Interview with Richard Lockhart

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Monday, March 12, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Chicago, Illinois, and I'm sitting across the table from Richard Lockhart. Good afternoon, sir.

Lockhart: Good afternoon to you, Mark.

DePue: We are going to be talking today, and tomorrow most likely, about your experiences growing up, and also especially your experiences during World War II, being in the Battle of the Bulge, probably not being greatly excited about that, and especially after you were captured in the early stages.

Lockhart: It was pretty exciting, I've got to tell you.

DePue: You might have wanted to have been someplace else a couple times.

Lockhart: It's one of those things.

DePue: Okay, so let's get right at the beginning here and tell me a little bit about where you came from and when you were born.

Lockhart: Well, I was born January 20, 1924. I lived all my early life, through high school graduation, in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

DePue: Is that where you were born?

Lockhart: I was actually born across the border in Lima, Ohio, which was my father's home and his sister's, and his father was still living there. And then shortly thereafter, while I was still an infant, my parents moved to Fort Wayne, sixty-five miles away. I have no brothers or sisters. My parents of course are long gone. I have two children now, one that lives in Albuquerque, the other lives most of the year in Florida, or sometimes he lives part of the year in Chicago.

My first memory of anything of a public nature was the 1932 presidential election between Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt. It seemed like all through the schooling in Fort Wayne, every time there was a presidential election, there was also an election that was done among the students, who they preferred. And so I do remember the '32 election. Of course I voted for Roosevelt. I was eight years old but I was paying attention obviously. The teacher was Republican and voted for Herbert Hoover, and then the next day she was complaining I recall, about it was not right. And so we had another election and so we all decided to support the teacher, so we supported Herbert Hoover on the second vote, but that didn't count. That was my first memory of anything significant happening in the outside world.

The other thing in my youth, long gone youth, was the fact that I had scarlet fever. Now nobody gets scarlet fever today but once upon a time in the thirties, it was a serious disease among children in fact, because I had it twice. I thought I had it beaten and then it came back. And I do recall being out of school for a long, long time, so long a time that I was set back a semester, as a matter of fact. But what I remember about it is on the outside of the house, they put a big red sign which said "Scarlet Fever." I would see people walking down the sidewalk and they saw the sign, they would cross the street and go on the other side as if there was some kind of a contagion that they might pick up.

I do remember being poor basically. My father never had a steady job during the thirties.

DePue: Do you know what he did in the twenties, in your early, early years?

Lockhart: No. He did not graduate from high school that I'm aware of. I have a feeling that he came to Fort Wayne when the Fort Wayne International Harvester plant opened up and he worked there for a while, probably in the mid-twenties. And then the Depression came and International Harvester cut back on employment so he lost his job, and he just had temporary work from there on. My mother had a job as a secretary.

One thing growing up in the Depression, you know the price of everything. So my mother had a job that paid seventy-five dollars a month. We lived in a single-family cottage, nothing special about it. We never had a car. I never had a car growing up at all. I never went on vacation with my parents, never went to a restaurant growing up anyway, with my parents, and

it was not a pleasant time. I can remember sometimes we just couldn't pay the electric bill; they shut off all the electricity. All the houses were coal fired then and coal was five dollars a ton. It was bituminous, it was high sulfur coal, and it was five dollars a ton, and trying to make that ton of coal last as long as possible without freezing.

Like I say, you remember the prices of everything when you're poor. The newspaper was, I think, three cents. The public transportation was seven cents. I was glad when things got better, which didn't take place until about 1939. Things got considerably better mostly because of the preparation that the United States was engaged in for the world war that was to come not very long away. It was not very far away anyway.

DePue: What was your father's name?

Lockhart: My father's name was William. His father's name was William and his father's name was William. So I'm the first non-William in the Lockhart family for a long while.

DePue: Lockhart, what ethnicity is that?

Lockhart: Scottish.

DePue: Had they been in the country for a long time?

Lockhart: I think a fair amount, or at least had been in Canada; I think some of them came down from Canada. And it just so happens my son and I went to Scotland just last year, on Thanksgiving, and I traced back where the Lockhart clan was in Scotland. So we went to the place where it looked like anyway on the clan map, a little town called Lanark, and what do you know, there was Lockhart Drive, and we have a picture of Dick Lockhart standing next to the street sign saying Lockhart Drive.

DePue: Were the Lockharts highlanders or lowlanders?

Lockhart: Lowlanders. This is the lowland part, south of Edinburgh, as a matter of fact.

DePue: How about your mom's maiden name?

Lockhart: Her maiden name was Dillon, Mary Dillon. She lived in Warren, Ohio, with her three sisters and two brothers.

DePue: Do you remember growing up; did it seem like your family was poorer than a lot of the other families that you were associating with?

Lockhart: No. It seemed like they were poor like everybody was poor, except we didn't have a car. Not a lot of people, but a number of them did have cars. We never had a car.

DePue: You mentioned that newspapers were what, three cents a day?

Lockhart: Three cents, yes.

DePue: Was that something the family could find its way to afford?

Lockhart: Yes. Fort Wayne had two newspapers; a morning paper which is kind of a Democratic supporting newspaper, and the evening paper, the *News–Sentinel*. I think now the city only has one newspaper. But they were three cents. We always got the evening paper.

DePue: That was a Republican paper?

Lockhart: That was a Republican paper. It just so happens, when I joined the service in the spring of '43, I took out a subscription in the morning paper, the *Journal Gazette;* that's a democratic oriented newspaper. I wanted to keep touch with my hometown and so that's what I did.

DePue: You mentioned that when you were eight years old you voted for Roosevelt the first chance you got.

Lockhart: In school, right.

DePue: Do you remember how your family was voting at the time?

Lockhart: No. I don't know that. I would guess that they voted for Herbert Hoover, even though my father was unemployed. We never talked too much about that, as a matter of fact, for some strange reason.

DePue: How about a radio? Did you have a radio in the house?

Lockhart: Yes, we did definitely have a radio, and that was very important because it brought news, it brought entertainment, and it was basically free. Now if your master tube went out that was a problem, but the radio was very instrumental. I still remember hearing Lowell Thomas. I think he came on at quarter to six every night for fifteen minutes.

DePue: How about some of the entertainment shows?

Lockhart: *Amos 'n' Andy* followed.

DePue: And you hung around to listen to *Amos 'n' An*dy?

Lockhart: Yeah, sure.

DePue: Did the house that you were living in have indoor plumbing?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: So generally you had a lot of the things that a farm family at the time might not have had.

Lockhart: Right, might.

DePue: Did you think of yourself as being poor?

Lockhart: If I did, I didn't think too much about it. I knew money was short; definitely I knew money was short, because they don't turn off the electricity just by happenstance. It was a deliberate result of not paying the electric bill. I do remember, when being very young, how did I get money? You go through garbage and find bottles. The bottles were refundable for two cents, so if you could get ten bottles, there was twenty cents right there.

DePue: What could you buy with twenty cents?

Lockhart: Well, you could buy a lot of things with twenty cents in those days. You could buy three candy bars for a dime I remember, yeah.

DePue: So real money it sounds like, for a kid's perspective.

Lockhart: Yeah. I mean I started a paper route in 1959, when I was fifteen. That's when you're old enough—was anyway.

DePue: Thirty-nine?

Lockhart: Nineteen thirty-nine, when I was fifteen. The newspaper route that was available to me was not the Fort Wayne newspapers unfortunately, it was all the out of town newspapers. So I delivered a lot of *Chicago Tribunes*, *Indianapolis Stars*, *Cleveland Plain Dealers*, *Detroit Free Press*, *St. Louis Globe–Democrat*. So I had a route with a lot of people who wanted their old hometown newspaper, and so they dumped them off in my (yard)—and this is the morning—so I had to get up real early with my bicycle and take around these newspapers to the various routes. I do remember, that was my first job basically, where I could get some independent revenue.

Now I do remember the newspaper agency said, "Well, Dick, you may break somebody's window; we're going to have to ask you for a bond. It's ten dollars." My parents couldn't come up with the ten dollars. I had an aunt in Lima, Ohio, who had a good job, so I borrowed ten dollars from her. But like I said, there was evidence: just ten dollars, my parents could not come up with.

DePue: Well, mentioning that you needed a bond because you might break windows, is—

Lockhart: I never broke any windows.

DePue: I'm guessing though, you got yourself a pretty good throwing arm out of the deal.

Lockhart: Could be, could be, and a bicycle too. I was very fond of my bicycle. I remember one day, probably maybe when I'm a little older, I bicycled to Van Wert, Ohio, which is about eighty miles away, and these are on two-lane highways, U.S. 30, which is not safe to do. I had a balloon tire bicycle, but I felt a sense of accomplishment.

DePue: Was there something in Van Wert you were seeing?

Lockhart: No, no. It was just a goal.

DePue: Was your family religious?

Lockhart: My mother was somewhat. She liked to sing in the choir and she did a lot of that in Fort Wayne. She sang in the choir, in the Presbyterian Church, and my father kind of went along, I think. I think they were both Christians, shall we say. I kind of got out of that when I was in the Army and I've never been back to the religious world, shall we say.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about high school then. When did you start high school, what year would that be?

Lockhart: That would be 1938, the fall of '38. Southside High School, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

DePue: Southside.

Lockhart: Southside High School. Fort Wayne had three public high schools at the time; North Side, Southside and Central. Not very creative. (laughter) It had a Catholic high school, Central Catholic, and they had a Lutheran. There was a lot of Germans in Fort Wayne, and there was a sufficient number of Lutherans that they had their own high school, grade school.

DePue: You mentioned that you were already delivering newspapers maybe about a year down the road from that. How about some extracurricular activities?

Lockhart: I can't think of any right now, to tell the truth.

DePue: Sports?

Lockhart: Well, come to think of it, when I was in the seventh grade, I was on the school relay team and we won the city championship. So I was a fast runner. I could have been, probably, on the high school track team if I wanted to, but by that time I was a senior. I did the newspapers when I was a junior and when I was a junior and senior, I worked across the street from the high school, at the student—what did we call them? Soda shop, whatever.

DePue: Right.

Lockhart: So I was a soda jerk at Miller's Dairy Farm Store across the street from Southside High School. I was there for more than a year, until I left town. They started off at twenty cents an hour, and when I left a year and a half later I was making forty cents an hour.

DePue: Wow.

Lockhart: But I was earning some money and it was mine basically.

DePue: Talking about being a soda jerk, that's the kind of thing that some people hear and get nostalgic over the good old days.

Lockhart: Yes. Well, I have my yearbook, I have it here in the house somewhere, and people signed it, "The Best Jerk in Town."

DePue: Why did they call them soda jerks? I bet you know the answer to that.

Lockhart: Well, just because they made sodas usually with some kind of a faucet device kind of thing. I don't know.

DePue: Okay. So you had a couple jobs as well. The other thing I'm interested in, the first memory you have—public memory you said—was voting in an election in grade school.

Lockhart: Nineteen thirty-two, right.

DePue: So, the world is a busy and increasingly growing dangerous place by the late 1930s. Were you paying attention to any of that?

Lockhart: Yes. I was paying close attention. I followed everything that was happening in Europe or Asia. I can tell you about the Spanish Civil War, which was fought between '36 and '39.

DePue: Well, who were the good guys in the Spanish Civil War?

Lockhart: The Republicans, so-called Republicans. These were the people who were the current government, which was kind of a socialist based, as I understand it. The bad guys were the fascists, the people that [Francisco] Franco was the head of, and troops actually from Nazi Germany and [Benito] Mussolini's troops came in to help him, but they prevailed.

DePue: Did you know at the time, what it meant to be a fascist or what it meant to be a socialist?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: You did?

Lockhart: Yes. I've always been a big reader, you might say.

DePue: Was that something that they were teaching in high school as well?

Lockhart: To some extent, I think might have been, to some extent, but I don't remember any specific segments of that history, focused on that. It was in the newspapers every day, you might say.

DePue: This is probably too early for you, but what's your earlier memories of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in Germany?

Lockhart: I would say probably in the mid-thirties, '35.

DePue: Do you remember the Nuremberg rallies?

Lockhart: Yes. They used to have on the movies, which people went to a lot, myself included, but there were news—what did we…?

DePue: Newsreels?

Lockhart: Newsreels, thank you. They were always big, spectacular kinds of events that the Nazis put on. It was scary, basically.

DePue: That was your reaction, you were not impressed; you were more scared by it?

Lockhart: Well, because I could see the trend. I had a sense about where this was all going. I knew Mr. Hitler was not a beneficial member of society, shall we say. He talked hate, basically.

DePue: Were you getting the same message, do you think, from both the morning and the evening paper?

Lockhart: Yes, I think so. Now the evening paper was much more isolationist, much more like the *Chicago Tribune* of that period. But there was still—you know, things were news, and both newspapers carried the news, I think. There was an editorial slant no doubt, in both papers, but yeah, I was pretty much aware of what was going on in the world.

DePue: Was your father in the First World War or is he too young for that?

Lockhart: No, he was not. I think he had some kind of a hernia operation or something, and by the time that was healed, time was up for enlistments.

DePue: Do you remember in 1938, I think it was in the spring of '38, when the Allies basically came to Hitler about the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia?

Lockhart: Yes, sure, I remember that very well.

DePue: And the same kind of feeling in terms of "this isn't good for us"?

Lockhart: Yes, that's right. It was aggression obviously, and intimidation. It was pretty obvious, it seems to me, any objective view of what was happening in Europe, I mean they were just taking countries. Mussolini takes Albania over Easter, and then he had been fighting in Ethiopia. I followed that as well. Europe was full of, you might want to say, aggressive dictators at the time: Franco, Mussolini, Hitler. And even in some of the other places like Poland. Spain and Portugal were both fascist countries. Obviously Russia was a dictatorship.

DePue: Did you have an opinion about the communist government in Russia, in the Soviet Union at the time?

Lockhart: Yeah, I didn't like them either, for the repression that was involved in it, yes, the repression.

DePue: And that's how it was portrayed in the newspapers?

Lockhart: To some extent. The only thing that I liked about the Russians is they and the Germans hated each other. So I figured, well that's good. The two bad bunches hate each other and so, you know, maybe something beneficial will come out of that or maybe they'll destroy each other in the process. I don't know, that's the only thing. There was a counterweight, in other words, to Germany.

DePue: Well, I'm asking a lot more probing questions than I do for most, because you've already expressed that you love history, you've read history your entire life, and obviously you were interested in that time. So I'm interested in the perspective.

Lockhart: I've even been a part of history, right?

DePue: Absolutely, a big part of it. Illinois and the United States and world history. How about, were you paying any attention to what was going on in Asia and the Pacific?

Lockhart: Yes, sure. I followed what Japan was doing in China. I remember when they bombed the American gunboat, the *Panay*. That was I think 1937. Yeah. The Japanese were probably universally hated in this country, more so than the Nazis and the communists, as a matter of fact. Part of it was racial; no question about it was racial. Part of it was they were considered to be manufacturers of junk. If it was made in Japan it was considered junk, basically. And what they were doing in China and the fact that they bombed and I think sunk the *Panay*, which is an American boat, in one of the Chinese rivers. They were just bad people basically, or so viewed anyway.

DePue: Well the next couple, then, are going to be escalating things. Do you remember when the Nazis invaded Poland in September of 1939?

Lockhart: I remember it vividly. I can tell you because they did it on the first of September 1939, and I was delivering the *Sunday Tribune* on the third of September, and I can remember it as if it was yesterday. I had one of my subscribers, I brought the *Tribune* to them. Well of course, it was the Sunday *Tribune*, so it had been printed probably back on Friday or Saturday, and the man said to me, "Don't bring me the paper", or something to that effect, "World War II has started." On that day, Germany had to back away from the invasion or Great Britain and France would declare war. And so that time was up, and so on the third of September 1939, Great Britain and France went to war with Germany due to the fact that Germany had invaded Poland on the first and had not backed away from that. I remember this vividly, on September third, a Sunday, 1939.

DePue: The gentleman who said that to you, do you suspect he was old enough to be a World War I veteran maybe?

Lockhart: Maybe. I kind of doubt it but maybe, maybe.

DePue: Okay, just curious about that. By that time, were you thinking at all that the military might be one of your career options?

Lockhart: Not at that time.

DePue: The next year, the spring of 1940, the Nazis invade the Low Countries and France. It doesn't take long—a couple months—that France falls.

Lockhart: It was amazing to me, because I had paid some attention to World War I and realized that Germany lost the war, definitely lost the war, and here they were taking on the same people that beat them in World War I. The rumor talked about the French Army was the greatest army in Europe; that was the talk. They turned it over; in six weeks they were destroyed basically, so it was a real shakeup to everybody, to have France defeated and the British really driven off the continent at Dunkirk. Of course, that was a presidential election year and Roosevelt was up for his third term. And I think a lot of people were kind of nervous about what was happening and they didn't want to change, even though Wendell Wilkie, the Republican candidate, was really a One Worlder, an internationalist, shall we say, an internationalist who was a Republican, and pretty much adopted the same point of view as Roosevelt when it came to foreign policy. But the people I think, in the country, were nervous enough about what was happening in Europe, they didn't want to change the presidency, and Roosevelt was reelected for his third term.

DePue: So you're paying close attention to what's going on in the world. You're sixteen years old. You see this war get even nastier and England standing all by itself.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: What did you think your future was going to be at that time?

Lockhart: I didn't know for sure at that point in time, until really Pearl Harbor. I thought somehow, these people will fight each other; they'll resolve it somehow or other, in one way or another, but we, the United States, will keep out of it. There was a very strong "America "First, not to get involved with the turmoil going on in Europe, and so I thought that that would prevail. I was really puzzled when I came back—this is on a Sunday of course, I remember it well—I worked at the soda shop, but I was working on that night shift at that time, so I'd come in at 7:00 at night and the guys there told me about this attack by Japan, in Hawaii. I couldn't hardly believe that. Why would they do such a dumb thing as that? We'll destroy them in a couple weeks, burn the whole place down. I just thought they were, you know.

So when that didn't happen and when the Japanese took the Philippines and Singapore, and of course, at the time we didn't know what kind of damage for sure had been done to the fleet at Pearl Harbor. Of course Germany and Italy did not declare war on the United States until a few days later. But after that point, I could see then, there was an inevitability about the course of this next few years.

DePue: How it was going to affect you personally.

Lockhart: I figured I would not be exempt, right.

DePue: I know that in October of 1941—and this is interesting timing—you had a chance to see Charles Lindbergh. Tell us about that.

Lockhart: Well, like I say, Fort Wayne was pretty much an isolationist town. It had a large German population and, like I say, very much in the course of action that was taken by the *Chicago Tribune*. There was two large citizens' kind of organizations. One was agitating for American to keep out of the war, called America First, and they had a strong unit in Fort Wayne. The other large organization, which was very weak in Fort Wayne would be my guess, was the Committee to Aid the Allies. I'm not quite saying it right but anyway, so we heard that the America First Committee in Fort Wayne had gotten Charles Lindbergh, who was certainly a well-known hero who had flown solo in 1927 from New York to Paris, was coming to Fort Wayne to give a talk; he was coming to the place at the south end of town, not very far from where I lived, and it was open to the public. So I went and like I said, I didn't agree with the America First position but at least I got to see my first American hero, Charles Lindbergh.

DePue: But not agreeing with their position, I mean, I would think that's got direct implications on you, that that would suggest that, okay, if war is coming then we need to do something. And that would mean, Okay, I'm going to be of draft age in a year or two.

Lockhart: Well, I suppose, but the values of the America First people and the isolationists was incompatible with the way I viewed the world, shall we say. It appeared that the allies in Europe could not defeat Hitler. I don't know what the provocation would take but I couldn't see that far ahead, to tell the truth. Hitler solved the problem; he declared war on us.

DePue: Well, you said it just wasn't in tune—you said it more eloquently—but with the way you saw the world. How did you see the world at that time? What was motivating you?

Lockhart: Well, I was motivated by the sense of adventure, this is history. I had read enough World War I history and other kinds of history. I had not been anywhere outside the Midwest, as a matter of fact. I forgot to mention, my first trip to Chicago was in 1933 for the World's Fair. My dad took me on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

I think in my readings, if I think back on it now, my readings into history kind of led me to realize that this evil was loose in Europe and somehow people would find a way to eliminate it. I'm talking about Hitler, Mussolini, the fascists and so forth. I didn't quite know how that was going to happen.

DePue: Before December seventh, when you would reflect on what you wanted to do with your life and a career, what were you thinking?

Lockhart: Journalism, as a matter of fact.

DePue: Which would mean you'd probably need to go to college?

Lockhart: Yes, definitely.

DePue: And so how does a kid coming from a very poor background go to college?

Lockhart: Well it depends. Universities didn't cost very much, if you were going to a place in your own state, and so I ended up going to Purdue. But this was 1942, so the thirties were different than the forties. The forties, people were working full-time, money was starting to be circulating. I can remember when I was sixteen, in the house we had, we finally had a refrigerator. It was ice usually, that we got from the neighborhood iceman. So I was sixteen before I had a refrigerator in my life. In the forties, you could see, it seemed to me, the shape of things to come.

DePue: What did your dad do for a living once he got into the forties?

Lockhart: He was working at the various factories and yes, things were better, shall we say.

DePue: Can you tell us a little bit about how the mood changed in the United States after Pearl Harbor, from beforehand?

Lockhart: Well, I think people were really mad. I can still recall big lineups of men at the recruiting stations in Fort Wayne the next day. In my office in Chicago I have the red headlines in the newspaper that day. I still have the original newspaper, December 8, 1941. It said, "Japan at War with the U.S.," and it was in red headlines. I still have that newspaper, in perfect shape still.

DePue: I'm guessing that they didn't use red headlines most of the time.

Lockhart: No, no. I've never seen it before or since. Anyway, there was an instant reaction that we were attacked, and especially attacked by the Japanese, who were about viewed then as one of the lowest kinds of nationalities out there.

DePue: I know that many Americans at that time, just as you are suggesting here, wanted to go get Japan right away but weren't nearly as interested in going to Europe.

Lockhart: That's correct.

DePue: That would have been your view as well?

Lockhart: Well, of course it happened so fast, because Germany and Italy declared war, I think, just four days after Pearl Harbor, so that just changed things and I could see that the direction was going to have to be [in Europe]—because at this time now—we're talking about January of '42. Germany had invaded Russia in the summer of '41 and there was big, heavy fighting going on, and Great Britain provided a kind of jumping off place for any kind of attack against Germany. So it was harder to get to Japan; it was further away. There was also a battle going on in Europe, you might say, with the Russian and the British. The British were bombing in Germany, so I could see that that was where the action was going to start, shall we say, for myself.

DePue: I'm assuming you graduated from high school in May of 1942?

Lockhart: June.

DePue: June. You might not remember this, but I wanted to ask you about the mood of your classmates, especially the men in your class.

Lockhart: That's a good question. I've thought about that. At that time they were not drafting at eighteen; that came a little later. So everybody, myself included, was thinking about going to college and seeing how long we could stay there basically, or what would change. So I went to Purdue, which didn't cost very much. I think they were waiting basically, everybody was just waiting. At Purdue, they had a big ROTC program, which was compulsory basically.

DePue: Is Purdue a land-grant college?

Lockhart: Yeah, ah-huh. It's supported by the state of Indiana. So we had to take ROTC[1]; it was field artillery. Eventually, that's where I enlisted, at Purdue. They had a program called Enlisted Reserve. If you were in intensive ROTC, you signed up for it, you enlisted in the Army. So I enlisted in the Army, December 7, 1942, exactly one year after Pearl Harbor. They said, well, under this, we'll let you finish your semester and then we'll take you. The presumption is, well, they're taking ROTC training, so maybe they'll be more valuable if we take them. I don't know what their thinking was, but if we enlisted in the Army early, they'll let us finish the semester, so I did that.

DePue: Was there any thought of perhaps going into some kind of officer training program, because you're already in ROTC?

Lockhart: I didn't think too much about it, to tell the truth.

DePue: Not one way or another?

Lockhart: I didn't think I had any choice basically. I didn't think I had any choice.

DePue: How about one of the other services? Why the Army? Because of the ROTC program being there?

Lockhart: Maybe. It doesn't register, Mark, anything specific that motivated me one way or another. I wanted to go to Europe just to see Europe, let's put it that way.

DePue: Those are peculiar circumstances to be going to Europe.

Lockhart: I got my wish and it didn't cost me a cent.

DePue: What was your major when you first went to school?

Lockhart: History. It's still my major.

DePue: For some reason I was thinking journalism was what you were going to tell me.

Lockhart: Yes. I was intrigued by journalism. I read a lot of books at that time, when I was a junior and senior in high school, written by war correspondents, and I still have those books upstairs in my library. And so the whole thing of being a participant in the writing of history had kind of a lot of appeal, and getting paid for it, you know, and I thought I had some talent when it comes to writing.

[1] ROTC: Reserve Officer Training Corp.

DePue: So you could see yourself being a journalist more than being a history teacher someplace?

Lockhart: Yes, definitely. Preferably a war correspondent.

DePue: Did you have a girlfriend at the time you enlisted?

Lockhart: No, I did not. I was bashful. I didn't have a lot of money, we didn't have a car. I didn't know how to dance, so I didn't, and I had a job. I worked forty hours a week at the soda jerk place.

DePue: While you were going to school?

Lockhart: While I was going to school.

DePue: In Fort Wayne?

Lockhart: In Fort Wayne.

DePue: What's the commute for Fort Wayne and Purdue?

Lockhart: Oh, no, I'm talking about in high school. In high school I was working forty hours a week at the soda jerk place.

DePue: Okay. I guess my question was in reference to when you actually enlisted, you were already at Purdue.

Lockhart: I was a student, yeah, I was a student.

DePue: Did you have a girlfriend by that time?

Lockhart: No. In the first place, there weren't many girls at Purdue in those days.

DePue: Here's my curiosity about that. Most of the male students are figuring they're just marking time because they're going to go overseas, they're going to enlist or be drafted or something. It's got to be a peculiar time to be going to college.

Lockhart: Yeah, it was, it was. But you knew that you were going to go, and so most people waited for the call to come, shall we say. I accelerated the call by enlisting, that's the only difference.

DePue: Where did you end up going to basic training and when?

Lockhart: Fort Eustis, Virginia, which was an anti-aircraft replacement training center. Fort Eustis is still there, outside Newport News, Virginia, I think it is.

DePue: I've been there.

Lockhart: Yeah? Fort Eustis?

DePue: Yes.

Lockhart: We used to call it Fort Useless.

DePue: It doesn't take long to get to that one does it?

Lockhart: But it was in a very historical part of the country which I had never been to before, you know, Jamestown and Williamsburg and all those places.

DePue: A lot of Civil War battlefields fairly close.

Lockhart: Civil War battlefields, Yorktown. I think I had my first beer maybe, in Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, Virginia. I think it's still there. I'm sure it's still there.

DePue: Do you remember much about going to basic training?

Lockhart: Yes, I do remember, because it was a testing time. It was tough and it was very hot and humid there in Virginia, very hot.

DePue: What time did you go there?

Lockhart: It was in the spring of '43. Yeah, it was tough, you know, but I had no problem with doing it.

DePue: Do you remember any of your drill sergeants?

Lockhart: I remember most of them, as a matter of fact. I had been a big bicycler, and I was pretty strong in terms of my leg activity, so hiking was no problem for me. I had also been a Boy Scout for a while, so I was in better shape probably athletically than a lot of the guys were. Do I remember—what was the question?

DePue: Any of your drill sergeants?

Lockhart: The first sergeant was a name Buc Van, I remember him. The other sergeant was Flickenger, I remember him, yeah.

DePue: Any stories that you recall from those days?

Lockhart: The thing I hated most was KP, kitchen police, which is the euphemism for taking care of the garbage and the dishes and all that. I hated that. I still hate to do that.

DePue: But just about everybody got their chance.

Lockhart: The training part did not bother me.

DePue: Where to after that then?

Lockhart: I had hoped that I would have been able to go overseas as a replacement. I was not picked for that. They sent me instead, to a place in North Carolina called Camp Davis, North Carolina, north of Wilmington. It's no longer there, of course. It's just a camp and gone. And it was just more antiaircraft artillery training.

DePue: You would have finished basic training then, basically in the summer of 1943.

Lockhart: Late summer it was, early fall.

DePue: If you had gone overseas as a replacement, you would have been going probably to North Africa or to the Pacific.

Lockhart: Maybe, or Italy, yeah.

DePue: I can't remember when we got to Sicily and Italy, but I think it was later in that year.

Lockhart: I was really kind of frustrated about it. I volunteered for the paratroop but couldn't pass the vision test, so I couldn't do that. And then all of a sudden out came an order, in the early spring of '44 now, that the Army would take infantry volunteers, and the unit you were in could not keep you. If you wanted to volunteer for the infantry, that was priority and you would go to an infantry unit. So I volunteered, when I was in North Carolina, for the infantry, and they sent me, what do you know, to the 106th Infantry Division in Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Back home again, in Indiana.

DePue: You're the only child, the only son. Was there a deferment or a classification for that?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: Not at that time?

Lockhart: I don't believe so.

DePue: Why the infantry? You had to know that it doesn't get any more dangerous.

Lockhart: I liked a certain amount of danger, adventure. I was very turned on by all of that, yeah.

DePue: What were your parents, what was your mother telling you?

Lockhart: She regretted that. She said, "You'll be cannon fodder." I can remember she wrote back to me, "cannon fodder," but she couldn't do anything about it, of course. But I was back in Indiana, so I went home every weekend.

DePue: So antiaircraft artillery wasn't your flavor at all.

Lockhart: I didn't want to spend it all in North Carolina. So what happened to that unit that I was in, the battalion that has four batteries in it? Three of the batteries were converted into infantry, involuntarily, shall we say. The other battery remained intact. Went to Fort Bliss, Texas, and never stepped foot out of the country. That was the battery that I had been in once before, so if I had not volunteered, stayed in that, nothing adventuresome would have happened to me.

DePue: You were adventuresome, but did you have any interest in going into any kind of an officer training program?

Lockhart: No. That was available but I did not want to do that.

DePue: Were you ever tested to do that?

Lockhart: Well, I think you were given an ASTP or some kind of a course, and if you got such and such score you could apply.

DePue: ASTP?

Lockhart: Something like that. ASTP, that stood for "All Safe Till Peace." I remember that.

DePue: I think that was the program when you went back to college and got some training.

Lockhart: That was the one I didn't want to be in. But there was an OT, Officer Training Center. There was something that I conceivably could have volunteered for, but I didn't think I was officer material.

DePue: Why not?

Lockhart: I don't know. I just didn't think I was ready for that.

DePue: You were still awfully young at that time.

Lockhart: I was young and hadn't really had many experiences, you know.

DePue: Okay. I know that Camp Atterbury wasn't necessarily the last place in the States. You had a couple other postings as well.

Lockhart: Before going overseas, they have these camps that are temporary camps outside all of the ports and the one outside Boston was called Camp Miles Standish. These will not be on any maps because they were secret places. They would bring a division there and they would wait for the ship to come in. Then they would go the next day, from the camp to the ship. So we were put

on a train at Camp Atterbury; they backed the train into Camp Atterbury and took us to this Camp Miles Standish outside Boston. Presumably we were there waiting for the ship to take us to England or France or wherever. And all of a sudden we were going to ship out later today almost, and so we all rushed around packing. They put us on a train—that went, not to Boston—that took us to New York, got on the *Queen Elizabeth*. The *Queen Elizabeth* had one division on it, I want to say the 79th Division. They had room for another regiment, three thousand men, so they called up I guess, for the troops that were at Camp Miles Standish, and we were ready so we packed up, ran down, got on the *Queen Elizabeth* and went to Scotland for about five days. So that's how we got to Europe.

DePue: What day did you ship out, then?

Lockhart: It would be in early October some time; you're talking about from Camp Miles Standish?

DePue: Yeah.

Lockhart: To Europe. I would say maybe about the tenth, the fifteenth of October, something like that.

DePue: October 1944.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: So several months after D-Day landings.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: I want to back up a little bit and ask you a few questions about the nature of the training you got while you were in the 101st.

Lockhart: I wasn't in the 101st.

DePue: Excuse me, 106th.

Lockhart: It was poor training, lousy training.

DePue: Why do you think that was the case? What was going on that was making it poor?

Lockhart: Well, let me give you some examples. When I go back to basic training, out to the rifle range, the rifle range. Number one, the rifle that we were issued for basic training was a Springfield 03 that was used in World War I. It was altogether a different rifle than the M1. Took us to the rifle range. The targets are 250 yards away; they're stationary. It's not realistic to combat, where you have moving targets, and they may be closer and they may be further away.

Like I say, the rifle was not compatible with combat circumstances. Now, in the 106th Division at Camp Atterbury, I'll give you an example there. I was in the regimental antitank company.

DePue: Which regiment?

Lockhart: A Regiment. In every Infantry Regiment, there's one company called the Antitank Company. There's one called the Cannon Company. Antitank Company weapon was a 57mm, and a tank gun. I have a shell upstairs in my condo.

In Southern Indiana, when we were doing in the training with it, did we have any such thing as moving targets? No. We had some shed somewhere. It would have been so much more effective if they could come up with some kind of a training as to how you might hit a tank that would be likely to be moving, rather than some kind of a phony shed, you might say, that's fixed on the side of a hill. And they didn't tell us much about how to take on a tank, you might say the tactics that would be used for taking on a tank. Most all of them were much bigger guns and much longer range than a little 57mm. That's why I often tell people, the gun we were given was only good at revealing our location. It was not good for knocking out one of those big, huge Tiger tanks.

DePue: Did you guys know that at the time you were training on it?

Lockhart: I was a little concerned about it, because they would show these pictures of the German tanks, photographs and so forth. We didn't want to complain. We didn't want to say we don't want to—it would sound like we were being cowards, you might say. But I think some of us wondered, how in the world is this little weapon going to knock out a thirty-ton Tiger tank before being located yourself and blown to bits? On top of that, I was the gunner for about a crew of five or six. I was the gunner and what weapon do I have? A 45 pistol, a 45 automatic pistol. Absolutely useless, you might say. So if the gunner was destroyed, as happened, I'm left with a pistol that's only worth hardly anything at all in terms of defending yourself.

DePue: It's probably got an effective range of thirty to fifty yards, something like that.

Lockhart: Yeah, something like that, right.

DePue: Did you have a chance to actually learn how to fire the 45?

Lockhart: Oh yeah, did that, but I didn't feel safe in Europe until I picked up an M1 from a casualty. Then I had something I could feel comfortable, at least I can…

DePue: When you were involved with the training, was it pretty much focused on how to operate that gun?

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: Was there training at platoon level or company level or regimental level?

Lockhart: I would say at the company level.

DePue: But not at the regimental level?

Lockhart: No, I don't think so, but that goes back now, Mark, to summer of '44. I'm just PFC Lockhart. I'm not brought in on any of the logistical details, shall we say, or they don't plan and say well, let me tell you what we're all going to do here.

DePue: You're still subject to do KP once in a while?

Lockhart: Oh definitely, definitely.

DePue: Were you thinking at the time, this is pretty crummy training we're getting?

Lockhart: I was worried about it. However, it was moderated to the extent that I could read the news, and I could tell that Germany was being beaten down and driven back and so forth. The question was, how much longer could they hold out. And so I was kind of, I'm going to say uncertain, about how long the war was going to last. I thought it would be over by Christmas.

DePue: You were hoping you'd have a chance to get into it before it was over?

Lockhart: Yes I did, yes I did. And I thought the Germans would be a pushover by that time, right? (laughs) Little did I realize what I was wishing for.

DePue: Yeah, exactly. You said you were in the antitank company—of which regiment?

Lockhart: Four hundred and twenty-third regiment.

DePue: Of 106th Division.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: I know a lot of the divisions would get filled up. They would do training and then the Army would come in and they would strip out a lot of the more senior personnel and ship them overseas.

Lockhart: That happened to the 106th Division before I got to it. They took out all the people who had trained together, gone on maneuvers together, had been working together and doing field problems. They took all them out as replacements and just scattered them up and down the military formations that were already in Europe. So that's how I got in the 106th Division. I was a

replacement to the person who went overseas as a replacement, to some other division.

DePue: Did that process make sense to you? And again, they didn't ask PFC Lockhart?

Lockhart: That's the Army way, you know. Who knows what mysterious things are going on? Besides, I don't have a vote.

DePue: I saw a map that had all the different locations you had been in the United States. You left out a couple, and just see if they ring any bell here. Camp Kilmer, New Jersey?

Lockhart: Well, that's coming back from Europe. I think we spent one night there, and then put on a train, went back to Indiana.

DePue: How about Miami Beach Relocation Center?

Lockhart: Yeah. You see, coming back, when I returned to the United States after the POW experience, I was skinny, and so they said in effect, well, Lockhart, you're basically healthy; you're just malnourished, shall we say, so we're going to give you a sixty-day furlough, fatten up, basically. And then we're going to relocate you to another division. Of course, your division is still in Europe, 106th is still in Europe. So they had all these people, displaced persons basically. So the Army had this replacement depot; it was in Miami. So after sixty days of furlough—and this would be the summer of '45—I went to Miami for two weeks. Not in an Army camp. I got one of these beachside hotels, shall we say.

DePue: Well, I didn't realize I would be jumping ahead of the story this much. Is the same thing true for Fort Benning that was after the war?

Lockhart: Well, that was after Miami Beach. The war with Japan was still going on.

DePue: Okay, so let's go ahead and hold off on that discussion until a few minutes down the road here. So, you ship overseas in October of 1944. How close had you and all of your buddies been paying attention to what was going on? I guess you've alluded to that already.

Lockhart: Oh, I think a fair amount, we did. There was camp newspapers or some kind of things, and there were radios. We were in England for a few weeks and there was news. We'd pick up things, you might say.

DePue: What was the morale of your unit before you guys shipped?

Lockhart: It's hard to say. Most of the fellas that were in my company, except for the noncommissioned officers, were there recently. They came in from different places, like myself. There was a few infantry volunteers but not too many, I

might add. A lot of them came from the so-called ASTP program. This is a collegiate program, and so they closed that down and converted all those student soldiers into infantrymen, you might say.

DePue: Whether they wanted to be or not.

Lockhart: Whether they wanted to. I would say that was a big adjustment for them, I've got to tell you that. And some of my good friends were living the life of Riley at some university lodgings, having lady friends, eating decent food, and all of a sudden you're in the 106th Division and things have changed considerably.

DePue: So you ship overseas. Tell me about sailing on the *Queen Elizabeth*.

Lockhart: *Queen Elizabeth* was a fast ship. It was overcrowded. I think there must have been eighteen thousand men on that, because there was one whole division and our regiment. It was a British ship, so you had to eat British food, which was especially not good in those days, and you only got fed twice a day, and you had to stand up to eat, I'll put it that way. It was jam packed, just jam packed. It was a rough voyage and there was a lot of sick men, shall we say, and a slippery deck, if you know what I mean. It didn't bother me, I got through. I didn't get seasick. So it was kind of ordinary, but I can see it was a luxury liner once upon a time.

DePue: And you got overseas much quicker than the guys going on Liberty ships.

Lockhart: Oh yeah, yeah. We didn't have any escort even. It made a zig-zag course all the way up through into Scotland.

DePue: Did you hear from some of those guys who had gone over on Liberty ships, that you had the better part of the deal?

Lockhart: I'm sure that's the case. Yes, I'm sure that was the case.

DePue: How long were you in Scotland?

Lockhart: Well actually, only a matter of hours, because there were trains waiting. We no sooner got off the ship and we were marched up to get on British trains that were waiting to take us down to England. Like I say, Scotland was only a matter of hours or so, I suppose.

So they took us all the way to the southern part of England, outside the city of Cheltenham, and we were there for a few weeks. We were waiting for the rest of the division to come over from the United States. In England, we didn't do very much, shall we say, for a few weeks.

DePue: You didn't do any kind of training?

Lockhart: I don't think so. I don't have any memory of that. The training was orientation rather than out in the field, let's put it that way.

DePue: This would have been October and November. Tell me what you guys were hearing about, what was going on with our Army in Northern France at the time.

Lockhart: We knew that the fighting was continuing. We had, I think, broken into the outer shell of Germany by that time and we were making progress, I think.

DePue: There was tremendous progress early fall. I'm thinking by November though, things were really bogging down in places like Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Had you been hearing about any of those?

Lockhart: Yes, I think so.

DePue: Because Hürtgen especially was kind of a meat grinder.

Lockhart: Terrible, terrible. I heard more about that after the war than I did at that time. The Army was not going to tell us about all of their failures and the casualty rate and all that kind of stuff.

DePue: Was there any fear that, hey, they're going to strip us out again and send us over as replacements?

Lockhart: You mean send us into Germany as replacements? No, I don't think so.

DePue: Did you finally get a chance to go in as the 106th?

Lockhart: I think we were told we were waiting for the rest of the division to come and as soon as they come—and it did. All of a sudden they said, Okay, we're here. So we went down to South Hampton, took a ship across. That was really a rough crossing to Le Havre, France. Climbed down the netting. You know how—you've seen these pictures—netting over the side of the ship. Of course the beach was pacified. Spent maybe a day or so and trucks came up and eventually, they drove us all the way through Northern France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and into Germany.

DePue: I want to take you, just for a second, back to England. Did you have a chance to see any of England and get some liberty and to go into town?

Lockhart: I did not. We hoped that we'd get to London but none of the enlisted men got to do that.

DePue: So you didn't spent much time in England to speak of.

Lockhart: Not too much. I remember a couple of things. Going to English movies. I think we went to one in Cheltenham. It was a city of probably fifty, sixty thousand people. Of course all the men were gone, basically. I remember going to a movie theater—and it was a lousy movie, I might add—and then I also remember they took us to church. It must have been the last Sunday before going to France; they took us to church. I supposed an Anglican church, I don't know. I was not a church person, but everybody went. You know, it was compulsory, just like going on a hike. It was compulsory to go to church that day. That's the only thing I remember about Cheltenham.

DePue: And you had already talked about it—tell us again—how you moved from Le Havre up to the front.

Lockhart: We maybe hiked for a day or so, or not a day, maybe hours, and trucks came up at daylight. Trucks came up and trucked us all the way across France, into Luxembourg, then into Belgium and then into Germany.

DePue: Okay, so the United States was fighting in Germany by that time.

Lockhart: Just barely, just across the border.

DePue: But not close to the Rhine by that time.

Lockhart: No, no.

DePue: What was your impression, marching and being driven through France and through a war zone?

Lockhart: That was exciting. I was excited. It was a high for me. I was looking forward to it.

DePue: Confident?

Lockhart: Confident, yes.

DePue: That the Germans were pretty much done with?

Lockhart: Yeah, or at least they were not going to stop us, let's put it that way.

DePue: Any talk at that time about when the war would be over with Germany?

Lockhart: No. I had read afterwards that a lot of Americans thought the war would be over by Christmas, and maybe we picked up somewhere on that. I don't know. The trouble, when you're in the Army, you can believe what you want to believe, but at the same time you realize a lot of this is shithouse rumors. Excuse me. Nothing is for sure.

DePue: When did you arrive at the front and where was the unit first assigned?

Lockhart: Well at first, I think there were a few nights out in the woods in Germany. I remember it would be across the border, because I think there was a sign, "You are now entering Germany."

DePue: In English?

Lockhart: In English. Well, it was put there by Americans. There had been American troops there and I don't know whether they had gone on or they were going to be replaced by ourselves or not. I'm fuzzy about that. But I do remember the first couple nights in the woods in Germany: snow, cold weather, nothing special to eat, as I recall. I don't know. You didn't know from one hour to the next basically, what was going to happen.

DePue: How long was your unit then on the front lines, prior to the time the Battle of the Bulge began?

Lockhart: Well, then they moved us from the woods—at least my people, the antitank company—moved us to a town called Bleialf, B-l-e-i-a-l-f. I've even been back there; it's not far from the Belgian border. They put us in a house at the edge of town, and we had the 57mm there and we were told to be there. I don't know where the communication went back to. It was just a few of us, maybe half a dozen, at this house, with the gun. I still don't have a rifle, I might add; I'm still carrying the .45, which is useless. So that's where we were when the Battle of the Bulge began.

DePue: So you had only been on the front lines for a few days?

Lockhart: Mm-hmm, right.

DePue: Your first combat action then, was the Battle of the Bulge itself?

Lockhart: Yes. Of course we didn't know it was.

DePue: Yeah, exactly. Well, you're a private; they don't bother to tell you, do they?

Lockhart: Yeah, that's right. I remember it was 5:30 in the morning, because I had just gone off guard duty. It began with a huge artillery barrage, of course. I think the building that we were in was hit but it didn't cause any casualties, let's put it that way.

DePue: Okay, this would have been December sixteenth?

Lockhart: December sixteenth, 5:30 a.m., to be precise.

DePue: And you said the name of this town again was?

Lockhart: Bleialf.

DePue: B-l-e-i-a-l-f?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: And that's in Germany.

Lockhart: That's in Germany.

DePue: We're looking at the map here.

Lockhart: The 106th Division, I think was part of the 8th Corps and I believe the 1st Army.

DePue: Right. That's my understanding too. So it's a green division. Now you've heard about this, being an avid reader afterwards: why was the 106th on this sector of the line?

Lockhart: It was told to be a quiet period, that you could kind of get acclimated to combat conditions, and that nothing is expected to happen to you. Use it to get oriented to the front line, so to speak.

DePue: Was that your understanding of things on the fifteenth of December?

Lockhart: Well, at 5:30 in the morning, I knew something had gone wrong.

DePue: But that was the next day.

Lockhart: Yes, right. Well, that's the sixteenth. Oh, I see what you're saying. On the day before, well as far as I knew it was a quiet place.

DePue: Was the unit kind of lackadaisical on being on its guard at the time?

Lockhart: Well, I think they were on its guard, because everybody was nervous and they took their responsibility, shall we say, seriously, and they knew that there were Germans out there.

DePue: As far as you're concerned, this is your first exposure to combat.

Lockhart: Yeah. It was a big high, I mean, I can remember that. I thought, this is pretty exciting, Lockhart.

DePue: Well, then what's the mood at 5:30, 5:45 the next morning?

Lockhart: Well, we didn't know the extent of the problem of course, at that time. I'm not sure that anybody quite knew what the extent of it was. We were told to pull back, but it was a while before we did that.

DePue: But on the sixteenth?

Lockhart: On the sixteenth, right. I'm not a noncommissioned officer or a sergeant or corporal, so I didn't have access to the phone. There was a field phone and I don't know where the orders came from, but it was kind of relayed back. Besides that, we were all so green, we don't know whether this is normal or abnormal. And I didn't know where we were getting information from, whether it was just an attack sporadic kind of thing or was there some sustainability about it. We were just ignorant, green and ignorant and dumb, basically.

Eventually, they got around to telling us this is pretty serious. See if you can pull back; see if you can pull out. And so then we began an effort to, I would call it, kind of hit and run tactics to get out of Bleialf, and we eventually did. After that, it's kind of blurry, Mark, because we were continuously in motion, it seems like. There was sporadic fighting, but as I say, it's an antitank company, it's not a line item, not a rifle company. It's not a rifle company or a heavy weapons company. Looking back on it now, I'm not quite sure what the direction of the company was.

The gun was destroyed early in the attack, so that kind of left us high and dry. Nobody quite knew what to do. We don't have the piece of our artillery that we're supposed to have.

DePue: Tell us how the gun got destroyed then.

Lockhart: Well, by the German artillery.

DePue: So during shelling?

Lockhart: Yeah, right. The house we were in got hit; other houses got hit.

DePue: Does that mean you abandoned the gun?

Lockhart: We think the gun was damaged, probably damaged.

DePue: Before that time, had you actually seen or actually fired the gun?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: You hadn't seen any enemy?

Lockhart: Had not seen the enemy and not seen anything to fire at, right, right.

DePue: What was the prime mover for the gun?

Lockhart: It was just a regular size truck that's called two-by…?

DePue: Two and a half?

Lockhart: Yeah. It carried the crew and the gun, and then there was another kind of trailer type that carried the ammunition.

DePue: And the gun crew was six people?

Lockhart: Something like that, I would say.

DePue: Okay, so this is all on the sixteenth still? You're moving back then, huh?

Lockhart: Yes. We were told to try to pull back. Like I say, I'm not at the end of the phone line, so I'm not sure quite what was said or what, describe the circumstances, what was going on. We did not know the extent of the attack basically. We did not have any idea about this is really something out of the ordinary.

DePue: Okay. Why don't you then, to the best of your ability—and I can fully understand why all of this is hazy, things happened really quickly—but from that point in time, when you first started pulling back to the time when you and the others were captured.

Lockhart: Well, it was about four days, the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth. On the nineteenth was the day when the regimental commander, who was a colonel, and I don't know what was going on with them and so forth. I think. This is what I think mostly from afterwards, from my reading afterwards. I think they were disorganized partly and also cowardly. I don't think they were aggressive. I think they were intimidated by the Germans. I think they were told by German officers—I'm getting this maybe months, maybe years afterwards, being told about this or reading something about it—that the two regiments, the 422nd and the 423rd, were trying to get through to Belgium, and I think they were apparently stopped. This is what I understand. The German officer said, We have you surrounded with fifteen 88mm and we're going to blow you off the face of the earth basically. I don't know whether that was true or not.

Commented [DM1]:

We had a very nasty artillery attack. Fortunately I survived that one, but a lot of people were hit. I still have memories of that field and men crying for the medic, crying for their mother, some badly injured men. In fact, from one of them, I picked up his rifle, because I didn't have a rifle before that time.

DePue: This was in an open field?

Lockhart: It was an open field, and I think what happened… In a more experienced unit, I think probably the attitude would have been different. We had inexperienced officers, like I say, who were scared and had no premonition about what was happening to them, and they gave up. I think they gave up, is my personal opinion. They had not done their job as officers.

DePue: Had you seen the enemy up to this point in time?

Lockhart: Yes. Oh yeah. I saw them attacking.

DePue: Do you want to get that or shall we go on?

Lockhart: We can go on. I don't know who it is. So yes, I had shot away. Of course, I borrowed a rifle from somebody and used it on some attacking. (pause in recording)

DePue: Let's start by asking the question again here. Okay, we took a quick break for the telephone, but you were talking about the time you actually saw the enemy.

Lockhart: Yes. I actually saw the enemy. I would say it was probably later that day. First, of course, in normal warfare, is the artillery comes in and pummels the place and then the infantry attacks. So when the infantry attacked, we fired away. There might have been a machinegun that we had. There were just a few rifles, like I say; we had to share rifles, basically. And then the Germans shifted their attack someplace else, and that's when we were told to get out, pull back. After that, I'm not sure where we all went, but we did pull out of the house in Bleialf. Where we went after that, three or four days, like I say, until the afternoon of the nineteenth, is when the two regimental commanders surrendered.

DePue: And at that point in time you weren't staring across an open field with Germans on the other side, or were you?

Lockhart: We were in the woods, and this is when there was a serious attack by artillery on us, and we sustained a number of casualties. Fortunately nothing happened to me, but there were definitely a lot of casualties, and I think it unnerved our officers, to tell the truth.

DePue: How did you find out about this news, then?

Lockhart: What then?

DePue: The news that you guys were now ordered to surrender?

Lockhart: Say it again so I understand.

DePue: Well, you said the officers decided to surrender.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: I'm assuming you're not directly there with the officers, that the word came down that you're to surrender.

Lockhart: Well, it wasn't far away, they weren't far away, and it was passed on, "Destroy your weapons." That didn't go over too good. I didn't like that at all. That order came down, and of course we're supposed to follow orders, so I did that, but it troubled me. Now we had been for several days on the run, no food, no nothing. I thought well, maybe we can get some food and I can figure out a way to escape; that was my first thought. Because the Germans didn't want to agree with that strategy, you might say, so they didn't provide any food. So we were pretty hungry before we got on the train to Bad Orb, Germany.

DePue: I wonder if you can talk through, in as much detail—again as you can remember—when the Germans first came in and actually took you all captives.

Lockhart: Yes. Well, we went down and the first place, they wanted all our money. I hid my money in the lining of my jacket, so they didn't get any of my money. What else? They marched us for two days and two nights; this is wintertime, snow. I had to sleep out in the field. Went to a town called Gerolstein; it's still there. Went through the town of Prum and then to Gerolstein, and got there and trains with boxcars, trains backed up in there. They would pack us in, in a boxcar. They would usually put about sixty of us in, so you could not all sit down at the same time; you had to take turns sitting and standing. Obviously, there was no food, no water, and no toilet facilities. The place was under heavy lock, shall we say.

DePue: From the time you had gotten captured on the nineteenth—and now you're on the move for a couple of days—you still hadn't gotten any food?

Lockhart: Gotten any food that I can remember, unless you were carrying something of your own. I don't think the Germans gave us anything.

DePue: They must have given you some water, though.

Lockhart: Might. Although, snow was available.

DePue: What's the attitude of you and the troops around you at that time?

Lockhart: How in the hell did this happen? We figured, well somebody must know something that we don't know about the circumstances. That's the only thing I could figure out. It defied my understanding.

DePue: As far as you're concerned, you and your buddies still had a lot of fight in you?

Lockhart: I would say yes. We didn't expect that it would be a capitulation of this nature, no. What we should have done—and I've studied this problem a little bit—the orders were wrong. They should have said, Everybody pull back to the town of St. Vith—St. Vith is in Belgium, and it's a larger city—and

surround it; dig in you might say, at St. Vith, and hold out as long as you can. There was an armor division, the 7th Armor is somewhere, and it's coming, but when it's going to get there nobody knows. That's what they should have done, instead of left us isolated out in the woods, you might say, with no food. We were running out of ammunition and you don't have the basics, and you're not sure about what's going on. We're dumb, green troops, you know, and of course the officers are all dumb and green too, but there should have been some contingency efforts made and some planning, it seems to me. It's a lesson in life. I call it complacency; there's too much complacency. And time; we don't have enough time. So complacency and time are two enemies that we have to fight, it seems to me. I look back on this and the tactics that were used; it was just stupid, just stupid.

DePue: I might be getting ahead of the story in terms of how you were thinking or analyzing it, but at this time…

Lockhart: That came later, not at the time.

DePue: But at the time are you thinking, Man, we were sure wasting our time in England. We should have been doing some better training?

Lockhart: I suppose, I suppose.

DePue: What was your impression of the Germans that you were seeing at this time, of the German soldiers?

Lockhart: Nothing particular. I don't remember anything in particular about them.

DePue: Did they look like they were a beaten army? A few days before you thought they were a beaten army.

Lockhart: Mm-hmm. Well, I don't know. The honest answer is it didn't register with me, let's put it that way, it didn't register. I was so unhappy about the circumstances that I was in and I was thinking about, is there some way that I can escape this? But I didn't know where anything was. I had no maps, didn't have any good sense of direction. If somebody had said to me, Guys, some of you come with me and let's see if we can't break out of here, I would have gone with them. Maybe I would have survived, maybe not, but the whole idea of being a prisoner was repugnant to me.

DePue: Were you fairly heavily guarded at the time or was that pretty thin?

Lockhart: Well, I don't think we were heavily guarded, no. The weather was part of the problem, of course. It was nasty cold, wet, snow, and we were green, so we don't know where we're at quite. It's only afterwards, I go back and look at the maps and see where things were, that I realize that there might have been some opportunities, but we're so green and stupid, and even the officers were

green and stupid, that it didn't end the way it should have ended or could have ended.

Now, I'm still alive today, so I shouldn't complain right? But I've reflected on that experience often and I'm just PFC Lockhart and the only thing I know is follow orders, do what you're told.

DePue: Did you know at the time, within a few hours of the time you guys were ordered to surrender, that basically the remnants of two entire regiments had surrendered?

Lockhart: No, no. We didn't know this big, huge German army was there and had suddenly broken loose and is tearing the place apart. No, we did not know that, because we were told just the opposite: they're beaten. And we're just waiting around for them to realize that so they can surrender. Well, the hell they were. They were just waiting for green troops to show up and make it easier for them.

DePue: When you were in these train cars, I'm sure there's no seat.

Lockhart: Boxcar, a small one too; they're small in Europe, if you've ever seen those.

DePue: So you're either standing all the time or sitting on the floor.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: Did you feel like, Okay, now we're a big target for the American Air Force?

Lockhart: And we became that. We were bombed by the American Air Force.

DePue: While you were on the train?

Lockhart: While we were on the train. Believe me that's scary. You hear those bombs; it sounds like they're coming at you for maybe ten minutes before they hit. Some boxcars were hit. Fortunately, the boxcar I was in was not hit, but of course, all it means is that the railroad line is broken, so you sat for hours and hours and hours, maybe a day or two, until they fixed the tracks.

DePue: So you're just on the train itself?

Lockhart: What's the question?

DePue: You were still on the trains, though?

Lockhart: Oh yeah. They didn't let us out of the boxcars, no.

DePue: How about when you needed to relieve yourself?

Lockhart: There was a hole in the bottom. I don't know if it was made by somebody else, but there was a hold in the bottom of the boxcar that was used.

DePue: This is a pretty grim situation.

Lockhart: Yeah, right. Welcome to Germany.

DePue: How many in this boxcar, do you think?

Lockhart: I would say there was between sixty and seventy. They're made for forty people basically.

DePue: A forty and eight?

Lockhart: Forty and eight, yeah. Kind of the standard European boxcar that the poor Jews were put on, to take to Auschwitz. There's one of those in the Holocaust Museum in Washington that looks like exactly the one that I was packed into.

DePue: So now it's late December, there's seventy people on this boxcar. No food and no water?

Lockhart: No food and no water.

DePue: How many days then, before you actually got to a camp?

Lockhart: We got to Bad Orb on the 26th of December.

DePue: One day after Christmas.

Lockhart: Yes, one day after Christmas.

DePue: Did anybody know, keep track of what day it was?

Lockhart: Yes. Oh, I think so. Nobody had an appointment though or had plans, shall we say, to be elsewhere. (laughs)

DePue: Was Christmas Day an especially tough day then?

Lockhart: Well, I'm sure it was, but all the days were tough, you might say. It wasn't any different than any other day I can remember. Pitiful, trying to sing Christmas carols in the boxcar.

DePue: You did try to do that?

Lockhart: Yeah, mm-hmm. Trying to keep their spirits up.

DePue: Was there somebody who kind of took the lead, or these are all enlisted men?

Lockhart: No, not necessarily. They were all enlisted men, yeah, but there were some corporals and sergeants. There weren't any officers on these boxcars but there were sergeants and corporals who kind of maintained order, you might say.

DePue: They were able to maintain some discipline?

Lockhart: Yeah, yeah, because they had to be timed, whether you would be standing or sitting, so they couldn't all sit at the same time.

DePue: So somebody actually was in charge of that.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Do you remember the Christmas carols that were being sung?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: How enthusiastic was the singing?

Lockhart: Not very, I'm sure.

DePue: I'm sorry to pry so much.

Lockhart: Not very. And the bombing, the aerial bombing was definitely scary, because you cannot hide, you cannot do anything, I suppose, but pray. Like I say, some cars were hit, I know that for a fact, but the one I was in was obviously not hit.

DePue: As far as you know, were there some American casualties then, to these air attacks?

Lockhart: I'm sure, there had to be.

DePue: On the twenty-sixth of December then, you arrive at the camp. Where was that?

Lockhart: It's outside the town of Bad Orb. B-a-d, O-r-b. I found out later. I didn't know where it was at the time. I found out later it's about forty, fifty miles northwest of Frankfurt. We knew it was a bad place.

DePue: We can find it on the map here.

Lockhart: We knew it was a bad place because the train station said Bad Orb. But of course Bad in German means like spa. It's kind of a spa town. I've been back a couple of times, as a matter of fact. I took my son back there a number of years ago. Still, some of the buildings are left.

DePue: Tell me your initial impressions of Bad Orb.

Lockhart: You're talking about the camp now?

DePue: What was the designation of the camp?

Lockhart: It was for privates and PFCs, lowest ranks in the Army. There were Russian soldiers there, there were French soldiers that had been there since 1940, and there were Serbian soldiers there. I do remember, the Serbian soldiers in the camp, Serbian prisoners, gave up half their rations for us Americans because they know we hadn't been fed for a long while, and they had not been able to bring in extra food for the additional prisoners that were arriving. So I have a kind feeling about Serbians ever since.

DePue: What was the designation of the camp? Was this is a stalag?

Lockhart: Yeah, it's a Stalag IX-B it's called, stalag. It was a regular prison camp but there were no officers in the camp. And as a matter of fact, even the corporals and the sergeants were taken out a few weeks later and sent to a better camp, I understand. And so yes. And then of course, the Germans separated out those American prisoners who said they were Jews, and they were put in a separate barracks, and later they were put on a train and sent to a place called Berga, which is not a POW camp. It was a slave labor camp way on the other side of Germany.

DePue: You all had dog tags, correct?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Wasn't the religion on the dog tags?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Was that how the Germans found out that these were Jews?

Lockhart: No, didn't have to, they'd just ask, "Identify yourself if you're Jewish."

DePue: How long were you there before that incident occurred?

Lockhart: It came pretty quickly, that came pretty quickly. And then like I say, they were just put into a separate barracks. And then apparently—I learned this from subsequent reading—the camp 9B got a request for 350 prisoners for this workplace on the other side of Germany. So they took all those individuals who identified themselves as Jews, and they took another bunch of guys, just ordinary guys, until they got 350, put them on the train, off they went to Berga.

DePue: I'm guessing that you already mentioned all these different other nationalities of foreign troops that were already there as prisoners of war, that this was already a pretty crowded place before you folks got there.

Lockhart: Yes, yes, it was.

DePue: And did they take all of the prisoners they captured from those two regiments to the same place?

Lockhart: I don't know that, but I don't think so.

DePue: Was it there finally, you were able to start talking to people and realize the magnitude of what had just happened?

Lockhart: Mm-hmm. Even to an extent, the German army provided some news about what was going on. So we had some kind of notion, shall we say, of what was going on.

DePue: Were these official announcements from the Germans?

Lockhart: I think so.

DePue: The great victory in the Battle of the Bulge, and we've captured such and such a place?

Lockhart: Well, I think they were also dealing with the fighting in Budapest or in Poland or some other place. I think they probably didn't give us much information about where we were at. The information you got was like, I remember fighting in Budapest went on for quite a while, according to the Germans, the street fighting.

DePue: Did you believe what they were telling you or did you think it was propaganda?

Lockhart: I probably thought it was propaganda, but we didn't have any other source, shall we say.

DePue: Tell me your initial impressions of Stalag IX-B.

Lockhart: It was kind of a primitive place, you might say. Oh, it was definitely a primitive place.

DePue: I've got some pictures I got off the website here.

Lockhart: Yeah, this is something like it. I never did see this. This looks like it could have been. You know, I never been in any other prison camp, so I don't know anything about prison camps except this one. It was not a pleasant place, obviously. Everybody was hungry, hungry all the time, and for a lot of it we were cold a lot of the time. Food was the overriding concern.

DePue: Well, we've been at it for a little over an hour and a half and there's still a lot more that I wanted to talk about, but I wonder if we should hold off and do

that tomorrow, in part because I want you to go through some of the letters and postcards and things that you had, and find some that we can actually read into the record tomorrow.

Lockhart: Sure.

DePue: That sounds like a good plan for you?

Lockhart: I can do that.

DePue: Okay. Well this has been a very good discussion, in part because you're going into a lot more detail than I've had other people discuss these kinds of things, and I appreciate that.

Lockhart: Well, you remember my passion is history, so I keep my own history. So that's what you see here, which I'm willing to share. I think some of those things need to be shared, as a matter of fact. I'm finding more and more now, maybe we'll get into the second and third generations of people who say to me—and I get these kinds of calls and notices of someone, you know, My grandfather was in World War II or my great uncle was, or somebody like that. He never talked about the war, but I know he maybe was a prisoner, but he never talked about it. Can you tell me something about what that might have been like. I've gotten a number of these and I respond to all of them, of course. So that's why I've had this little broken down memoir, taken my red notebook there and boiled it down to what I handed to you earlier, you know the little memoir thing. So I had those printed up, so now I have something to hand out to people.

DePue: And that is part of the permanent record that we'll keep in our archives, with the interview itself. Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Lockhart, we're going to pick this up tomorrow morning, then.

Lockhart: All right. What time do you want to come over?

DePue: Nine o'clock.

Lockhart: Nine o'clock.

(end of interview #1 #2 continues)

Interview with Richard Lockhart

VR2-A-L-2012-008.02

Interview # 2: March 13, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Tuesday, March 13, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and today I have my second session with Dick Lockhart. Good morning, sir.

Lockhart: Good morning to you, Mark.

DePue: We are in his apartment in Chicago. Can you tell us exactly where you live?

Lockhart: I live at 1176 South Plymouth Court, and that's in the south loop. Plymouth Court is a small street between Dearborn and State Street. I walk to work normally, when I'm in Chicago.

DePue: And when you get to home, you get plenty of exercise just going up and down the stairs here.

Lockhart: Yes. I have three levels here, but I like it. I'm actually one of the few original people in this area that have maintained their residence since 1986.

DePue: That's when these were all built?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: We're only a couple blocks away from an elementary school, so it's a very nice neighborhood here. Well, yesterday we talked about your experiences growing up, we got you into the Army. You joined the 106th Infantry Division, you got through Scotland, through England to Europe, and got to the front lines just in time for the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, when you were captured. And that's pretty much where we left off yesterday.

Lockhart: Mm-hmm.

DePue: I wanted to start today with this question. You told us yesterday that you were not pleased at all about the idea of being captured. You thought there was still plenty of fight left in the unit.

Lockhart: I did, yes.

DePue: How much did you know about what was going on in Germany, in the prison camps and in concentration camps?

Lockhart: Very little about prison camps. I was aware that the concentration camps that had been set up during the Nazi regime, starting in the 1930s, were there mostly for political prisoners, communists, socialists, Jews, other dissidents. I do know that they existed yes, but I didn't know anything about prison camps per se.

DePue: Was there any knowledge or any discussion among the troops about death camps, that they would actually deliberately kill prisoners?

Lockhart: There was not enough well-known information about that. There might have been rumors, but there had not been the graphic descriptions that we heard, saw later on after the war.

DePue: What I'd like to have us start with today, then, is in as much detail as you can, describe this camp that you were in.

Lockhart: This camp was a very primitive kind of camp. It was only for the lowest ranks of soldiers. There were Russians in the camp, there were French who had been there since probably 1940, and there were Serbian soldiers there. We got there the day after Christmas, the twenty-sixth of December, and we were liberated on April 2, 1945, but we still had to stay in the camp, maybe for another week, because there was basically no transportation out, and we were all pretty weak and could not march very far after that.

It was a cold place and we were put in wooden barracks. Practically no food was provided. Everything, like I say, was very primitive. The heat was little there, and we were given one blanket, one thin blanket. After a while, when the weather moderated a little bit, then we were infested by vermin and that became a big problem, just in terms of having this lice crawl all over your body all the time.

DePue: That was it, it was lice?

Lockhart: Yeah, right. You couldn't sleep very good and it was irritating at many levels.

DePue: Tell us about the guards that you had there.

Lockhart: Well, there were guards there, but there was very little interaction between the prisoners and the guards. It's outside the town of Bad Orb, which is northwest

of Frankfurt, Germany. This we found out much later after the liberation. We didn't know where we were, basically, in Germany, but we were kind of at the side of a mountain. We had no perspective of where anything was, because we had been in boxcars for four days and four nights and there was no visibility. So where we were actually in Germany, we could not really learn about in any kind of significant way. It was a situation where you got what we called grass soup. You got kind of a half a liter of grass soup once a day, you got a couple slices of so-called bread that always appeared to be more sawdust than bread. Like I say, food was on everyone's mind.

DePue: How big were you when you were captured; how tall were you?

Lockhart: I was about five-ten, probably weighed 160 pounds. I do not know how much I weighed afterwards. I suppose I had lost thirty or forty pounds. Didn't realize how weak I was, except when they came to take us out, I could not get in the truck unaided, which was a surprise to me, because I always figured I was a fit person in terms of my physical ability.

The other thing, in addition to the food deprivation, which did not bother me, but there were a lot of soldiers who had become addicted to nicotine during the course of their Army career, because cigarettes were easily available, either free or cheap.

DePue: It was part of the rations that you got.

Lockhart: Well, yes. But I mean, once they got away from home, got to their training camp, a lot of them picked up on smoking, because they couldn't do it at home, apparently, but they could in the Army camps. So they became addicted to nicotine and when they got to the prison camp, of course there was no PX or anything of that nature, so nicotine deprivation for some. Fortunately, I had never smoked in my life so it didn't bother me. But anyway, I do know that the nicotine problem on some men who were dependent upon nicotine and once deprived of it, it had an adverse effect sometimes on their behavior. They would trade food, as little of it as was, for a cigarette.

DePue: Where were they getting cigarettes?

Lockhart: Well, I've never quite figured that out. There was in the camp what I would call a trader, who's an American soldier who had somehow obtained access to cigarettes. And as I may have mentioned earlier, when we were first captured, the Germans required us to turn in all money. I did not do that. I hid it in the lining of my jacket. So when I got to the camp, I heard about this trader who had cigarettes, and so I traded, I don't know, it must have been about twenty dollars, for a package of Marlboro cigarettes, which were probably selling in the PXs for about ten cents, and I traded one cigarette a day, for twenty days, to another soldier, another prisoner, who would rather have a cigarette than

half his food rations. So I got half his food rations and he got from me, a cigarette, and he was done, that was a good deal basically. I thought it was a good deal. Maybe I was a little better fed, not because the Germans gave me anything more, but because there was a weakness in an American soldier for nicotine, and I basically used his weakness to increase my food supply.

DePue: How was the food prepared? Were the Germans preparing it and then the classic scene of having to go through the mess line and they would ladle out the soup?

Lockhart: I think they did not provide it. They provided the materials, but there was a kitchen detail of prisoners. Of course, that was an ideal kind of job to have, and I don't know how they were selected, because everybody in the camp was either a private or a PFC. So, they did their own food. I suppose it was the basic materials was provided by the Germans, but there was only two things on the menu; the sawdust bread we called it, and grass soup. You didn't have any choices, basically.

DePue: Did you have any idea what the guards were eating and how well fed they were?

Lockhart: They all looked healthy to us, as well as their dogs did, so I'm sure they ate far better than we did. We were basically weak.

DePue: But you mentioned you didn't have a lot of direct interaction with the guards themselves.

Lockhart: No, we did not. On one occasion, they put out a requirement, anybody who wanted to go on a wood cutting detail outside the camp, and if you did you got extra rations. So I volunteered. This is in the dead of winter now, a lot of snow out there still, and I'm somewhere in one of the German forests cutting wood for the camp. Suddenly I was attacked by one of the guards with a club, who hit me on the back and knocked me down, hit me a few more times while I was down and then took on a couple of other American prisoners who were working on this detail, knocked them down. There were no words spoken. Apparently, the only thing we could figure out was the problem, first I thought he went berserk and I thought if he hit me in the head, he would have killed me that day. But he only hit me across the back and my body, and the others as well. We got no extra food rations by the way, and this was a bitter day, cold and heavy snow, deep in the woods. So that was my interaction with the German guards and it was not a good one.

This beating that I took and two other men took, ended up strangely enough, in a report that was made of prisoner abuse. Senator Durbin was able to find that in the National Archives. In 1998, he provided me the report that was made to the War Crimes Commission of prisoner abuse, and I am in that narration, along with the two other prisoners. So there is, shall we say

evidence of this, and as far as I know, nothing was ever done with respect to seeking out those German guards who took us for a beating that day in the woods.

DePue: Do you have any idea why he was beating you?

Lockhart: The only thing we could figure out, because no words were spoken, is that he didn't think we were working hard enough, fast enough. That was probably true because some of them didn't even have gloves and we were generally in a weakened condition in the first place.

DePue: I'm going to read a couple things on what you were just referring to here. Here's a letter from the National Archives, to Senator Richard J. Durbin, Dick Durbin, June 29, 1999. This is in response to your May 27, 1999 inquiry on the behalf of Richard Lockhart. And I'll skip down here.

"PFC Richard Lockhart, we have also located two affidavits, sworn by inmates of Stalag IX-B, Bad Orb, Germany, which cite PFC Richard Lockhart as the victim of physical abuse at the hands of a German camp guard."

And I'll read portions of a certificate that one soldier, William Arnold Vest, Corporal. Does that name ring a bell to you?

Lockhart: Yes it does.

DePue: It says, "About fifteen January, 1945, Privates Richard Lockhart and Donald Ledum and two other American soldiers working on a firewood-cutting detail at Stalag IX-B and were beaten and severely bruised with a rifle by a German guard, merely because he did not believe they were working fast enough. I was told those four American soldiers were marched about five miles in snow and extremely cold weather to reach the work. I actually saw the bruises on two of the victims when I talked to them afterwards. I cannot recall whether any medical treatment was given to them." Was there?

Lockhart: No, no, there was no medical treatment given or available.

DePue: Did that slow you down? Did that cause any permanent damage or temporary damage?

Lockhart: Yes. Still at times my back hurts, which I attribute to that occurrence.

DePue: How bad were you right after that? Were you basically limited in your mobility for a while?

Lockhart: Well, I was aching for a while yes, but I couldn't do anything about it. There was no medical services available, shall we say. Men died in the camp every day, I do believe.

DePue: What happened when they died?

Lockhart: There was a burial detail that buried them outside the camp.

DePue: Was there a chaplain or any kind of religious service?

Lockhart: That's a good question. There was a Catholic priest, chaplain, and a Protestant one, and they held services. It's interesting, you get a bunch of people together and individuals will come to the surface who wouldn't otherwise find the occasion to do so. But both of these chaplains provided religious services quite a bit. In addition, your question reminds me, there was a soldier, he was just a private but he was apparently well read, and he provided a series of, I think, twenty-some lectures on American history. That's without notes, without books, without reference material, and obviously, they were well received, shall we say. There was a lot of self-encouraged resourcefulness that was evidenced in this prison camp by ordinary Americans, you might say, who had to respond to this unusual situation they found themselves in.

DePue: You folks were in desperate situations. I'm wondering what kind of discipline you had and who was providing the discipline. Because I would think the worst crime of all would be to steal somebody else's food, for example.

Lockhart: Yes, it was. In every barracks there was a barracks leader. Sometimes there was one who had some proficiency in German or someone who was bigger, tougher, and could necessarily impose some discipline himself if necessary. So yeah.

DePue: And pretty much the barracks, the personal dynamics of the barracks, somebody would eventually emerge as the leader?

Lockhart: Yes. I wouldn't say eventually. Probably pretty quickly. Again, I think it was the individual Americans first, who could speak some German, because not very many of the German guards knew English. So that was a way to communicate, that was beneficial to the Germans, obviously it was beneficial to their fellow prisoners as well.

DePue: How many people in your barracks, any idea?

Lockhart: Not for sure, can't think about it right now. Maybe a hundred, maybe less than a hundred, but I think it was probably more than that.

DePue: Did you get your own bunk or did you end up having to share bunks?

Lockhart: You had your own bunk. It was just wooden with one blanket, that's all it was.

DePue: Metal springs or wooden slats?

Lockhart: They were just wooden. There wouldn't be any metal, no.

DePue: Do you remember who your barracks leader was?

Lockhart: No I do not. I don't remember, except friends of mine from my unit in the Army who ended up in the barracks. Let me just say also, about the toilet facilities. There was only one room with a hole in the floor, and there was no toilet paper per se. What we were provided was Excelsior wood shavings. Everybody had diarrhea and in a generally weakened condition, so you were filthy, basically, wearing the same clothes I wore in November, all the way through and of course, there was no way to get things washed.

Once or twice, the Germans would take us to a barracks or a room, where they would provide delousing services, which was only a very temporary solution to the lice problem, because the lice were everywhere. You go back to the barracks and the lice were waiting for you. It was a primitive situation and a lot of men got sick. I did not per se get sick, but a lot of my fingernails came loose and they've never grown back quite the same. I would say at least half my fingernails just came sliding out.

So there were men who got apparently pneumonia. They were taken out of the regular barracks and put in another barracks for sick men, and a lot of them never left the barracks either. People died every day, it seemed like.

DePue: Do you recall, was there a cemetery on the compound?

Lockhart: There must have been, probably just outside the camp. I understand afterwards, the bodies were removed and moved to a regular U.S. Military cemetery somewhere, probably not in Germany but in Luxembourg or Belgium probably.

DePue: Okay, a couple more questions about the food. A lot of the stories you hear, Red Cross parcels were incredibly important to soldiers.

Lockhart: Yes. That's a good thing to remember. The catch was that you had to share it with maybe three other guys. Nobody ever got their own Red Cross packet, so it was limited, but it was welcome.

The other thing I wanted to mention too, when we first got to the camp there was no food for us for a while, and the Serbian prisoners who had been there since probably 1941, gave half their food rations to American soldiers, so at least they had some food after being four days and four nights in a boxcar. I always remembered that kindness, of the Serbian soldiers who did that.

DePue: You talked about other nationalities being there: Russians, Serbians, French, others. Were they all in the same barracks compound?

Lockhart: No, they were segregated into different sectors of the camp and there was no intermixing.

DePue: Talking about the United States there, I would think there would be soldiers who knew some Russian, maybe even some Serbo-Croatian, or things like that.

Lockhart: I did not have any interaction with any other nationalities in the camp until later on. There were some British soldiers who had apparently been in a prison camp in the eastern part of Germany or in Poland who when the advancing Russian forces there, the Germans took the prisoners out and marched them across Germany, and some of them ended up in Stalag IX-B.

DePue: You weren't hearing then, too much about what they had experienced, being there for several years already?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: Now from what I've read, the Russians started to, for lack of a better word, disappear.

Lockhart: I've heard that, yes. I've heard the fact that they were probably killed outside the camp somewhere. I have no knowledge of that. The one group that I do have knowledge about is the American Jews. Jewish soldiers, were segregated out. First they asked all the Jews in the American camp to identify themselves; some did and some didn't. Those that did were segregated out and put in a separate barracks in Stalag IX-B. At a later point, they were all shipped off with some other non-Jews, to a slave labor camp in Berga, Germany, on the eastern part of the country, not too far from Dresden or some of those other cities in Eastern Germany. So they had a very difficult time, I can imagine. I have reports that I've picked up later from people who survived that.

DePue: You told us earlier though, at least to your knowledge, that you didn't know much of anything about the Nazi concentration camps.

Lockhart: Did not. We did know of course, that there was a lot of animosity by the German government toward Jews. That had been pretty well known before that time, but we didn't know about the death camps, so to speak.

DePue: I'm trying to visualize how this happened. Were you all put in a formation and then a German came forward who could speak some English, and ask for the Jews to identify themselves?

Lockhart: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Is that how it happened?

Lockhart: Something like that, yeah.

DePue: I think you mentioned this yesterday as well. I'm just trying to imagine this moment in life myself, that had to be quite an experience, but the Jews that

did volunteer, I mean all the Germans would have had to do, I would think, is look at the dog tags.

Lockhart: Yeah, but of course you could throw away your dog tags.

DePue: Did you?

Lockhart: No. I didn't throw away my dog tags. I've thought about this and conjured with it too, and I think the Americans who were Jews in the Army, when this came up, number one, they did not feel right in denying their religion. Secondly, they felt that somehow, their American uniform would protect them, and it didn't really. The people they took off to Berga were not just Jews. They took all of the Jews who indicated so, but they also took a lot of non-Jews as well. They took 350 prisoners out of Stalag IX-B, which included all those who indicated Jew. I have letters back from soldiers who didn't know, the rule is you tell them name, rank and serial number. You don't have to tell them anything else. Some of them did not tell the Germans that they were Jews, and some of them, it bothered them. I always thought it shouldn't have bothered them, because the Germans were the enemy; you don't have to tell them anything. You can lie to them as far as that's concerned.

I have letters back, because I have talked about this issue a number of times, including even at the Holocaust Ceremony in Springfield, Illinois, back in '91, and then my remarks were printed in a number of places. So it has been an issue which I've heard about. Some of them were grateful that I made this known, this fact. And you see some letters here from those individuals who learned of this for the first time and were surprised. Well, of course it's unfortunate but those things happen in war.

DePue: Apparently, though, from what I've read, this was not a practice that was done in a lot of other stalags.

Lockhart: I have not heard about it in other places, let's put it that way, but I honestly don't know.

DePue: Okay. Now it certainly is sobering to think about; certainly your experience was horrific but theirs was even more so.

Lockhart: Yes, yes, much worse. I have letters back from a couple friends of mine who survived that.

DePue: Are they here in front of us perhaps somewhere?

Lockhart: Somewhere, maybe. But a funny thing, this good friend of mine who survived, now dead, but he sent me a long letter about it; but he didn't talk much about the experience itself, strangely enough. I think it was just too painful.

DePue: When you were captured, of course this is in December, in a very cold terrain, lots of snow. What were you wearing at the time?

Lockhart: Well, we were dressed for winter. We didn't have any what was called the snow packs for feet; it was just regular boots we were wearing, which were not resistant to snow and cold, and so that's where I first became aware of my feet being frozen, especially when I had no dry socks to change. We sat in boxcars for four days and four nights, you couldn't even exercise to speak of. My feet bother me today, what's called the residual effect of frostbite, and I get compensation from the Veterans Department due to my feet problems, which persist.

DePue: Those problems were even more severe than the beating you got when you were in prison camp?

Lockhart: Yes, mm-hmm, because they never quite go away.

DePue: Did you also have a parka or overcoat, a hood?

Lockhart: I had an overcoat, fortunately. A lot of men threw away their overcoats. I think I even had a jacket. I'm not sure whether I had gloves. I can't remember that part for some reason. But all your other clothes, like I say, which you put on in November, you were still wearing in April.

DePue: In other words, there was no laundry facilities.

Lockhart: No.

DePue: Was there a shower that you could get cleaned up?

Lockhart: Well, once in a while we'd get the delousing shower, you might say.

DePue: But that just sounds like you're being sprayed with something, rather than having soap and water.

Lockhart: Well, it was a cold water. I think what they did, when you took the shower in cold water, they deloused your clothes at the same time; there was a delousing operation going on, because I'm sure the Germans were subject to vermin as well.

DePue: Did you get the same clothes back?

Lockhart: Yeah. Don't ask me, I can't remember some of the details though, Mark. I'm just trying to figure out what must have taken place.

DePue: I apologize for my curiosity, but I won't relent, I'm afraid. You mentioned that there were classes being given by some of the soldiers who just kind of voluntarily decided to do that.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: What else did you do to keep your minds busy?

Lockhart: Think about food, basically. We would collect—I remember this from other men—good restaurants in their town or what kind of food, when we got back home, would we want out mothers to prepare. Food was an all-encompassing, I'm going to say demand, and that's what I do remember. And I even have evidence where I recall writing down restaurants of guys, from their hometown. I still have them in my red notebook here.

DePue: Isn't that a form of torturing yourself though, when you're starving to death?

Lockhart: I guess. Well, when you go hungry day after day after day and there's no opportunity to satisfy your hunger, it becomes an all-encompassing driven factor in your thinking, your planning. That's all you think about. I could probably find some letters here where that's basically what I talked about, is there some way… if we could write letters back home and ask for things. We were always trying to figure out, what would be something good that could survive the travel and still be nourishing. Would it be peanut butter or nuts or something? Long discussions, shall we say, about what would be the best food that we could ask to be sent to us. Of course no food was ever sent to us, so it was all part of a fantasy.

DePue: I think this might be a good opportunity. You did have a chance to mail some letters, it sounds like. You've got one in front of you here dated January 5, 1945. Could I get you to read that for us?

Lockhart: It's kind of long, but the Germans did provide on occasion, but you can see on the other side, it was not received until March 20, 1945. Now, part of the problem was, while I was in the service my parents moved from Indiana to Ohio. This is written in pencil and the years have faded some of it. So this is to my mother, January 5, 1945.

"I certainly was happy today when I first got a chance to let you know that I am safe and everything is okay." This is probably the first letter that they allowed us to send out.

"I'm treated all right and although I would like to receive some boxes very much, inquire with the Red Cross in Chicago as to how many—" Because we didn't know how to manage the shipping of stuff to Germany during wartime, but you'd probably have to go to Switzerland.

"The Red Cross in Chicago as to how many boxes…" And blah-blah. "But, send the maximum amount and send all food. I would like especially peanut butter, corned beef, cashew nuts, chocolate." See how I'm getting carried away here with the food deprivation? Like I said, we never received anything.

"I can send but two letters and four postcards a month. I will try to send most of them to you. We POWs have second priority on going home after the wounded, so maybe it won't be very long until I am home enjoying some good pies, weddings, and good meals again." Food compulsions, so having these comments here.

"Hang on to the house." "Good meals, try to"—I know, to go back to—"I hate to come back to. I'd like to come back to a strong"—I don't know what that meant. "I hope you are all well and haven't worried too much about me, but I am okay and will be home one of these days, with all of my back pay. Tell the *Journal–Gazette*"—that's the newspaper I subscribed to in Fort Wayne—"to discontinue the papers. I will write when I can but don't forget the food. Love, Dick." That was the first letter back home.

DePue: You wrote that on the fifth of January. You said they got that in March. Here's the Western Union telegram that your family received, it looks like on the twelfth of January 1945. So a week after you wrote this letter to let them know you're okay, and this is what your family found out on the twelfth.

"The Secretary of War desires me to express his regret that your son, Private 1st Class Richard T. Lockhart, has been reported missing in action since twenty-one December, in Germany. If details or other information is received, you will be promptly notified."

So, a month after the beginning of the battle, practically a month after you were captured, your family…

Lockhart: It doesn't say prisoner, it just says missing in action.

DePue: Missing in action.

Lockhart: I think later, much later, they got another telegram and it was reported that I was a prisoner of war. But this one here did not—all as it said, I wasn't killed in action.

DePue: As far as the Army knew, you weren't killed in action.

Lockhart: Yes, right.

DePue: Did your parents tell you what their reaction was to this telegram?

Lockhart: Well I heard about it yeah, from others.

DePue: What were you hearing?

Lockhart: That my mother basically collapsed. I'm an only child. She's a worrier by nature anyway. She could not function, basically, because of her fears and concerns, and in fact like I say, could not function. My father was working in

a war plant in the Detroit area, could not get away, so what he had to do was to arrange for her to go to her parents' home in Ohio. And so she went back to Ohio, and when I was liberated and came back to Indiana, of course, I knocked on the door and found out there was somebody else in the house, not my parents.

DePue: Well that's getting ahead of the story a little bit. We'll get to that pretty quick here, Dick. Well, anybody who knows about World War II knows that one of the worst things for somebody back home to see was that telegraph boy, the Western Union telegraph boy riding up to the front of the house.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Because that meant probably, possibly bad news for them.

Lockhart: Yes. You notice there's two stars there. My guess is two stars were prisoners and maybe either three stars or one star was killed in action.

DePue: But as you said, this doesn't say you're a prisoner. It just doesn't know what happened to you.

Lockhart: That's right, that's right. There were obviously those that had been wounded as well, and so there was probably some other kind of identification of the telegram, that you were wounded.

DePue: Do you know how people would end up finding out that they were prisoners? Was this something that was passed to the Red Cross and then passed on to the United States authorities?

Lockhart: I believe so. There was a roster of all the prisoners. The prison camp was part of the jurisdiction of the Swiss International Red Cross. So they came, I remember, to the camp, and we were fed better that day, I noticed, and they did a report. I have records here in my files, of the reports of the Swiss International Red Cross, saying this was the worst prison camp in Germany.

DePue: And I wanted to read some of that too.

Lockhart: There's some commentary about that.

DePue: Now where did I put that? Here we go. This is by Pete House, who obviously was there at the prison camp along with you. I got this off the internet, I have to tell you.

"Stalag IX-B was considered by many as the worst of the worst of the German stalags where American POWs were held. The first Americans arrived on December 25, 1944, Christmas Day, after being captured in the Battle of the Bulge." And you got there just one day later it sounds like.

"Stalag IX-B was supposed to be used only to classify POWs and send them to regular camps. In fact, the privates and PFCs never left. Officers were kept until January tenth, and noncommissioned officers sent out on January twenty-fifth." Does that pretty much jive with your memory?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: "Jews and some others left in February. In two reports by the Swiss Red Cross, they reported how horrible the conditions were. They report on bad food, filthy barracks, poor health conditions and lack of clothing. To my knowledge, it was the only stalag to actually send Americans to slave labor camps." As you mentioned, they were sent to Berga.

"Red Cross packages were never issued to the Americans. When American troops arrived in Bad Orb after liberation, many packages were found in town." Now you had talked about Red Cross packages. Had you received them in your camp?

Lockhart: Mm-hmm. But you didn't get one for yourself. It had to be shared with three or four other prisoners.

DePue: Okay. So that part of it, you would slightly disagree with what he said.

Lockhart: Yes, I would. I'm sure there were some packages that the Germans reserved for themselves, because they were in control of that situation.

DePue: What were in the Red Cross packages that you guys got?

Lockhart: Well, might I also say there was always cigarettes and maybe some cheese, crackers probably. I can't remember now, what other items might have been in there. Things that are nonperishable, obviously. They were gratefully received, shall we say, and sharing it was part of the problem, but we didn't have any choice about that.

DePue: Did that make the difference between life and death for some people?

Lockhart: Don't know. It could have been if liberation had been delayed for a long period of time. It's a little hard to say about that.

DePue: Well, you guys are slowly but surely getting weaker and weaker.

Lockhart: Yes, right. One of my teeth had rotted out, so I had some tooth pain and I had my fingernails gone. Other people turned jaundiced and had gotten weaker and weaker, yeah.

DePue: Was there any kind of dental care?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: Were there any barracks dentists or barracks doctors?

Lockhart: No. There was a doctor, an American officer who, he was a dental officer but he didn't have anything to take care of sick prisoners, but he was—and I understand afterwards, he was Jewish and obviously never told the Germans he was Jewish. He stayed in the camp. He was one officer, and the two chaplains of course were officers in the American Army.

DePue: Did you think about escaping or resisting?

Lockhart: We would have liked to escape but we didn't know where we were, basically. We had no idea where we were and the weather was cold.

DePue: What were you thinking in terms of how long you might be there, how the war was going on?

Lockhart: We thought, I think, that it would be relatively soon, that we would outlast the bastards and be able to leave the camp some time in spring, summer, or fall if necessary.

DePue: Even though there was this overwhelming offensive in December, the Battle of the Bulge?

Lockhart: Yeah, well, that we were aware of, but we didn't think that could be sustained by the Germans either. And of course they were being attacked by the Russians on the eastern front. The Germans were in an impossible situation. They couldn't sustain that opposition forever; they're going to run out of men.

DePue: And again, you guys had lots of time to think about your situation and think about how you were slowly starving to death.

Lockhart: Oh yeah.

DePue: What was the speculation at the time: the Germans were doing that deliberately, slowly starving you to death, or that the whole country was like that and you were just suffering along with them?

Lockhart: Well, we assumed there was suffering by everybody, but we were probably at the lower rung. I think our concern was toward the end, that they would march us out of the camp, into some other part of unoccupied Germany, because there had been some evidence that they had moved some prisoners on the east side of Germany to our camp. And so it appeared that that was part of their strategy: when the enemy got too close, they would march the prisoners out. So that was our concern and we thought that that was going to really happen, but the officers in the camp somehow either persuaded—or I don't know whether the Germans needed that. They pointed out that we were a lot of sick people and we would be marching through German villages, and maybe run the risk of contaminating the German population. Whether that was a rationale

or whether there was any basis to it, I'm not involved in, obviously, those kinds of deliberations or discussions. So we were never marched out, they never marched out.

DePue: You said the officers in the camp. Are you talking about prisoners or are you talking about the German officers?

Lockhart: No, I'm talking about the two chaplains and the medical officer. They were the only officers that were there.

DePue: Were you able at all to keep up with war news?

Lockhart: To some extent, yes. To some extent there was some accessibility of a limited nature, from the German army information office, yes.

DePue: How would they disseminate that?

Lockhart: They would put it on a piece of paper and tack it on the wall outside one of the huts.

DePue: Did you keep receiving prisoners, new prisoners that were captured?

Lockhart: Some, yeah.

DePue: They could pass on information as well?

Lockhart: Conceivably, yeah. In fact, there was a fellow from my high school graduation class showed up one day, from another unit.

DePue: A bad place to have a class reunion.

Lockhart: I was going to say a class reunion in the middle of Germany.

DePue: What keeps you going in those kind of circumstances?

Lockhart: Hope. Hope, I think. We knew it had to come crashing down pretty soon. You just had to keep alive.

DePue: Did you see any evidence of Allied airpower? Did you see any aircraft flying overhead?

Lockhart: Oh yeah, oh sure, a lot of that.

DePue: What would happen when you saw that?

Lockhart: Well, we could do nothing but be pleased, shall we say.

DePue: Was there cheering sometimes?

Lockhart: I don't recall that. I do recall there was one point a fighter plane—I don't know what it was about, whether an American fighter plane came down, I don't know whether trying to shoot the guard tower—but shot into one of the barracks and killed some American soldiers. That's not good either. But you know, strange things happen in war. It's not always, shall we say, planned.

DePue: Was that an incredibly demoralizing thing, or was there some hope because, Okay, at least they're getting closer?

Lockhart: Yeah, well, by that time, I think probably it was regrettable and it could happen to any of us, to be shot like that by your own. But you know, we were looking forward to liberation. Hope sustains people you know, even in the direst circumstances sometimes.

DePue: You mentioned earlier in the interview that you had some exposure to Christianity, but you didn't feel like you were especially strong religiously. Did any of that change, your attitude change?

Lockhart: I used to go to the services, but mostly because there's nothing else to do, basically. I guess I was always glad that they were there, those services were available, but it didn't make me a religious person.

DePue: Are there any stories that we haven't talked about already that are especially vivid for you while you were in the prison camp?

Lockhart: Nothing comes to mind, let's put it that way. Nothing comes to mind. I do recall when after liberation, we still had to stay at the camp and still had to eat grass soup for a few days. But when they brought the trucks in to take us out, I was so weak, I could not get in the truck by myself, and I always believed myself to be a strong individual physically. I had to be helped into the truck, and it made me realize how weak I was.

DePue: How much do you remember about liberation day then? Can you talk about that in some detail for us?

Lockhart: I don't have any—isn't that strange? I don't have any kind of a vivid memory about it. We could tell from the shooting down below in the valley, that liberation was not far away, and so it was expected.

DePue: Did the guards suddenly disappear?

Lockhart: The guards disappeared, yes they did. I'm trying to think of the division that liberated us. I can't think of it right now. So we're still in the camp and then they took us out of the camp, to another place not far away, where we were basically physically examined. I remember the Army nurse showed up, the first woman I had seen since November, and we were kind of evaluated there, as to those who would need medical care immediately and those who could be sent on.

I was well enough that I didn't need any medical care, and so we were taken to someplace where there was an airport. I took my first airplane trip in my life, from Germany to France, outside of Le Havre, France, to a place called Camp Lucky Strike. The camps were set up in France for men either coming into combat or leaving combat. They're called cigarette camps, so there was Camp Chesterfield and we were in Camp Lucky Strike. These were not permanent camps; these were tent cities basically, tents. And this is where we could finally gorge ourselves on food, most of which I did, and then threw it all up. My system couldn't get used to this.

DePue: I've heard the stories about how dangerous it is when you're first exposed to that, and that they would really have to closely regulate that.

Lockhart: We learned that. Yes, that's absolutely true.

DePue: But for the first few days after you're liberated, you stayed in the stalag?

Lockhart: Mm-hmm, yes. Because there was no way to get out; there was combat going all around.

DePue: But what's the attitude of people the day that you're liberated? What was your attitude?

Lockhart: How soon can we get home and get something to eat? Or maybe the reverse of that: How soon can we get some food and get back home?

DePue: Did you have in mind what the perfect meal would be?

Lockhart: I'm sure I did, but I can't remember it now. All those things were planned out in your head.

DePue: Do you recall the reaction of the American troops that found you?

Lockhart: No. I didn't have any interaction, essentially, with them.

DePue: Now, you strike me as a pretty observant person and very intelligent, and yet you don't remember a lot of the details.

Lockhart: Well, it was long time ago.

DePue: Yeah, I didn't—that didn't sound very good. Were you emotionally and mentally exhausted at the same time, do you think?

Lockhart: I was probably physically weak but not mentally weak, except maybe there was uncertainty of what was going to happen. What are they going to do with me, basically. Am I going to be sent to a hospital in England? That certainly was a possibility. A lot of men who were wounded, injured, there were hospitals in England where they recuperated. Are we going to get on a ship

and where, how? All those things. Well, fortunately, due to my better physical condition, I got on a hospital ship in Le Havre, France, on the thirteenth of April, and was back in the United States in about ten days.

DePue: So this is the days of the dying pangs for the Nazi empire. Were you ever debriefed?

Lockhart: No. I don't think so. No, I was asked, I remember, by somebody, "How were you treated?" This was on radio, and I decided not to talk about the beatings, not to talk about the prisoners who were sent off to slave labor camp, because I didn't want to worry my parents, who might have heard that radio announcement and be concerned about it, so I did not speak up. As far as I know, nobody else spoke up either. The war was still going on, of course, technically. It didn't finish until the first week of May.

DePue: Right. Do you recall hearing the news about the Nazi death camps, and just how atrocious those were?

Lockhart: No, we did not. No, that came later.

DePue: Were you already back in the United States when you discovered that?

Lockhart: I think so.

DePue: Do you recall your reaction when you heard that?

Lockhart: Well, I guess we weren't probably surprised, because the Germans had an attitude of superiority; the other elements of society were for them to order around, to kill or do whatever they wanted to.

DePue: What do you think today then, in the last fifty, sixty years, when you hear, "Well, the average German didn't know this was going on"?

Lockhart: Well, at that time, I think most of them knew there was something going on, because the concentration camps were not a secret, because people went there and some of them came out. The Holocaust circumstances, I think, the extent of them, did not come out until after the war. We knew there was some kind of… Well, I had of course read about the concentration camps that were set up during the early thirties. The Nazi authorities put people in concentration camps for all kinds of reasons, you know, disrespect of the regime and one thing or another. Now the murder of the Jews, the gassing of them, did not come out until, I think, after the war. There were rumors about these things that went on, but there was no evidence.

DePue: How does somebody like you, who spent your life now after this, reading history, fascinated with history, having been part of it, knowing that you're growing up in a country where there were millions of German immigrants

here, so how do you wrap your brain around what the Germans did, what the Nazis did during the war?

Lockhart: Well, I have had several transformations. I went back to Germany with my wife at the time, ten years after the war. I went back in '54. I went to Germany, went back to Stalag IX-B as a matter of fact; there were still some of the buildings there. I looked at all the men who were about my age and I wondered whether they were trying to kill me or I was trying to kill them. And so, yes, I felt in 1954, when I was there, ten years after the war, when I left Germany I felt good. I felt uncomfortable when I was in Germany, back in 1954. Now I've been back to Germany a number of times and I don't have those feelings. Time has gone by, most of those people are dead, whatnot, and I don't have the feeling any more that there was any residual hatred or any residual attitudes of the Nazi period still remaining. So I don't have any ill feelings about the Germans of today, let's put it that way.

DePue: Tell us about then—you spoke a little bit about this—but coming back home and the reunion with your family, if you can lay that out in some detail for us.

Lockhart: Well, I came back quicker than I ever would have imagined, to tell the truth. We spent about maybe ten days on this hospital ship coming into New York. I spent one day at, I think Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, where I finally got a haircut. Well obviously, we were on the ship, we could eat good and got better. I still had this rotted tooth that was giving me a lot of problems, but I didn't want to tell the Americans about it, because I thought it would hold me up from getting back home. So I kept that to myself. They put us on trains, went right back to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where we had left back in October. When we were there, got some back pay, got some clothes, and got orders at that time for the sixty-day furlough, probably got some food ration stamps. I can't remember all that.

I had sent communications back to my parents that I was on my way home. I traveled faster than the mail did, and so I go to the house thinking they have received my communication and they hadn't, that they had no longer lived there. My mother, as I indicated earlier, collapsed, basically, and couldn't function back in Indiana, so she went home to mother and father and her sisters were all there, back in her original home. So I get to the house in Indiana and there are strangers there now. And of course immediately, the people in the house knew the circumstances and so I think I communicated with my parents by phone. Things were a lot slower. You didn't have the sophisticated communications system back in 1945 that we have today, of course. The war was still going on in Europe and the war of course with Japan was still at a significant level. So I hitchhiked to Ohio from Indiana and rejoined my family there.

DePue: Do you remember anything about the reunion then?

Lockhart: Well, it was at my grandparents', because my mother was staying there. They were all curious about what happened to me. (chuckles) So they had a big dinner for me at the house and, you know, it was an adjustment, but it was not a difficult adjustment.

DePue: Adjustment for both sides?

Lockhart: I would say so, and that's, I think, one of the reasons they gave a sixty-day furlough. We were not ready to get back into training or go back to the war for a while. We were all kind of weak, so the sixty days was very helpful in terms of getting your strength back and reorienting yourself to America.

DePue: Do you remember what the menu was, that first meal back home?

Lockhart: No I don't. It was ample. It was satisfying.

DePue: Well you said you had a two-month furlough, but it also makes me think that the expectation you had—the war with Japan still going on—that you figured you were going back in the Army and maybe ship over to Japan?

Lockhart: I was still in the Army. I was not discharged.

DePue: Right. That you would go, ship to Japan?

Lockhart: I expected that, I definitely expected that, right, because the war with Japan to me was a long-term effect. Presumably now, I'm a little more experienced, shall we say, in combat, so I'm a little more valuable than I was back in December.

DePue: As long as they can put some meat back on the bones.

Lockhart: Yeah, that's right. And my feet were still a problem. I had not really—what do I want to say? The penetrating ache in the bones had really not quite disappeared, but I finally did get the bad tooth pulled in a civilian dentist, so I was feeling better.

DePue: What were your thoughts then, when you heard about [Harry S.] Truman dropping the atomic bombs?

Lockhart: Wonderful, wonderful. At this time I was now in Fort Benning, and of course the bomb was a complete surprise. Nobody realized that it was even in preparation, execution. We all figured there would be a long, bloody combat period coming up, and I think that was anticipated by the American Army. The invasion of Japan was construed to be, going to be, a very bloody event. The Japanese showed no sign of surrendering at that time, until the bomb anyway. They even had to drop a second bomb, probably to prove to the Japanese we had more than one of these bombs, and maybe had more than two conceivably. So that was a big relief. And that was, I think, in August;

the Japanese surrendered in September. I was discharged in December of that year.

DePue: So by the time the atomic bombs are dropped and shortly thereafter the Japanese surrender, you had no expectation of ever being shipped back overseas.

Lockhart: No, not after the bomb, no.

DePue: I'm sure you're aware that over the last three decades, there's been an awful lot of debate and discussion about whether or not it was the right thing, to drop those bombs.

Lockhart: Well, I'm firmly in favor of dropping the bombs. And I think the Japanese are better off as well, because otherwise, it would have been more destructiveness on their home islands, and probably much longer, much heavier casualties than otherwise could be the case.

DePue: So does it bother you when you hear people condemning us for having done that?

Lockhart: Yeah, well, it bothers me to the extent that they were not in my shoes, so to speak. I would understand that there would be a different point of view. There is a humanitarian side of life, I know, but when you're in the Army, in the infantry, and you're dealing with death, the humanitarian emotions recede, shall we say. All you want to do is defeat the enemy by whatever resources you can bring to bear and get it over with.

DePue: How about those people who deny the Holocaust?

Lockhart: Well, I don't understand those people, to tell the truth. I've been to the museums. We have, I think, one in Skokie. They used to have the Spertus over here on Michigan Avenue. I don't know whether that's still there or not. I've been to Israel, outside Jerusalem, there's the big Holocaust museum, Va Vashem. There's Holocaust museums I think in a number of places in Europe. So they're just either prejudice people or absolutely—what do I want to say?—deficient in any willingness to look at the facts.

DePue: Did you follow the Nuremberg war crimes trials?

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Do you think those were handled well, that justice was meted out?

Lockhart: I do.

DePue: You're released from service, you said, in November of 1945?

Lockhart: December 12, 1945. I know exactly the date.

DePue: That one sticks with you, huh?

Lockhart: That one stays with me. Back in Camp Atterbury, my three trips to Camp Atterbury.

DePue: And you remember very well, the specific time and the date you were captured.

Lockhart: I do.

DePue: That the invasion started. What did you do after that, then? What were your plans for your life?

Lockhart: After liberation, you mean? You mean after I got discharged?

DePue: Right.

Lockhart: I came to Chicago on January 2, 1946, and I've been here ever since, basically. I enrolled at Northwestern, evening classes at the university on Chicago Avenue. I got a job. My first job was a job as a soda jerk; that's the only thing I knew, shall we say.

DePue: In downtown Chicago here?

Lockhart: Downtown Chicago. I lived at the YMCA Hotel; the building is still here, 826 South Wabash. I'm back in the same neighborhood. It's taken me a while to get back here, but that's just a block or two away. And like I say, I met a wonderful woman, married in 1948.

DePue: What was her name?

Lockhart: Her name was Dorothy Phelps, and we lived in Chicago. At the time, I was editor for a business publication and I worked there six years. I had an interest in politics and government, and started as a volunteer, doing precinct work for the Independent Voters of Illinois here in Chicago. Out of that experience I got some information about Illinois government and politics, and I got more and more interested in it.

Graduated from Northwestern in 1951. I started as a freshman at Purdue in 1942, so it took me nine years to get a degree, but there was a few interruptions to that. One thing, another, and I worked for some civic organizations, got involved in some constitutional campaigns. I started my own business, my own governmental affairs consulting firm and lobbying firm in 1958; and it still exists today and we still have clients. I've been in business now, fifty years.

DePue: Well, for the listeners and readers of this interview, I want to entice you, because we're going to end this interview today. We've still got a little bit more to discuss, but we're going to interview on a future date about your experiences dealing with lobbying and working in Illinois government, in politics. So that's a different subject for a different day. [2]

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Did you use the GI Bill?

Lockhart: Yes. Yes, I did, for the university expenses, since I was just a part-time student, so I didn't use it for living expenses because I had a job, a daytime job in Chicago. I went to evening school at night. The GI Bill paid the school charges, tuition and whatnot.

DePue: A lot of historians after that, and a lot of people of your generation, have touted how important that piece of legislation was.

Lockhart: No question about that.

DePue: You share that view then?

Lockhart: Yes, I do.

DePue: Why is that?

Lockhart: Well, I think when you spend three years in the Army, you lost a big hunk of life, at least at the learning level, and so you're not prepared sometimes and your mind has not been disciplined to deal with thinking problems through or maybe describing them or writing. You lose a lot of the ordinary skills that you would be working to develop, and so the immediacy of the discipline and training provided by universities came at the right time.

DePue: After the war, did you join any veterans' organizations?

Lockhart: No. Well, my Division has an association, so I joined that, and since I'm a disabled veteran, I joined the Disabled Veterans of America, but I don't go to meetings or any of that sort of thing.

DePue: Are you the type to keep track with a couple of your Army buddies or POW camp buddies?

Lockhart: Well, I did for a while, but I think they have all died and have passed on.

[2] See other series, *Illinois Statecraft – General Interest*

DePue: Okay. These might be somewhat peculiar questions, but 106th Division, as divisions go, has one of the worst reputations in the United States Army, because of the situation we discussed.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: And certainly, as a PFC, you have nothing to do with that particular reputation.

Lockhart: With anything, right.

DePue: But then you also become a POW. So I'm wondering how the public and other veterans that you encounter have reacted to those facts, that you were in this division with a horrific reputation and that you were a POW. Have they treated you like a hero or like there's something wrong with you or somewhere in between?

Lockhart: Maybe it's a curiosity now, that I'm still alive. So I don't think there was any prejudice, you might say, either the fact that I was in this particular division, because most people don't know one from the other basically. If you were in combat as an infantryman, they knew you had some horrific experiences of some sort anyway, so a lot of people don't pursue it.

DePue: Did you have some of those experiences coming home, and you walk in a bar and say hey, I'll buy that guy's drink, that kind of stuff?

Lockhart: Maybe, but I doubt it. I don't remember any of that.

DePue: Or parades, do you remember any parades?

Lockhart: No, I did not do any parades, I can tell you that.

DePue: You were back home I think, at the time of VE Day and also for VJ Day.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: Do you remember celebrations on those days?

Lockhart: No, I do not. VE Day, I was still on the sixty-day furlough, and I can't remember where I was. I was glad to hear about it, but it was expected too. I'm following the news carefully, so I could see that the surrender was soon. In the Japanese war, I was in Fort Benning and I don't remember anything special. But here again, once the two bombs were dropped, we knew that the Japanese would have to stop fighting. And it happened so suddenly.

DePue: Well this is speeding ahead five years, but June 25, 1950, is the day that the North Koreans invaded the south.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: What were your thoughts about that war?

Lockhart: That does ring a bell, because I thought that that war would spread. I thought Russia would make some kind of a move in Europe and we would have to react to that. And so I expected to be back in the Army, as a matter of fact. I can remember telling my wife, "You know, I might be back in the service in a few months; why don't we have some kind of a different vacation?" So we went to Cuba for a week or so and then Florida. So I do remember 1950 very well, and actually we reregistered. They had a draft thing going on. I had to reregister for the draft. I still have the card for that somewhere. So yes, I thought that would spread; definitely I thought the Korean War would spread to Europe.

DePue: Well, the Truman Administration was calling that a police action. Did you basically agree with the need to be there in the first place?

Lockhart: Yes, I agreed with the president.

DePue: Well, let's jump ahead a few years, and now the children of your generation are being sent off to Vietnam. What was your view about the Vietnam War?

Lockhart: I didn't understand that one, to tell the truth. I did not understand it especially we had the experience of the French, who had fought there for maybe fifteen years or so, had completely failed. I didn't agree with a position that was stated by a lot of people who thought that this was a communist move. And the domino effect—do you remember the domino effect?—I didn't agree with that. I thought it was most unfortunate, the whole Vietnam experience, and it certainly turned out to be.

DePue: Well, I think we'll save our more detailed discussion about events surrounding Vietnam, like the 1968 Democratic Convention and things like that. That will be in the next interview, such as we have.

Lockhart: I was here.

DePue: I'd love to hear what your impressions were during all that.

Lockhart: It was terrible.

DePue: Did you talk much to your wife and your family about your experiences as a POW and experiences in the war?

Lockhart: No.

DePue: Why not?

Lockhart: I don't know. Maybe I sensed that they weren't really that interested. I have talked to my son, who was more interested, and like I say, I took him to Europe in '87, in the wintertime. In '88 we went back into Germany and found Stalag IX-B. It's a children's camp now by the way.

DePue: A children's camp?

Lockhart: Yeah, right. So I've kept him pretty much up-to-date, and he's gone through my loose-leaf red notebook history of World War II. He thinks his father is a hero for surviving.

DePue: For surviving. For going through things that no human should have to experience.

Lockhart: That's true.

DePue: Are you proud then, of your service in the military?

Lockhart: Yes. I did nothing dishonorable. I did what I was expected to do.

DePue: You obviously believed in what you were doing.

Lockhart: And I was a volunteer, the other thing too of course. I could never complain, because I was an infantry volunteer, and so I learned a long time ago, once you volunteer…

DePue: Did you have an even deeper appreciation for what you had done was the right thing, after you found out what was going on in Germany?

Lockhart: Yes. I felt absolutely it was the right thing to do. I was glad to be a part of it.

DePue: I know you've had an opportunity—you mentioned several times here—had gone overseas. Did you ever get back to the battlefield scenes?

Lockhart: To an extent, but I've not been quite satisfied. I had been there in my car and I've been to St. Vith, Belgium, which is a little town in Belgium. There's still a monument to the 106th Division, by the way, in St. Vith, Belgium, if you ever want to go. I've driven back into the woods area, but I have not done it on foot, and I'm not quite sure whether that's something holding me back from doing that or what, but I always think I'm going to go back to Belgium and I'm going to park the car and I'm going to go back in the woods.

DePue: Is that on your bucket list?

Lockhart: It's on the summer to-do list.

DePue: That might be this summer then?

Lockhart: Might be this summer. It comes up every year in my mind anyway. It comes up every year, but for one reason or another, some unconscious force keeps me from actually doing it. I don't know why.

DePue: You talked about going back to Germany and your reaction to seeing Germans there, especially Germans of your age. How about going back to Belgium and seeing some of the Belgians there? Is that a different experience?

Lockhart: Oh yeah, much different. I don't remember if I told you about my friendship with Serge DuBois?

DePue: We haven't talked about that on tape, so I definitely want to hear about it.

Lockhart: This is a very interesting event, shall we say, or few events, and it was just a few years ago, three or four years ago. I get a communication from a gentleman in Franklin, Indiana, whose name is Jim West, who keeps a marvelous record of a lot of things World War II, including 106th Division. He has a lot of records; he scanned my red notebook. Anyway, he sends out an email and I'm on his list. Maybe three or four years ago, not more than four years ago. He said there's a gentleman in Belgium who has been taking care of the graves of two American soldiers; one of them is from the 106th Division, and he puts the name and unit he was in, and the other one was from another division. And so the Belgian individual who has been taking care of these graves wants to know whether anybody out there knows anything about these two GIs buried in the Liege Cemetery. And he said, "Well, if you don't know either of these persons, why don't you write to Mr. DuBois and thank him for taking care of these graves?"

So I thought that was an easy enough thing to do, so I did that; and I said, "Well, I'm even thinking about coming to Belgium next summer for a few days," because I hadn't been there for a while. He writes back, emailed right back, "Please come to my house, please come to Liege. I will take you anyplace," blah-blah-blah. So I do that. He is a Belgian businessman; he's retired. He has a wife and they live in Belgium, and he's probably a millionaire. He takes me to his house, takes me to dinner in Liege, takes me to a couple cemeteries I wanted to go to where friends of mine are buried. He kept telling me, "It's an honor for me to have you in my house." He says. "We Belgians view you and the British as our liberators."

Now unfortunately, Serge DuBois died a year or two ago, but I asked him when I was there, "Serge, you're sixty-five; the war was over about the time you were born. How did you get into taking care of American graves? It defies understanding a little bit." He said, "Well, my father did it and so I just continued doing it." It's such a rare experience to hear someone say that so many years after the war, that the American presence in Belgium was so important to the country, that here is somebody, at least through his family,

regards us Americans not as people who are difficult but are heroes still. It was a great experience for me.

DePue: Does that make all the sacrifice you went through worth it?

Lockhart: Somewhat, somewhat. And I have had other experiences in Belgium—not any other place—but people ask me, "Well is this the first time you've been to Belgium?" I said, "Well no, as a matter of fact I came here in 1944 with the American Army." They stop, hold out their hands and say "Thank you very much." That's happened two or three times.

DePue: Well that's worth the price of the trip, isn't it?

Lockhart: Just about.

DePue: Yes. You saw some pretty horrific things. The POW experience itself and getting on the edge of starvation.

Lockhart: Soldiers, American soldiers wounded, dead. Yeah, I've seen all that.

DePue: How did all of this experience change you?

Lockhart: I suppose it has changed me, but see I don't know whether I would be different if I hadn't had these experiences either. It does make me realize I think, that I can take it, shall we say, that nothing can get me down.

DePue: You mentioned earlier, your son thinks you're a hero, the Belgians think you're a hero.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: Are you?

Lockhart: I always say I'm a survivor. So if being a survivor is a hero, I guess. Surviving is of course, you can be a dead hero, but it's more better to be a surviving one.

DePue: You mentioned also, that you didn't really talk to your wife much, that there was a point in time in your son's life when you started talking about it. Why sit down and spend some quality time talking to me about it?

Lockhart: History. You're providing history and history to me is an important component of society. And I realize that I had experiences that a lot of people have not had, or if they have had, they didn't keep any kind of a record of it. I get several letters a year from people saying, My grandfather, my uncle was in the war, they never talked about it, they're dead now; what can you tell me about being a prisoner, some of them. It's like I say, history is valuable in terms of what it does, in terms of maintaining the values of this country.

DePue: Well I know the one in particular chapter of your story that you thought was very important, and that was to get the message out about what happened to the Jewish soldiers.

Lockhart: Yes.

DePue: Why was that such a burning need for you?

Lockhart: Well, because I had immediate experience with that, you might say; I knew it took place. I figured somebody had to write about it; otherwise, it would be lost in history or not be known whatsoever. So it's been described—I don't know whether I've got the book over here. Over here on the table is a book, what's it called?

DePue: Well let's get you unhooked and we can pause for a second here.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Okay, we took a very quick break; we're back at it.

Lockhart: What I'm holding in my hand now is a book called, *Given Up for Dead: American GIs in the Nazi Concentration Camp at Berga*. I am interviewed in here; in fact, they even put my picture in it. Well anyway, there's just a lot of evidence here that somebody worked hard to maintain this record, and I think it's important.

What I don't like about the American situation sometimes is complacency. I always figure there's two problems, complacency and time. We have too much of one and not enough of the other. So like I indicated earlier, I'm big on history. I have 1,600 history books in my house and I've read them all.

DePue: You've got three levels of a house that's filled, each level full.

Lockhart: Yes I do, even in the bathroom, and I've read them, dated them and so forth. It's just one of my compulsions in life, I guess. I don't know.

DePue: Well that's the journalist in you, that thirst for knowledge and thirst for understanding.

Lockhart: I was growing up, I had a library card at the Fort Wayne Library, and they had branches around the city. I was a heavy user of the library system.

DePue: Well, we're talking in 2012. The United States is just finishing up this last year, finished up theoretically, our experiences in Iraq, after a long war there. We're still in Afghanistan and just as we talk, things have turned rather ugly there for us.

Lockhart: Yeah.

DePue: Being a lifelong student of history and a veteran yourself, your reflections on what we're experiencing now?

Lockhart: I say we have to get out of the country. Afghanistan, if you look at it historically, they chased the British out, they chased the Russians out, they're going to chase the Americans out. It's one of the worst countries in terms of recognizing other foreigners in terms of—I don't really understand the country, but I've read the history of the country. It's very antagonistic to any outsiders.

DePue: Well, it starts from Alexander the Great and the Indians and everybody else you mentioned as well.

Lockhart: Mm-hmm.

DePue: How about the current situation in the Middle East, especially the situation Israel finds itself in again, as the Iranians are…

Lockhart: I don't know what to do about that, what to say about that. I hate to think of dropping some more atomic bombs.

DePue: Which is what Iranians right now—and for people who encounter this twenty years from now—right now they're close to getting a nuclear weapon.

Lockhart: I don't understand how to get it resolved. It's beyond my intellect.

DePue: Okay. What would you like to say in conclusion then, for the interview?

Lockhart: Thank you for an interesting discussion, good questions on your part, and better questions, better than I had been able to provide in answers. It's all a part of the American experience, that's the way I kind of look at it. I'm no different, I'm no special person compared to many others who had the same experience.

DePue: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Lockhart.

(end of interview)