We had 40mm mostly for anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. As I recall some of the information going back, of course now I am making this tape on the 10th day of May 1983. I am 63 years old and I'll do the best to recall what I can during the war. Some of it may not be easy, but a lot of it is still in my mind. As I recall some of the events we were to engagement to free a, what do they call it, a camp where they had the slaves in, they called it a concentration camp as I recall. It was a few miles from a railroad station down at Berchtesgaden. I can't even recall the name of the concentration camp, but as I recall there was between 3,000 and 5,000 prisoners there when we arrived. We were set to go there. I can't even remember the particular date now in my mind. But anyway we were to go in the morning and we arrived there at approximately 7:00 in the morning and the gates were all locked, but we found no Germans around and so we broke the locks on the gates and went in and, of course, all the prisoners told us that the Germans had just left about 30 minutes before. So, of course, they were happy to know that the Americans had come to free them and we gave them some food and cigarettes. And, of course, as I recall, there were all kinds of nationalities of people there, Polish, they were mostly all foreigners. As I recall, I don't think there were many Jews. I think by that time most all the Jews had been disposed of in other concentration camps, Well, I don't know as I recall I think we were there an hour or two by talking with the rest of the men. I was there with my, I was a PFC and I was there with my sergeant and we had a couple of trucks and there was about a dozen men and then we had a couple other trucks with another dozen men, two other trucks. Usually about six men to a truck so as I recall it, we had about 4 trucks and about two dozen men and, of course, there was no problems except the prisoners were all happy and they looked sad and half starved to death I guess mostly.

There was one old man there, he must have been about maybe I would say in his 50's. He was Polish, but he could speak English and he told us about all these, his family and his two brothers being murdered because they had worked on a project up at the Eagle's Nest on an underground, which he said was rumored where they had, Gorian had his, all the loot that they had stolen from Germany and Paris and France and I guess all over what they'd stole from different countries that they had, you know that they had captured the loot what they call Gorian's loot, I guess it might have been Hitler's loot too. He said he knew about it because his two brothers had been on the work gang that had helped build this underground and that one day and he had exchanged and went with his, in place of his brother to work on it. But then he was never supposed to go to work on that he said. He was supposed to, you know, he took the place of his brother by to go see one day. And then shortly after it was built, they killed his two brothers and everybody that had worked on the project and they didn't know that he had made a trip there so I guess they figured that, according to him, he said there was nobody alive that knew where this underground was built, where they had this loot all stored. So he said he would show us where it was if we take him up there. So, of course, we did, the sergeant and I we took the trucks, 12 men and he showed us the way.

We went up the mountain to the Eagle's Nest and it was the day after they had bombed it, that they had bombed it and the place was still in ruins and they saw it was still smoking from fires and stuff. You know, we could even see it when we was down in the, below the mountain there in the city by the railroad tracks and so forth. So he took us up there and we went and we found it alright, took a lot of pictures. I was the only one that had a camera. I had a little old Kodak camera, which I had took a lot of pictures. I think I had one time about 50 rolls of film, but I didn't take that many up there. I took a lot of films up there, which some of them is which you had in your collection that I gave you of myself and some of my sergeants and some of the men that was with us. Anyway, we

From the communication room at the bottom of the mountain there at the railroad station, they had a door that went into another little room; it was maybe about ten foot square. And in this room they had a cable car outfit that run up to Hitler's home. This was a little kind of a car deal you sat in kind of like the miner's car. It was small and I think it had two seats on it and maybe four people could get in it and I think it run by possibly electricity and maybe also I think it batteries too in an emergency if the electricity went off. I'm pretty sure the electricity was, we didn't ride it. We could see it went up through this tunnel. It probably was about four feet wide and I don't think it was too high. It might have been five feet high, but I don't think it was any higher than that and cement lined and you could, well it started to go out straight and I think it had to go across a few streets and stuff before it got. I'm sure it wasn't too deep under the ground. I'm pretty sure when they went up the mountain it was probably just below the surface of the mountain and then they probably planted vegetation and stuff over this tunnel. But there was, we could feel a cool draft up there so I'm pretty sure they must have had ventilating pipes that went out of this tunnel, probably the top of the ground for fresh air and stuff and they probably were in the trees and along the side of the road you know probably six or eight inch or foot pipes for fresh air to not only tunnel and. I think this thing run on, if I remember it went on about two small tracks almost like a miners, if you've ever seen a miners' track. They're small railroad tracks, but they're really narrow. They go in mines with and kind of like a mining cart that they'd set in this thing and then go up and they had a false kind of a shelving and a cupboard in the garage that you couldn't see; it was like in the mountain, which probably, I think it was probably just under the ground and

30 or 10 by it was a real big window, biggest window I'd ever seen in a house. You can tell by the pictures of the men that I had standing there and I took pictures and you can see they're pretty small compared to the size of the window. As I recall the windows was broken out from concussions of the bombs that had been probably within 30 or 50 of the house. I don't recall any direct hits on the house by bombs. Now this window I think had to be about two inches thick and it looked, I'm pretty sure they had a motor of some kind that moved it up and down so they could get fresh air for them, probably when it got to hot or something and they wanted fresh air. Now in the center of this big living room there was a six or an eight foot cut glass chandelier which I'm sure had to be real old, probably was 300 or 500 years old at least. And underneath it is the table, as a matter of fact there was five tables but this one table was underneath the chandelier was the center one and it was the one I got the tablecloth off of that I had sold to you, a lace tablecloth. Now the other four tables that I recall are not the same size but they had solid line cloths on them and I kind of figured they probably slid the tables together when they had a _____ or something for a big bunch of people I imagine because there was lots of chairs in the living room and as I recall there was a _____ desk and a couple of German flags on polls on either side of it and I think behind it was a bust picture of Hitler.

Huge safe in the corner, I think it was probably three feet by four and possibly five feet high, maybe six feet high but they had left the safe unlocked so we didn't have to blow that open. _____ got some of the stuff that I sold to you was at the foot of the bed. And as I recall I think it was about two feet wide and about two feet high and possibly oh five feet long. It was all hand carved. I remember it had kind of a _____ to it like probably mahogany, cherry wood or _____ but it was all hand carved. As I recall when I lifted it up the wood was about two inches thick but it was cedar lined, _____ cedar lined, you could smell the cedar in it and it had a tray in top and in the tray in top there was a couple of diaries as I remember. One was green, one was red, it was some women's clothes, underpants, braziers and stuff in the top tray. Underneath where I took the tray out there was some linen and table clothes and pillowcases and yeah I think that was it. I think there was a wedding dress down in there and I suspect it probably was used and some other things in there. And then in the corner under _____ chest was a hand carved silver chest and then it was all the silver that I got and sold to you. But I took a pillow case and _____ it was too big to take the chest so I just dumped it all out in the pillow case where it was easy. I could throw it over my shoulder and carry up. I weighed it one time and maybe you have since and I don't recall _____ around about 30 pounds, all that silver set, and maybe more. If you weighed it you probably know. And it was as I recall 99% silver but a lot of the pieces were gold plated. And one of the pieces had initials on it, EB, so it no doubt was, but it was _____. So I just threw it in this pillowcase, brought it up out of there and _____ let's see what else can I recall there.

You requested in your letter to me. My name is Howard W. Vogel. My serial number was 17048335. I was in the army during World War II. I was in 910th anti aircraft, anti tank battalion division. We had 40mm mostly for anti tank and anti aircraft guns. As I recall

A: Yes he did. Gorian had a home. Back now he told us where this was and we had to get back that night and they came looking for us. Well we reported what we had found and they sent up engineers the next day. We didn't have equipment. They had to use bulldozers to uncover this and this door was cemented shut and dirt was piled over it and you wouldn't know anything was there and this Polack knew it was there because he had his brother, somehow they were in different camps, but he had, I don't know, they get, sometimes the word leaks out and everybody that was supposed to have worked

on this underground. See, this was one of the pictures you could see, it was religious picture that had been stolen from a museum in France, I guess. Now this, when I come back the second.

Q: What is this here?

A: That's the entrance to it after the bulldozers cleared it off. We went back the second day and my sergeant and three or four other guys and the first day that we looked at that about two truckloads of wine and liquor out of the wine cellar at Berchtesgaden., but we took one truckload by ourselves and then _____ we had already been drinking wine and think it was pretty good. But anyway, the second day I went and they were bringing the loot out from Gorian's loot and the engineers up there and they were trying to take an inventory of their stuff and I got a few pictures and then the guy one of the colonels come around and he says, no, no, no pictures because these colonels and stuff, they got great big vases with diamonds and jewels in them and they're busting them up and filling the pockets and they don't want no records or nothing. No, no pictures and he was going to take the camera away and I said, no, I said we was the one that discovered this and I said, yes, but you guys wouldn't be here if it wasn't for us. So he said okay, just hide your camera and get out and take a souvenir and so quick was doing the looting and making an inventory of this. So I got a lot more pictures, but this is the only one I think I got left because the guys when I showed it to them after I got it developed, they took my film. They took my pictures because they wanted to show there was there too. So I think that's the only one I got of it and here's some more _____ that I took. This is taken down hill from Berchtesgaden. These are shell holes that were down the hill from where they had bombed all over _____ .

Q: So it's further up here, isn't it?

Well, not that very far. It's just here. I'm standing outside the house and looking down. This is looking down and these were looking through the window and down. I had stood at the edge of the window and some of them I stood back.

Q: What are these things here?

Well, this was —Berchtesgaden. These are shell holes that are down the hill from where they had bombed it. (repeat of the paragraph before—did not type again).

This was part of the stuff that was left from the ceiling, bay window or something. No this was looking out.

(Continue these bits and pieces on the other side, side B of this tape.)