Richard Dolejs

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Cohen: Hi, how are you?

Dolejs: Pretty good.

Cohen: So, my name is Leah Cohen. And on behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, I have the pleasure of interviewing the former special agent, Richard Andrew Dolejs.[1]

Dolejs: That should you said it perfectly.

Cohen: Said it perfectly. Okay. He served with 190st [should read: 191st] CIC, Counterintelligence Corps, [detachment - of the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division during the Korean War.]

Dolejs: That's correct.

Cohen: Today is June 14, 2019, close to seventy years since you began your service in 1950.

Dolejs: Yes, that's right.

Cohen: So we'll start the story of service with the very beginning. When and where were you born?

Dolejs: I was born and Chicago, Illinois on the south side of Chicago in the Lawndale district. And I lived there until I went into the service and first, I went to school down in Millikin University, after graduation from Wright Junior College in Chicago. And then I finished up my four years at Millikin University, in Decatur, Illinois. One month later, I was inducted into the military service. I went from there to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for basic training. I was trained as an engineer. And upon completion of the training, I was sent to Fort Holabird, Maryland, which is military intelligence school for counterintelligence school. I finished my schooling there and was sent to Korea, at first to Japan. I was Japan for about a month and a half, and then into Korea during combat. And within a

[1] See Appendix A for more information on Dolejs family.

month or two later combat was terminated they came up with the armistice, so I did very little combat service at all. Almost immediately thereafter, they transferred the 1st Cavalry Division, to which I was a attached, to Hokkaido, Japan, and to Camp Crawford, and I was attached as I said to the 7th Cavalry Regiment. And my job was to ensure security for the camp. That means we checked the perimeter of the camp for physical problems, entry. And then also we had as a group of informants that reported to us on various aspects of communist activity within Japan. Because there are there was a lot of communist activities in the labor unions and things of that nature. And the communists were still a threat, even though we had entered into an armistice, the communists were still a threat in China, still posed the problem to our security. So our informants gave us all bits and pieces of various information that we're all sent to C.I.A. to a... and they would put it together in a formal report and send it to headquarters in the CIA headquarters in Washington, Washington, DC.

Cohen: You know, there's a lot of good information. Thank you for giving, like an overview. Do you want to go back chronologically of just choose specific topics because there's so much that's interesting?

Dolejs: It's up to you.

Cohen: Okay, so we'll go back a little bit. Which subjects interested you in high school and later at colleges both here and later in Decatur?

Dolejs: Well, actually, I was in political science and history. That was -- I've always loved history. I like to read. And I've developed quite a library as a matter of fact. I have two libraries one here in Burr Ridge where I live now and one in Michigan, I have a summer home in near Muskegon, Michigan. And I have a huge library there, as well. And I just don't have books to keep, I have books to read. And sometimes I'll read them two or three times. Because the first time I read them, I read very quickly. So therefore, I lose a lot of it…I miss a lot of information. By reading the second and third time, it fully embellishes the subject I'm reading, and it's much more enjoyable.

Cohen: Which particular subjects in history interested you? Both as a younger person and then...

Dolejs: All of history, particularly Central Europe, I was primarily involved in Central Europe, because I'm of Czech ancestry, my parents were Czech. I'm 100% Czech-American. And so, I was interested in all that aspects of history that relates to the change of dynasties with their or political systems in Central Europe…when I came out of service, I did a lot of traveling. And I traveled to China and back to Japan a couple times, and Africa and Europe three or four times. So I've driven, personally driven all these continents. And to me, it's fascinating and interesting

of the contributions that were made to civilization by each of these various people, peoples that live there. So I am, I'd like to Central Europe to begin with. And that meant Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Russian dyn-- the Czar...throughout just one after another as they came up. Throughout the years, I enjoyed reading about that, and learning about the contributions that were made to what we enjoyed today. And I learned that we have in this country, the greatest country, there is no one touches us. Because of the fact that we have the freedom, the freedom of opportunity, you are as good as you put your time in. I don't think people young people understand and appreciate the fact that thousands, hundreds of thousands of young American boys lie in graveyards in foreign countries who died there - for not only to preserve our freedom, and to enhance our ability to thrive, but also to recreate [i.e. ensure] freedom for them. All of Europe would have been still under Germany, all of China would still be under Japan if it wasn't for us. It was our boys that fought and died and freed them and allowed those countries to do whatever they want. They can, they became communist, or socialist or whatever they wanted to be. They allowed them the freedom. But it was the deaths of our boys that allowed that and that that is there's danger, I believe nineteen cemeteries [in Europe] with our young men buried there. American boys that died for the freedom of people that all of Europe, all of Europe, was under Germany, there was nobody. And so, we did that- same thing with the Asia, to China. Can you believe? People don't even realize that China wouldn't be free to be a communist. So if we had wanted to stay there and continue our domination we had we had the right to do it. We didn't do it. We [granted] freedom and we left and that's what's great about America.

Cohen: And growing up in Czech-American community in Chicago as a child, was there a lot of talk, like about Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland? Or, ah, was there a lot of awareness?

Dolejs: There was a lot of awareness. I grew up in the area I grew up was a Jewish community. I grew up in…North Lawndale. And it was all Jewish at that time. And I was a little goyim kid, I used to be the kid that go out for the Orthodox religious Jewish people. They during their holidays, they couldn't switch off a light or turned up the gas. Well, that's that's their religion, and you respect that. And I was the kid that came in and did it and I was rewarded by Mogen David wine and matsos [i.e., unleavened bread, like a cracker, eaten during Passover] with a little butter on it. But I enjoyed that. And I was I was very popular because I was very one of the very few kids in a community available to do that. It was a meeting the culture that was enjoyable to me.

Cohen: And you mentioned when we spoke on the phone that, I believe your father, your brothers and your cousins had all served in the US military. Would you like to talk briefly about that how it inspired you?

Dolejs: Well, my father was a mechanic and he was inducted into service and served San Antonio, Texas in the 1st US Army Air Force. He was hurt, he was hit by a propeller in the head and unconscious for a month, but survived he came to and was able to live until eighty-five. So he did very well, but he served in military honorably in a US Army Air Force. My oldest brother, Jerry, was a National Guard at the 33rd Division, in Chicago. At the advent of the Second War, [he] was immediately pressed into duty and served for the entire length of the war. And he served and ended up in Japan occupation, Japan, Okinawa, Christmas Island, Hawaii; he [retired] a master sergeant. My third brother Edward was -- he joined military at the advent of war. And he served in the invasion of Africa, in Morocco, and Tunisia, eventually, let's see, the island to Sicily, and then he went to England and prepared for the invasion. He did invade… [France and Germany] with the 1st Army and was killed. He is buried in Normandy… [Cemetery] at the beachhead. My third brother…[Louis] was he a little squirrelly guy - he joined the [US] Navy and he was a member of the Armed Guard. They would put [armed] detachments on a merchant ship with cannon to protect against submarines and stuff like that. He was torpedoed three times in the North Sea and survived it - which is amazing in itself because most people didn't survive one sinking. But he survived three, they rescued him. He ended up in, finally, in Okinawa, he met my other my older brother in Okinawa in Japan…So all my whole family has been military inspired and proud to serve our country.

Cohen: Were you the youngest of the brothers--

Dolejs: of the olders, yes. Of the five.

Cohen: How did you feel when you were receiving letters home from them?

Dolejs: Oh, that was very, very, not only was it fascinating, and interesting, it was also devastating what we got the death notice. That was terrible. But one thing happened. A funny thing is Edward who died eventually in France. When he invaded in Africa, he became friends with a young Frenchman in Algeria. And he put me in touch with him because I'm a stamp collector. And we were trading, we were trading stamps back and forth. And I became a close friend with that young man, he was seventeen at the time, I was fifteen or sixteen. And we maintained that friendship until he died about two years ago. But he, eventually, was thrown out of Algeria by the Algerians. And he ended up in in Vichy France, and he became a doctor. So he actually invited me and I, my wife and I went to

France, and he picked us up in in Paris, and we drove to the graveyard because he was close friends with Eddie, my brother. So we had a, we maintained even though my brother was dead, we maintained that his friendship and that relationship.

Cohen: When did you and your wife go for--

Dolejs: Oh, that's got to be twenty years ago, fifteen or twenty years ago, I can't remember the exact date, you'll forgive me.

Cohen: That's okay. One thing I found that I meant to show you before we began -- is I looked in the database called Fold3 and we found a copy of your registration card for the army, not the draft, but the registration card of 1947, January, 1947, which would have been -- at that point in time, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 had been extended twice before Truman passed the next Selective Service Act of 1948. Do you recall going to Roosevelt Rd. to tr--

Dolejs: Yes, I recall registering, but I don't remember much about I just registered, and then I didn't have much to do with it until I graduated, I was kept out because of my school. I was in school at junior college, and then Millikin University. But I'll tell you, a month after that I was in the Army. [Laughter] A month later, I was gone.

Cohen: What were your majors at Mi--

Dolejs: Political science and history. Although I did take Spanish, too. I took three years of Spanish.

Cohen: On the subject of languages, do you speak other languages in addition to English and Spanish, and later, I believe that you said Japanese?

Dolejs: I became fluent in Japanese. And I we did interrogations in Japanese. Because if you remember, part of my job in Japan, was to establish a network of informants. So they would meet our informants, they were people such as dancehall, girls, prostitutes, people that worked at night, in the heating plants, you know, shoveled coal, stuff like that, workmen, because they were members of the union. And we wanted to get inside information on the activities of the unions and…you want to know about security breaches, if they were giving up secrets about the type of ammunition or equipment that we had, if we were preparing for an invasion, for instance, the different things of that nature. So we had informants that would meet with us on a weekly basis. And the Japanese, we would have to speak Japanese, although we had usually had an interpreter with us because our capability to speaking was limited. It was there I mean, we could, you know, Ikaga deska dumo arigato goziemaste [phrase in Japanese]. I could speak many of the words, but it wasn't fluent enough to provide the inside

information that we needed for our reports. So I spoke Japanese, but I spoke Czech when I was a kid -- Czechoslovakian. And I if you speak Czech, you can understand a little bit of Polish. And I spoke Span--, and now I speak Spanish pretty well. Because we deal with a lot of Spanish people.

Cohen: Would you like to talk in more detail for people like myself the uninitiated? You know how you make contact with informers? Did you take the initiative…or did they? What was their motivation? What was a carrot you could offer?

Dolejs: Money. Simple. It was money. They didn't come forth due to patriotism. I had a few girlfriends in Japan at the time, and that they were motivated by emotional feelings, we became close. But those were not our key people. There's mostly money, you offered money or food...ability to trade at the PX [Post Exchange on Army bases] ability to pick up debris. Like our our camp had a lot of wooden crates and stuff like that. They needed that for fuel. So you would allow them trade, trade them certain privileges; coal, a big issue was securing a load of coal out and you give them some coal. That was very important. They were very poor after the war in Japan. So anything so simple things that we wouldn't even think of today. It doesn't seem important to you, but for them to keep them heated, or food, potatoes, rice, butter, eggs, things...We had that - cigarettes. Cigarettes was a big issue. You could do any [thing]. carton of cigarettes, that was a big issue for trade. So it was trading things that they didn't have.

Cohen: So, how would you decide whom to approach? Like, let's say you knew of ten prostitutes, how would you decide which one to--

Dolejs: to use? First of all, we would have seminars, in in the various groups, you know, the the platoons, and we would talk, we would tell people what to watch for, if people are questioning them about certain things. And what they were key issues that would indicate to them that these people had other than just natural curiosity. And they would give it they would identify as they will, "Go on the corner of Fifth, Fifth and Division and Susie Q, she asked me questions. Then we would personally go out there in military clothing. Ordinarily, we wore civilian clothes. But in cases like that we would dress military, and we would appear them as ordinary GI and try to get to know them, myself. And see if they approached us with the same questions, then if they did, we would know that, we would itemize each issue, each issue that or each topic that they discussed. And then we would follow them. We didn't arrest them or anything like that, because they were also their second- and third-class agents. They were people who would go to, they would give their information to another agent who would pass it on to a more sophisticated agent. And our job was to find out who they were. So we can surveil them, and find out who they were in contact with, and

eventually determined or identify the enemy, the people who are looking for this information.

Cohen: Do you want to describe one particular scenario or person that was surveilled and how it came about?

Dolejs: I'll give you a good one. As I told you, we had three safe houses. And one, one of the houses and each house had a room. It was occupied by a Japanese family, kids, the whole family in one room and that was devoted to our use. And we would meet our informant, there away from the base. So they wouldn't be identified with association with the military, with the American military. And one of the girls that we had... I think I forgot her name. [Dolejs later provided the name: Nandko Koyama]. But anyhow, she, she one day I come in, she's sick, she's, "Ah, Dick San, I'm sick. I got pleurisy." I said, " I see, don't worry about it. We'll call a doctor", which we did. She's afraid, “My father died from pleurisy”. Well, that was not what she had originally told us because each of these people, when we hired them, when we put them to work, we interrogated them and we got some background on them to determine and investigated their background. And when she had come to work for us, she had told us her father died in a Russian air raid, which was to lend a little credence surge. You know, she was anti-communist. So at least we thought at the time, and we had hired her and she… was very good. She did a very good job for us. But she told us a lie. So we did a further investigation and we have agents all over. And and she turns out that she was working as an agent for Romanoff who was a Russian intelligence agent, and Karafuto which is Island north of north of Hokkaido, and she was an agent. But we didn't let her know we found that out. We found that out to another investigation without her knowledge. But we kept her on, kept her in line. And we just watched her and listened to what she had to say. And every information comes in different segments -- it's not in a big package comes a little bits and pieces. And it's got to be put together and correlated with other reports. And that's how you get the big picture.

Cohen: So were you involved, as well, in this correlation, like let's say, for example, after meeting this woman, would have you to write a report and would you ?? with other reports?

Dolejs: In her case, at first it didn't. At first, she was just working as an interpreter there after she became a subject matter. So we issue a report subject matter as to her -- what she said, what she had done what she had. If she gave us advice of a name or an address, or instance, it was all put down in a report and then submitted to headquarters. And it was terrible then because our reports, we had to give a copy the headquarters in Tokyo, headquarters in Washington, DC, division headquarters. You had t make five [copies] and we didn't have copy

machines. We had to do with carbon paper. So everything was five copies and was smudgy and it was a pain in the behind, but we did the best we could. [Laughter]

Cohen: Where was the HQ, by the way? Where was--

Dolejs: It was is in Tokyo, Japan. That was headquarters, headquarters for intelligence in Japan, [part of] General MacArthur's headquarters.

Cohen: And you say, one in Washington? Where was the divisional headquarters?

Dolejs: Division was Camp Crawford [in Sapporo, Japan].

Cohen: Okay, So I was wondering a little bit about the physical setup, like what was in the room in the house where you would interview the informers?

Dolejs: It was very informal; it was usually six tatami mats. In Japan, the rooms are measured by the straw mats on the floor. They don't have carpeting, they have straw mats and I think there were four by six, I think, four by six. I'm not sure the exact measure, maybe four by eight, and you would measure five to tatami mats, eight to -- that's how big the room was and there was. You sat on the floor. You had a couple of pillows. And yeah, Hibachi to cook on. And that was it - a very simple, nothing complicated about the housing in Japan.

Cohen: Was the family living in the house aware that it was being rented out to these US--

Dolejs: No, no, no, they just do it again. Again, money and food. Food was very element, there was a thing that it was a big scarcity of food and Hokkaido, particularly, it's very cold. I mean, during the winter months it's [minus] 20 30 degrees consistently is not {un]known. It's, it's a simple way it is. You have to dress warm and it's cold and fuel, like the packing crates, like I said, which were just so annoying, anyhow. The favorite to be able to get packing crates, or a load of coal was a big thing as like ten dollars, giving them, ten dollars. [Dolejs later clarified the amount].

Cohen: Were you very much like struck by the poverty...in post-war Japan, like---

Dolejs: No, I wasn't I understood it. It's something I understood and appreciated the fact that in America we have so much...Some of the things that appreciate that I appreciate it was Korea and Japan both -- Japan particularly Japan was far ahead of Korea always has been -- but their streets they had no…[pavement]. They had macadam pathways. There's no concrete walkways. That very simple, but none-- We consider, take that for granted, here. A sidewalk. They don't have that and fuel, heating and cooking, they didn't have gas stoves. That hibachis, where you heated with charcoal, you know a couple of pieces of charcoal. They had very

limited...They lived on very limited means. Bathrooms, no flushing water, no phones; one phone in about six blocks. They're very limited in any technology. Of course, now, they are far ahead of us everything is far ahead and modern and new. And they're doing fine. But at that time, and right to the end after the Korean War, they had very little, very little. And they live, they got by, they got by and food was very simple. Lot of rice, lot of rice, fish, quite a bit of fish, very little meat of any kind. We didn't have meat. Vegetables - that's it.

Cohen: What type of physical circumstances did you and the other people in the CIC encounter? Like were you --- what type of food were you given? Where did you live?

Dolejs: My-- I live in Camp Crawford. We have barracks and at barracks was devoted to both CIC and I -- it's also an intelligence group who did monitoring of the radio networks and they recorded everything like you do. And they would put that put it put it in, write it up and send it in for reports. Because they were getting written the radio broadcast from coming to a close to Communist China and Communist Korea too, because it was still there, you understand.

Cohen: And also, looking at a map, I see that Hokkaido was really close to these teeny tiny islands that the Soviet Union had occupied after the 2nd World War?

Dolejs: Karafuto. Yeah, yeah, that's true. And that's where is Colonel Romanov. That's what his headquarters are. They were there particularly to observe us, the American military presence.

Cohen: Were you and others ever concerned about a direct attack from the Soviet base?

Dolejs: You know, I don't recall. We, by the time the Korean War was, was ended by armistice, we know we very, very relaxed, because although we didn't win, we didn't lose either. And we felt that we were pretty secure and we our strength was gaining. We're gaining more and more strength all the time. The trouble with the Korean War, we went into sort of halfway, you know, and we did win it. We we went in originally, we defeated the Koreans and sent them all the way back to the Yalu River, which is the border with China, at which time China came into the war. It supported Korea and drove us all the way back to the 57th parallel, I think it was, it's about halfway down. So we retained it. And the proof of the pudding, of course now, is it that that part of Korea that we retain control over has been really successful. Everything is going great for 'em, where North Korea, they're living in poverty.

Cohen: I believe you mentioned on the phone that initially, you were sent to Korea for the first month?

Dolejs: Yes.

Cohen: Could you talk a little bit about what you did there and what it was like?

Dolejs: Well, we went to the front line, or close to the front line. And we were interrogating line crashers. They're all Korean. You don't know if they're South or North, it's hard to de[termine]. And you interrogate them and try to get whatever information you could from them as to the strength of what they had seen or where they were going, or what they were doing. It's just making reports on each individual trying to get whatever intelligence information you could get. If they had seen troop movement, or the quantity of troop, how many people they'd seen. Or if they saw gun emplacements, things of that nature. We didn't do -- the music?? party was right near the -- they had pits where the people coming across the lead, they would put them through water bath to kill fleas and lice and stuff like that. So it was sort of fascinating, but it was demoralizing and-- you know, some people bathed?? -- they take their clothes all off and and go through-- It was it wasn't a good duty, but it wasn't bad either. But it was nothing endangering - the closest I came to [being] endangered - It was a mortar round; it came about fifty yards away. That scared the heck out of me because I thought the mortar rounds. You know, they don't have in place, you don't know where they could land. But other than that, I didn't have any danger. I was a I was very fortunate. Not as opposed to a lot of people that died there.

Cohen: Where were you based when you were in Korea?

Dolejs: Near Pusan. It was, was right near the lines, and I was happy. I was happiest guy in the world when the armistice came out. Because I -- nobody tells you they weren't scared, that they tell you lie. Because if you're any place where somebody can kill you, you feel very apprehensive. Could you talk a little bit about what you did there and what it was like?

Cohen: What were your options? Like was there any dugouts or--

Dolejs: Oh, yeah, that's a--You went into pits and dugouts and tried to protect yourself. Get down so that anything, you know, shrapnel is a big thing. You get hit by shrapnel and if you're in a pit, you're pretty well safe from that.

Cohen: So, how how would you and the others, like cope with all these difficulties of being threat and--?

Dolejs: The what?

Cohen: How would you and the others cope with all these difficulties? Like do the people sit around or how do people deal with that?

Dolejs: Well, in my case, I was fortunate I had a jeep assigned to me. So I drove every place I went, I drove a jeep. And that provided me transportation I needed. I had a jeep stolen one time. And I had I was confined to base, confined to our base for about three weeks until they found that -- they did find it. Some Japanese, that was in Japan, though, that wasn't in Korea. In combat, is it's a matter of finding the places for shelter and protection from shrapnel. And I had very little of that, but what little I had was more than enough. [Laughter] And I don't want to repeat???, the actual GI's are out there, shooting it out. Man. I'll tell you. It's a rare breed. We're very fortunate to have young men that are willing to take, to take that on and do it. And they did it. They did it well.

Cohen: You know this reminds me of a question going back earlier. I think you said that a month after you graduated university, you had served -- you'd done your basic training at Fort Leonard Wood. Do you want to talk about that? What the training was like and how it later you were selected to be in the [Intelligence]

Dolejs: Well, basic training is simple. It's...you know, you have to march a lot. We marched twenty-five miles, for crying out loud. We'd march and then we would, we would go out to build a bridge, we build bridges out of timber. And then the afternoon, we would blow it up. You were taught in the use of dynamite and explosives. And that was our job. And that was interesting, because…you'd be back far enough. They were smart enough to keep you away from any danger. But you set your charges. And you had to do it sit within a certain time, you know, so many minutes, and then you get back at the thing and blow up. Whoopee [laughs]. The destruction seems to be something that's very interesting to people. And that's what we did then march all the way back in. And that's what we did day after day; exercise, all the usual exercise you do; crawling and jumping and running and marching, learning discipline. And it wasn't bad. It wasn't -- the basic training was intense, but it was reasonable. And it it did fortify you and made you a better man, I think. I would try and get my grandkids into the service in a minute, just for the discipline. Because that's what we're losing today. We don't seem to have that. But your basic training was not that difficult for me. And I enjoyed it. I enjoyed blowing things up. I enjoyed shooting I was a marksman with the with the rifle. So you learn you learn, you learn how to use a rifle grenade, all the usual arms and things. And then after we went through a series of tests, and based upon our test scores, they chose, I think, the nine of us out of our group to go to Fort Holabird and out of Fort Holabird, out of the nine, I think four went to school and graduated.

Cohen: What kind of classes did you take at this school?

Dolejs: Well, they gave us classes like in, in surveillance, how to follow people in a car, report writing, how to report, make sure you get all the who, what, when, where, why, and how. How to report, write a report. A lot of in... I can't really relate to you, it's not really supposed to be related, our intense training. But it's it teaches you how to be an agent and what your requirements are. Teaches you, your your loyalties, you had a very intensive making sure that you understand you're loyal American. They worry - one of the problems I had, as a matter of fact, the question - Why because of my Czech ancestry, did I have relatives in Czech Republic which was communist at that time? Now, see, I do but I don't know 'em, I never I had no contact with them. So luckily, they passed over that. A lot of people they wouldn't let you get through. If you had, like -- I had speeding tickets when I was a kid, I had two speeding tickets. That was [it]. I didn't smoke, thank God, I didn't use any dope and I didn't drink. So that helped get me through. But they were worried about things like that, that might in some way, neutralize your capability and do the job right. Thy were very high and integrity, loyalty. And [in] Intelligence, you had to be careful what you said, what you did, who you dealt with. So it was very, made you feel very proud to be American when you came out of that school, believe me.

Cohen: How do you feel that the training carried over to civilian life? Like you mentioned before that you wished that your grandsons would be in the service?big buSo, how do you feel that the training helped you become a better man?

Dolejs: Well, it taught me investigative techniques, which helped me at when I came out of service I started -- went to law school. But while I was in law school, I was an investigator for Chicago Motor Club, which is an insurance company. And we would investigate claims and determine the validity of the claim whether good, bad or phony. And if we would find out they're phony, we would turn them down. And if we found out they were legitimate; we'll try to get them as fair settlement. But the important thing is you learned how to report the facts and put it down so that it's informative to someone - your superiors. So we determine if they're paying up money and things. So you had to know that those are keywords who, what, when, where, why, and how. Yeah, that that was ??? in your mind and take pictures and do diagrams, it taught you investigative techniques that led themselves to my, to it being a good investigator, which is I was a good investigator for about three years. Then I did. Thereafter, when I left the insurance company, I was doing investigations for attorney on the other side of the fence, trying to investigate and and establish the validity of a claim. Was there was a truly liability on behalf of their insurance, whoever? And you have to establish that by factual evidence, and by being a good investigator and putting my facts out in good reports, report ready. That that dealt well, for me and for the company.

Cohen: It's really fascinating. Can you talk a little bit more about the investigation side, whenever [i.e., whatever] you think is appropriate?

Dolejs: Well, the main theme, I used to work with a court reporter and a court reporter that would write down everything that was said, and that's held like law. So I would go out and talk to people and say, "Are you married, Jones? Did you have an accident? Could you to tell me exactly what happened?" Well, and they would say something like, " I never saw him. " And of course, that's, that's an admittance set, you're partially liable. And they're partially contributorily negligent. And if you contributorily negligent, at that time, it you weren't gettin' nothing. Nowadays, insurance claims are based differently. They get rid of them just for the fact that the cost of investigating, or the cost of the legal fees are so much money - so they get rid of it. And they'll do a nuisance settlement, they call it. But it doesn't mean that they're entitled to anything. It just nuisance. And lot of people, they get they get money for that. A lot of it. And there's a lot of attorneys that file suit just out of basically they know they're going to get something. They don't care if they're right or wrong. What we tried to do establish a good -- a good investigator will establish the validity of the claim. And if it's good, you pay him and if it's no good, you deny him. That's the way it should be - that unfortunately, it doesn't work out that way nowadays.

Cohen: Back at Fort Holabird, were you expecting to go to Occupied Japan?

Dolejs: No, we didn't - no idea where we're going. I had no idea. In fact, we were hoping we get -- you see, the biggest thing that we were done as special agents were clearing the statements of other people, new soldiers, you know. Did you hear recently, President Trump's grand--, his son that he was denied clearance? Well, that's we did. We did we did the investigation on people to determine whether they were entitled to clearance for Secret, or Top Secret or whatever. There are several classifications. Top Secret being one of the toughest one, For Your Eyes Only, that's even higher. But what we did, we would investigate people's backgrounds, whether they're drunks, whether philanderers, chasers of women, it's nice that to chase to women, I'm one of them.[Laughter] But the point is, it could also endanger you, it made you vulnerable, made you very vulnerable. So if you couldn't control yourself with women, then you couldn't control yourself with top secret events. So for those of us, that that's what we did in the United States, agents, I graduated, they just did clearances, they would do investigations. They'd like, for instance, let's say you're a subject, they would go to where you lived and knock on the door next door. That's a good example. When they checked me out, I told you I was going up at a Jewish community. Well, they didn't know me. They nobody knew anything about me. Some of the some of the rabbis did, but most people didn't know me from Adam, because I

was I wasn't part of their group. And so that the there was a question, how come you could live in that neighborhood for so many years and nobody knows who you are? I said, "I don't know. There's a different culture and they don't know anything, that's that's good, I guess, because I didn't do anything wrong." And they bought that. But that was a question that they worried about the question, "Why did you have speeding tickets? Do you do you drink?" See, if you drink, it makes you vulnerable. If you use dope, of course, you're dead deep in it, you were out. So any kind of defects in your character, they were watching for. And the they would deny you accessibility to that position. Our position was like our rank, special agent. We gave us a capability to enjoy all the privileges of like the NCO club. The officers club, we just had US, gold US that's all we had no bars, no silver bar, no gold bars, just gold US. And we didn't have any stripes, that were an unusual entity. But it was good. We had, we enjoyed - we could go anywhere we want to. And we cleared the guy, like the general I, I was the one that cleared the general attainment to do the 1st Division when they had a replacement officer. I had to check his record, check it out and follow if there's anything in his record that would possibly be detrimental. Let me give me an example. One of the guys that I was following in surveillance was a pianist. And he was he was a clerk for one of the groups?

Cohen: In Hokkaido?

Dolejs: In Hokkaido all he did was play at an embassy dinner at the Chinese Embassy. Because he played at the Chinese Embassy, that made him suspect. So we ended up following him, surveilling him, because we thought he might be he was in a position to provide military information to the enemy. So we followed him. I remember his name, his name is Barry Hiem, H-i-e-m and he was a great pianist. I mean, he was a concert pianist. And I followed him for about three months before I was sent back home. About a year or two later, maybe, maybe longer, I don't remember the exact time, but don't hold me to that. But I after I got into my own business, I was selling insurance. And I was going to a tavern down the block to collect the insurance premium. And there's a pianist at, you know, providing entertainment. It's Barry Hiem. [laugher] Now, he didn't know me, I knew him. I said, "Aren't you Barry Hiem?" He says, "Yeah." I says, "Did you know that you were being surveilled while you were in Japan?" "Yeah, I knew that." He says, "I didn't do nothing." But it was just unusual situation. Now, he's got a part time job in a bar, playing piano in a bar. Very unusual coincidence, after all that division and change and distance.

Cohen: That's funny. So although you surveilled him, you hadn't found any...

Dolejs: No, no. He was just --he had a bad report. He played piano. [laughs] Or say, he went to the PX and bought some cigarettes or--. No, there was nothing that no prevalent information that was [incriminating] And I never did get me to go to the Chinese Embassy. It had been reported by other agents that he had been to the Chinese Embassy that so it was in his file. So everything we report we made, went to this file. And it was consistent. There's, like I told you before, it wasn't the information that I provided. It was an accumulation of - It was a community accumulation of all the information from all the agents that did the work.

Cohen: What was your role, in particular, like, would you receive like when you're when you're going through files and people for security clearance? If something unusual came up? Were you usually assigned to surveil that person or--

Dolejs: Well, we would provide a report - like the general. Was he drinker? Did he drink a lot? Was he in an accident? Did he use narcotics? Did he visit a brothel too often? There's all kind of things that went into the report, and that we would just put through, we didn't make the decisions. We could make a recommendation. But I never found anything serious enough to put anybody down, quite frankly, minor things, minor human infractions, but nothing of conscience.

Cohen: In addition to having like an upright character, it seems to me that you would have been very discreet as a special agent.

Dolejs: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, discretion is very important. Like I told you, I had a jeep stolen and because the jeep was stolen, it wasn't my fault. I was visiting, I was at one of my safe houses, and I was where I was supposed to be. But the fact that the jeep was stolen, that was unfortunate. They had to determine how'd that happen? It was just somebody who just stole the jeep, but they didn't steal it because of me, they just stole it because it was a jeep. So there was a concern about it, because everyone if somebody was involving themselves with my intelligence efforts...No, that wasn't that obvious. It was kept under a low key. Even the interrogations we did were done on a very low key very casual, relaxed basis. We didn't want to cause any situation that would create a problem within the community. As a matter of fact, CIC was the equivalent of the Japanese milit- secret police and the Japanese secret police during the war had the power of life and death. If they found you did it, they'd shoot you right on the spot. So people were apprehensive about, there's a lot of respect shown, but I did time. I was a nice, I was a playboy, I was a nice guy. You know… I'd go to the PX and buy a box of bubble gum and hand out bubble gum to all the kids. They thought -- I was very popular.

Cohen: So, you kept it like a casual conversation. Here's some gum and --

Dolejs: Yeah, no questions of kids. I've just given them gum and go home. My interrogations were limited to various people who are in a position to have information. For instance, a guy that shoveled coal into the stoves, into the furnaces, they heated huge complexes, you understand, they were members of the unions. So we would try to determine from them who in the union was directing activities, because union activities were there in a position to shut down. They could stop heating a whole place and sabotage the operation of base. Things of that nature. Some of the cleaning girls, you have to-- what if they were snooping around and fighting things over military nature and making reports? Because that's what they look for, they want to determine your military strength? How many people you have available? What do they do? What kind of guns, what kind of armaments they use? Are they cannons? Are they anti cannon? For instance, when they were going to do an invasion, back of lines -- Do they fit the jeeps with mufflers? Would they go high so they're out of water, because if you get in the water, things of that [nature], questions of a military nature. And that's what we had to watch for people who are observing that and reporting it and who do they report to. And like I said, we wouldn't bother the initial agents, they were minor people there, of no consequence. But who they talked to, they might have bit higher. And where did they go to? Where do they report it to? It was a matter of obtaining information and putting it, putting together a crossword puzzle.

Cohen: When you were talking to the minor agents, or just let's say the potential minor agents such the coal shoveller from the union or a domestic on the base, like, how would you run a conversation? Like would you be friendly? Would you hear their stories?

Dolejs: We were very friendly, and we were giving them stuff. They liked us because we give them, somebody'd give them candy or some kind of whiskey some time, cigarettes, mostly cigarettes. Cigarettes was a big deal because that is as item of trade. They could barter that for everything. Cigarettes was very, very essential and simple. Nothing complicated. We'd [use] hosiery. For ladies, it was very good. It wasn't complicated. And nothing serious. Nothing to talk about. You, now and when you think about it, it's, "What's that about?". Who cares? But that's what we use for barter. We bartered for information. And because we were giving him something, even though just they're just talking, they didn't mean anything to them. We were very popular. We got along. We were very popular people. Nobody is mad, scared of us. I did. We didn't intimidate people No. Although we did some interrogations in Korea, where we were actually, you can consider torture, we hung 'em up by their hands and stuff like that. That was simple and we never hurt anybody. We never created a hurt or injury that hurt anybody at all. But we did try to scare them. And interrogations, that was part of

the game. You try to make them think there is something going to happen so hat they talk more.

Cohen: Was that, like, in Korea, itself?

Dolejs: Yeah, that happened. Very simple, very, very seldom. Maybe once or twice in my entire tour but most of the time, it was just, we were popular because we're giving, we were bartering. You're bartering for information.

Cohen: Did you have a chance to partake in the general culture in Sapporo or the area? Like did you have contact with the -- not for military purposes -- with the society...?

Dolejs: Yeah, I did. In Japan, they have a very strict culture. In order to be recognized, you have to be formally introduced to 'em. In other words, somebody's got to introduce you. Otherwise, the only -- what most GIs would meet, would be dancehall girls, who have been divorced, or in some way not the not high-level society. So you didn't get an opportunity to meet most Japanese girls, because there's no way of introducing to 'em. I was in a position because of my position to meet some integral parts of the society. And I met their daughters and such. I did meet some nice, very nice and they were, believe me, that was[at] a high-level cultural exchange. You had the pleasure of being with a beautiful woman and listening, sitting and talking. And they were very serve--, serving you, bring you goods and stuff. But that was it. It was very high cultural level. Any other physical or intimate relationship was usually what people who had left the high level of society. There are prostitutes, some dance hall girls, but not all of them, some of them. Otherwise, you wouldn't meet 'em because they were -- for instance, if you are if you were done in the in a department store in in Hokkaido, Sapporo a town, and they would bump into you and they weren't even you weren't even there. They didn't say, "Excuse me". They'd just walk, bump in you and walk past. Because you don't exist, unless you're formally introduced. On the other hand, if they had been introduced to you, and they know you, they were scraping and bowing. And, "Oh, Gumanisie, I'm so sorry" and then there would be a lot of apology made. That's the way, the society in Japan is. Japanese people are very highly cultural and very clean; food is very good. The girls are very beautiful. I suppose they had some homely ones, too, but I didn't run into them. [Laughter] But it's a very high level of cultural activity. And they're very proud. And like I say; you didn't even get to meet the cultural people - they ordi[nary]. Like the ordinary family. You didn't meet their family. You didn't meet their daughters or their sons unless you had a reason. And you had to be formally introduced. If you weren't formally introduced, you didn't exist.

Cohen: So what if you had been formally introduced to like a cultured family and a woman, would they invite you again or--

Dolejs: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you'd to go for dinner. See what their ??? Japanese term, they'd play their…they'd sing for you and they'd serve you and bring you tea and bring you food. It was very nice. Japanese society and Japanese cultural activities. Very, very, very nice. And I enjoyed it. I firstly succeed, exceed that if I I had -- I gave strong thought of maybe staying in Japan and being married to a Japanese. I enjoyed them that much. I really did. They're very nice. Very sweet and very, very pleasant. You're... Man is king in Japan. They treat you like a king. And it's hard to resist that. [laugher]

Cohen: Did you have a girlfriend [there]?

Dolejs: Several, yeah. [Laughter] Like I told you, each of these houses had a girl in 'em. They they were hired, they had a job - to keep the house clean and bring, to make breakfast or supper, whatever it be. They fed me, you know, they took good care of the house real good. So that was, it was wonderful duty area. You know, I hated that's why I say I hate to discuss my role in the military because it was such a pleasure that people in the military, my brothers, they went through hell, they died. One died and others died too - I had -- many men died. And they didn't enjoy the -- I was just very fortunate to enjoy the great privilege that the military provided me.

Cohen: What a beautiful way to put it!

Dolejs: Well, it's true. I'm not trying to try to make it sound phony or baloney, because it was that good. The people were so nice. And the people I dealt with were very, very nice. And it was a great pleasure for me, a great experience. And I be and by the way, that being with the Japanese helped me formulate and develop my language ability, too. I became fairly fluent at that time. In fact, for several years later, when I was my wife back to Japan, we had a Japanese guide. And I was speaking Japanese to her. And she says, "Boy, you speak good Japanese!"; at the time. But you know, if you don't use it, you lose it. But I was pretty good at it. I can't even speak Czech very well now. I speak a little, I speak mostly Spanish now because we have considerable amount of Spanish people. But I'm fairly fluent in Polish and Czech. And a little bit of German, "Ich sphreche Deutsch" and Japanese, mostly Spanish. English - I'm not so good in English. [Laughs].

Cohen: So do you want to talk about when you began to learn Japanese and how you developed when you were speaking to Japanese girls, etcetera, etcetera?

Dolejs: Well, they started they started Japanese when I went to Camp -- what was its name -- it's in California. There's the language school, California.

Cohen: Monterey, California?

Dolejs: Yeah, Monterey. That's it. In Monterey, there's a language school and I went to a brief course in Monterey, I think for about three weeks. But, Gee, it's hard to learn a language in three weeks! You learn some of the, you know, "Konichiwa" [i.e. Japanese greetings], "Ikagadeska". How are you? Look what you know where you going? You learn some of the commonly used – the "benjodokodesku" - where's the bathroom?" [Laughter]. Very important. So you learn a lot of the standard uses, but until you actually live with Japanese, then you start the ordinary usage. And contrarily, when you don't see 'em and talk to 'em anymore, you lose it. You forget it. Forget all the use.

Cohen: While you're in this [assignment] did you ever have opportunity to visit the mainland and Tokyo?

Dolejs: Yes. I was in Japan. I was in Korea, in Tokyo for-- Well, I was in Tokyo in what was it? There's a main headquarters, General MacArthur's headquarters, and I was stationed for about a month before we went to Korea. In Tokyo, but that was -- the only thing we did there was go downtown and see the girls and play Pachinko. You know what Pachinko is? It's a little battle bulges. It's a game and we ate good, ate in the best restaurants. We were king, the occupiers of Japan were like kings, believe me, this was the wonderful. I doubt that you'll ever find anybody will give you discourse and say, " Whoa, I didn't like Japan" because in Japan, man is a king. It's a beautiful place to go. One more thing I gotta say. You would think that being occupiers that the Japanese would be very antagonistic. I never found anyone like that. All the time I was there, they were all very cordial and very humble, and very pleasant to get along with. We got along good with Japanese people.

Cohen: Well, that's one thing I was wondering about. Like do you think the Japanese genuinely embraced the democracy or did they feel that they had to "suck up", you know, to the Americans? Or do you think they were happy to no longer be under an emperor?

Dolejs: Well, they still had the Emperor Hirohito at the time. And and they still, they still believed in the Emperor, even now. But I think they embraced democracy and opportunity. That's what they were given. And, of course, as you know, America provided not only, not only did we defeat him and provide freedom, but we developed opportunities so that their trade, and their economic situation was greatly embraced. And that's what's happened. The primary reason people like us now is because by doing business with us, it's great for their economy. And as you know, China right now and Europe and all nations enjoy the privilege and, and the great benefits of economic trade - things with US. And we did that in

Europe, we came up with the Marshall Plan. And we rebuilt and all these countries, your irony of is that all these countries are far advanced from us, all their plumbing, all their electric, all their buildings are modern, beautiful tech, the technically correct issues, which we don't... Our buildings are old time in about 150 years old and junk, and the dumps. Really, we're far behind the world now. I mean, we have places where we're up to date. But for the majority of our people who used to live in chaos, compared to what they have in California [not sure of word?], Japanese.... In China! I've been to China in the last ten years and it's beautiful, China's clean and neat and well-maintained. And they're kind of -- even though it's still very behind us, it's improving, where people are eating now -- that, you know to for them, it's simply a matter of having enough to eat. And it's doing, they're doing very well in these foreign countries. China. And although I don't know what your political affiliation is, and I'm slightly dependent myself, but I admire what Trump has done so far. I think he's doing a good job. I think he's using the power that is there, rather than military power. He's using economic power to get things done. And it's working. It's working so far. Now whether, it continues to, let's hope it continues. It looks good. I think China is good to come our way. And I think that that the world's going to be a better place and hopefully maintain peace. I don't want to see fighting anywhere. I don't see anyone hurt, anywhere. And I think that's what it takes - it takes you use of the economic power that we have.

Cohen: It gives an impetus?

Dolejs: Right. I don't care whether it's Republicans or Democrats, as long as they do it. [Laughter]

Cohen: Well, I was about to ask you something and now, of course, it's has escaped my mind. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Okay. So you, you were in Japan in an interesting time, when I think that General MacArthur would have been replaced after he made his threat to bomb China and there were concerns that he would draw the Soviets into the war. So it made me wonder what your impressions were about that whole situation at the time, how you felt, how your peers felt?

Dolejs: At that time, they were totally in support of MacArthur, they're totally disappointed. Because if he had been able to bomb the bridges and prevented the Chinese for entering into the Yalu, here's something a lot of people don't know. At the time, we were right up to the Yalu River, which is, which is the border of China. And they came across the bridges in strength, huge strength, and they tore right to the middle of our lines. And then they flanked us. And we lost like the Marines for the 1st Marine Division lost 50% casualty to -- a lot of deaths, a lot of injury. And there was another division there. And I can't recall exactly which one it was, but it threw his arms out and ran. So they allowed a

huge hole in Chinese to get behind us. Now it's hard to fight of battle on both sides, in front of you and behind you. If he had been allowed to bomb and he wasn't, it would have stopped that from happening. We would…have kept the Chinese, the Koreans, Communists from taking that power. But they didn't and he was replaced because, it is kind of like with Truman, and I like Truman, Truman. Truman was the president that used the atomic bomb to do Nagasaki and Hiroshima. And I think he did it wisely. And not to kill people, but to save people. And that's what it did. And what's going to happen and if we, if we resort to, to the war, now, I think and we have to utilize atomic weaponry, millions of innocent people are going to die. And I don't know if anybody's going to benefit from it. Because the effort to recover, it's immense and so many people not only in the injuries inflicted by the bomb, but the injuries that come from the results of the bomb, the cancers and all the other illnesses, it'll be horrendous to society. And, maybe, who knows? Anyhow, I hope that doesn't happen. But I think that -- getting back to your question, I think McCarthy was supported by the troops. They loved him. The Japanese loved him. You know, he established democracy in Japan. So everybody Japanese loved the guy. I never heard a bad thought or spoken word against [General Douglas] McArthur [Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, in Japan, following World War II]. And I personally, I would like to see him use the bomb at that time.

Cohen: How was the General [Matthew] Ridgeway, the replacement?

Dolejs: Ridgeway was okay. I went on a hunt with him. I met him personally. I met MacArthur briefly, just walking by, I didn't actually meet him, I should say. But I did meet - I met Ridgeway, I was his bodyguard for three days. That's another thing we did, security.

Cohen: When were you his bodyguard?

Dolejs: I don't remember the exact date. But he came when he came into Japan. they assign people to bodyguards for like...General Clark came from Italy. He was retiring. He was in charge of the Southwest command in Europe. And he was retired, and he went on a bear hunt in Hokkaido. And I was with him on a bear hunt, four of us were, four of us up were guards. That was interesting.

Cohen: You mentioned in the article I think in the Riverside newspaper that I think special agent was not like being like James Bond?

Dolejs: No.

Cohen: How was it--

Dolejs: It was it was; it was [different]. James Bond is pretty glamorous. You walk around in nice clothes. It wasn't anything like that, it was simple investigations and reports. And what can I tell you? I if I say if I gave you the report, if you made it into a book, people wouldn't want to read it. It's not that interesting. It's sticky. Ordinarily the fact that, it's factual material and may say something or may not, it's the interpretation, you put on when you read it. So there's there's nothing for, we didn't we didn't go to casinos or stuff like that. We were doing dirt work.

Cohen: So, I noticed that the 191st CIC was associated with the 1st Cavalry Division and I wonder what -- if there was there a lot of contact with the people from Cavalry, itself, like...of yeah, the 7th regiment?

Dolejs: 7th regiment. There was the 5th, the 7th…I forget which one is on my mind. Is going…. the 8th. There's two [i.e. three] regiments in the 1st Cavalry Division, three regiments, and engineers was the 8th and the 5th was... The 1st was the Cav, was it just the regular, the regular GI's. They're divided in 1st engineer? engineer 7. Well, anyhow, the 7th is the most famous because that's what that Custer was the—Custer…[commanded] it, the Little Bighorn. So, he has a famous background. And they wore a yellow ribbon. Have you ever heard that song? There was a 7th Cavalry Regiment. So it was a very historically famous division. And they're very proud of their engineers, too.

Cohen: So did you have a lot of contact?

Dolejs: Oh, yeah, sure. played football with them, as a matter of fact. They had a league - after we really got down to peacetime, they had nothing else to do, they had developed a football league and they had regimental teams so that I was on I was on the football team with 7 Cav. So I got to know, we got to know all the GIs, sure. We meet 'em, they met us. They were always lookin' at us, salutin' us, which made me feel -- I don't like being saluted. I didn't feel worthy of being saluted. I'm just…I just an ordinary GI, doing a job.

Cohen: One thing I came across in my reading that when the 1st Cav was in Korea, you mentioned before the forced retreat, and then there was like a rather mocking song that was written about this retreat. And I wondered if you are aware of it or--There's a song that was, unfortunately, making fun of I forget which regiment of the 1st Cavalry - their retreat in Korea but I just wonder if you were happened to have come across that.

Dolejs: Of what? Well, they used to be they used to taunt us about the line we never crossed, the horse we never rode, and the yellow that runs on the middle of our back. That one?

Cohen: Okay. The one that was called the was called, "The Bug-Out Ballad". I'll show you the words, later.

Dolejs: “The Bug-Out Ballad” was of this other division. It was not the 1st Cav Division. There was another division. That's what I'm talking about that threw out the arms and they left more... They said, it said I am not sure about this. But I've heard it said that they'd left more guns and ammunition and equipment behind than we lost in the whole Second World War.

Cohen: Okay, okay but this was not the - it wasn't the 1st Cav Division. Gotcha. Okay. Okay. Out of curiosity, did you do other things, in addition to playing football, when you had a little bit of free time?

Dolejs: In Korea?

Cohen: In Korea, well then, later in Japan?

Dolejs: In Japan, all I did was -- I played football and I chased around with girls. Well, I wasn't chasing out with girls. Actually, I was developing informants. [Cohen: laughs]. That's true. Now it sounds funny now but that's exactly what it was. You developed informants from people that you created associations with they had to trust you and they had to give you information. That's what my job was collect. In essence, my job was to obtain and collect information I could arrest but I never did. I could arrest people, but I never did I could arrest I had power arrest over soldiers or even at that time even individuals. But if there were something like that, we didn't involve ourselves. We strictly collect information and submit it to the powers that be, and they would determine how good or bad it was. Actually, I didn't turn out to too much too much. The information wasn't that wise because I never had much done with it.

Cohen: Well, it sounds like in this way, things jived well. You had a genuine interest in meeting local people and at the same time felt it needed [unintelligible] identify informants and so on.

Dolejs: Well, the whole job like I said, we had a job that we had to do and when you get down to it, we never accomplished an awful lot. We did what -- we create an exercise and it had to be done in the event of an actual war a lot more it could have become a lot more important. But at the time, we were already engaged in peace. So nothing seemed that like I said we start playing football you know and we still march and we still exercise and we still shot our guns and dig into that nature as a military exercise, but in our case, my case my job was collecting information and trying to develop places where I could get that information wherever it was and you never know where you get it from. Like I told you, I was chasing a pianist around, watching him, seeing who he is involved with, what,

who is he who is he doing things with? What is he saying? What as company clerk what military secrets is he divulging to the enemy or to the possible enemy? We don't have any enemies, we were in peace, right?

Cohen: Interesting. How many CIC agents were you part of?

Dolejs: Our detachment was eighteen. There were eighteen, actual agents in field- eight. The rest of them are administrators, you know, typists, company clerk, things of that nature.

Cohen: Did you ever read the "Stars and Stripes". Was that--

Dolejs: Sure. Yeah, we used that was our only, only news media. We couldn't read Japanese. We spoke a little Japanese, but we couldn't read it. That's for sure. That's all kanji [Japanese writing system] and oh, it's a different, different method of writing.

Cohen: Were there any cartoons at the time by Bill Mauldin or--

Dolejs: Yes, he was the most popular one.

Cohen: Do you remember ones that you liked?

Dolejs: Not, particularly. They were all pretty good. He's pretty to the point. But there's another one I can't remember. He's a famous journalist but I can't remember his name.

Cohen: Yeah, I must admit that I have another reason to ask about the Bill Mauldin because the Pritzker Military Museum & Library is planning an exhibition on him.

Dolejs: He was very, very popular. He was in the "Stars and Stripes". was very, very popular. It was the only real means of news distribution that we had. Nothing on the radio except they had -- they did have something on the radio once in a while, but not that I recall anything. But "Stars and Stripes" was our only means of -- plus the mail that we get.

Cohen: I was about to say - did you get mail regularly from--

Dolejs: Yeah. I used to get Christmas cards and letters from Kim Novak. You know Kim Novak is?

Cohen: The actress?

Dolejs: She's an actress, yeah. She's a high school sweetheart of mine. And we were in... when I went into service. She followed me to Wright Junior College. Reggie and she stayed, we stayed in touch. And she sent me Christmas cards and cap and pinup pictures. Which I did I copied up and set and gave them to all the guys,

everybody had copies - given away. That was interesting. [Laughter] Well, [a] pinup picture is a big deal for GIs, you know. At that time was Betty Grable, there's a few others I can't remember. But Kim Novak was a novelty. Someone new and I had exclusive distribution rights.

Cohen: Did you write her back?

Dolejs: Oh, sure. I in fact, she was in town about a year ago. She was here, downtown at a Czech-American exhibition. And she said, "I'm so happy to be here. I'm so proud of being Czechos-- She's a Czech, too and I and I met some of my old friends even my first high school sweetheart, this year. She introduced me to my wife - that was great.

Cohen: So when were you discharged from the service?

Dolejs: I don't recall the exact date.

Cohen: Or approximate?

Dolejs: '55, probably.

Cohen: Do you ever - like - were you returned to--

Dolejs: Yeah, I came with a return [inaudible] we came on boat. That was very definitely interesting. We came back on a ship. And we -- at four in the morning, we woke up, we said we're in sight of America. And we got on the ship and you could see the Golden Gate Bridge with the sun coming up behind it. And it surely did look golden. So we saw the Golden Gate Bridge. And we just embarked in Navy, we got a train. And they took us to Camp Carson, Colorado, where we were discharged.

Cohen: And so from there, how did you continue on to Chicago?

Dolejs: I don't know, I get home, somehow.

Cohen: What was the boat trips like both going and coming?

Dolejs: Going was very, very - it is a very small ship, it's called…The size of the ship for based upon the military rank. And I went on Sergeant Antolak, Sylvester Antolak, I think there was Sylvester Antolak. It was a sergeant and it was very small ship and it's very rough and I was seasick two or three days. But since then I never got seasick again...But I was seasick then. Coming home on a bigger ship. It was a general and it was luxurious, and it was pleasant. It was fast. Much quicker. I think it was nineteen days going over and only about five or six coming back.

Cohen: So, what did you do after you returned? Did you use the GI Bill?

Dolejs: Yeah, I applied for I applied for GI Bill and I went to law school, Northwestern [University] Law School. And I finished two years and my mother passed away. And I had to engage - I had to disengage myself from law school and help my dad. He managed three or four buildings, smaller buildings, income buildings, but he was incapable of doing it himself. So I took it over and we started a real estate insurance firm. While I was doing that I was also selling insurance for Prudential Life Insurance. For a couple years, I was doing investigations for the Chicago Motor Club. And then I also learned how to fly on a GI Bill. When I disengaged myself from law school, I went to flight school. I learned how to fly a plane. So I flew a plane and have a small air strip, or I did have one. It's in Twin Lake, up in Michigan, I would fly up to Michigan all day. So I was I was pretty busy. [Laughter]

Cohen: Where did you meet your wife?

Dolejs: She came to work for me. She was seventeen years old and she came to work for me on 26 in Troy Street in Chicago in a small office. And I had her, a cousin and a Mexican girl work for me in my office. And they were very good at what they did in the office. And we did very well. And we've grown since then. First, we primarily dealt with real estate sales, and insurance. And we sold a lot of property. I was very involved with real estate as president of the real estate board on 26th Street, a couple times. Then I was president real estate board it says from Berwyn, four times. And also involved with other activities, the Lions Club. I'm the oldest lion I think now in Riverside. In terms of years, I became- I got into Masonic Order. I'm a mason with the Riverside masons, president of the lodge. So I get myself involved. That's not always so smart. A lot of work. I mean, you got a lot of activities that you have to you have to take care of. So I've been involved in all these things. And eventually, when I finally sold, I invested in real estate, and I had a big building, forty-two-unit building, in North Riverside, which I sold and made me independently wealthy. So I'm an independent, Bohemian, Bohemian millionaire. But I continue - I opened up another office, because I use some of the funds from the -to avoid taxation. And I created office in Lyons, which I have now. And here, which you're in. And the reason I did that was my son. See, give him a livelihood. And he works. He works here too. And we manage a hundred different properties now: condominium associations, apartment owners, building owners, into any kind, but there's a hundred different locations. So we're quite busy. We have nine people that work the office, plus about ten or fifteen that are independent contractors. And we do very well. We try to provide the best possible service for the least possible cost. And people appreciate that. And here we are.

Cohen: Do you feel like you learned from your father, as well, who had been in management before?

Dolejs: No, my, my dad, I learned – sure, I learned to start with-- [but] my mother, mostly from my mother, though. My mother was the worker, my dad was fine. And he did [work] but he wasn't the organizer or the worker. My mother work like a slave. And I worked with her. I learned how to paint and do repairs… repairs, cleaning and gardening and just all kinds of tasks that are necessary to maintain property right. From my mother, right. My dad was primarily a boiler maker and a plumber and a broker. And that's how I get my brokerage license - eventually -- to him. And we've been doing fine ever since.

Cohen: Do you belong to any veteran organization?

Dolejs: Well, I belong to American Legion as past commander 488. I was commander there for a couple years and kept them alive. And now. Pepe is to present, the commander now and doing a better job, much better.

Cohen: Who's Pepe?

Dolejs: Pepe Topinka. He's Judy Baar Topinka's son [i.e. Joseph Topinka].

Cohen: I know him, I guess by his more formal name.

Dolejs: Joe. Yeah. Pepe, that's his--I know him since he's a little kid, and he's doing an excellent job. He's very full of vim and vigor and vitality. And he very bright man, and he's doin' a great job

Cohen: Cool. Is there something that you would like to talk about that we did not talk about yet?

Dolejs: No, I just hope I just hope that what you it, I think what you're doing is resurging interest in veterans and in what they do. And the idea behind what veterans do, that is maintaining stability and freedom for our country, freedom to go out and create opportunity, not to give you something for free, but to give you the opportunity to do what the hell you want to do. And that's something that most people don't appreciate. They can go out, they can start a business, any [inaudible] like I did. I started from nothing. Anybody can start with different types of vision. You paint doors, you can do gardening. Like to give you an example. At present time, we have about fifty accounts with landscapers that cut the grass and some of our $18, $20 a week, peanuts. But collectively, it's a big business. Somebody could become a landscaper and start one at a time and develop accounts until he's self-employed. It's a simple business, cuttin' grass doesn't take any brains. Shoveling snow in winter, you could because you could

get yourself… snow blowers, that are cheap and ... shovel snow in the winter. People were glad, were tickled pink to have you and pay for it. And there's all kinds of -- those are simple. You go down the street knocking door and say, “I'll paint your garage door for $20” and do fifty of them a day. There’s all kinds of opportunities, depending on where you want to go. Become a realtor, you could be if you sharpen up and talk, talk well enough, you can talk people into buying properties. It's just a matter of your own ability and capability and willingness to work at it. And that's what we fight for. That's what our GIS die for that allow us that opportunity. And now when they come back, they say they don't have any jobs, I find it difficult to believe because there's a lot of people looking for work now. I think it just depends on what you want to do. You're not going to be president of a corporation. But you can start out start out simply like I did and develop. Anybody can do it. Anybody can do it. I'm no brainchild.

Cohen: Is that what you would like younger generations to learn?

Dolejs: Yeah, I'd like to go out and try – be, be brave and charge. I don't care what you do. But go out and try it, wash windows. I got a --a young guy came in from Guatemala. And he's washing windows, now. And he washes windows [in] about fifteen buildings, every week. And he made he makes a living, a good living, I'm not talking about a few nickels, he makes very good living…So the point is that the opportunities are here - you got to grab it and work at it and do a good job. If the reason she's been doing it for so long, she does such a good job. if she didn't do a good job, I'd have somebody else do it.

Cohen: To my understanding, what you're saying is we need the military to step in, to allow us to have democracy where people can take initiative and, you know, make a living, and make good lives for their--

Dolejs: Exactly right. And it's a military that guarantees that. it's not some local politician. It's our military, sometimes politicians are successful in maintaining good governmental controls. But it's the military, in essence, that protects us. Otherwise, we would all be under Japan or Germany or whoever, whoever could, be under Venezuela. Look at Venezuela, they keep the people down and people want to work. What they have to do? All they can do is demonstrate. If they, if they had freedom and opportunity and open up their markets and everything, they'd be doing fine. And that's what happens. You--that's what -- again, like I says, I have not, I have not been happy with Trump, with some of those capabilities and talking with people because he's a little rough. But he gets the right idea. He gets the jobs done. He's getting the job, so far. And if he and, believe me, if this thing works out with Venezuela, and with China, and with the Iran, he's gonna be president for maybe, ten more years. Because if you can do it without a war, that's the big thing.

Cohen: Well, on behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, I'd really like to thank you both for your service, as enjoyable as it was, as well as your interview today.

Appendix A. Dolejs Family legacy in Chicago [title supplied].
By Richard Andrew Dolejs

Prior to 1885, Matus and Marie Dolejst emigrated from Prague, Bohemia which at the time was an integral province of the Austrian/Hungarian Empire and settled in Pilsen. The community was occupied predominantly by Bohemian, Slovak, and Polish families, mostly employed in the Chicago stockyards. Matus engaged himself in rental properties and the family lived at 2121 W. 19th Street. Sons, Andrew and Charles, and daughter Marie were born and raised in Pilsen. Mother, Marie, became licensed in the State of Illinois in 1887 as a midwife and assisted the delivery of a great proportion of the children to the community. Andrew became the chauffeur and assisted his mother in registering the births of the growing population. Matus constructed a commercial building at 2600 S. Troy Street, in 1901 and operated a tavern until his passing. Andrew and Charles owned an automobile repair shop near Cermak and Western until Andrew's induction into the US Army Air Force [Corps?] in San Antonio, Texas. After a serious injury, Andrew returned to civilian life with an honorable discharge. Andrew assumed responsibility for the real estate investments and obtained a broker's license and became a speculator. In 1928, he married Marie Jungvirt Vyskocil, also an immigrant from a small village, Unice, located near Pisek, in Bohemia. After the end of the Second World War, Czechoslovakia was granted independence and freedom. Immigrants from Central Europe provided an answer to the labor shortage in America and contributed a strong and beneficial impact to the prosperity and growth of the economy. Gradually, the Czechs, Slovaks, and Polish began to move west into what was to become, "Little Village" and further west into Cicero, Berwyn, and Riverside. The Mexican population merged peaceably and harmoniously with the community, which has resulted in a safe, healthy and prosperous area. Little Village has maintained a strong and viable economy while Pilsen is swiftly becoming regentrified and energized by support from University of Illinois Chicago Campus Organization.

The Dolejs family have played important roles in sustaining and achieving a strong, safe, and desirable community. Andrew M. Dolejs and his son and nephews all served America in the Second World War. Edward Dolejs was killed in the Normandy invasion and is buried in France. Richard Served as an intelligence agent it the Korean war. After his honorable discharge, he followed in his father's footsteps as a real estate broker and speculator. An office was established at 3147 W. 26th Street and 1443 W. 18th Street, in Pilsen. Eventually, suburban offices were established in North Riverside and in Lyons. At present, Dolejs Realty provides service and sales for more than ninety multi-unit apartment buildings and condominium associations. The success of Dolejs Realty is based upon traditions developed within the Czech/Polish/Mexican/American community of hard work, honesty, and good service.

We are proud of our connection with the various cultures of Pilsen, Little Village, and suburban communities.