

- (A1) 28.
- (A2) 1943 to 1944 Air Force school. After four years of attendance at the ~~Szombathely~~^ZSzombathely School I could have finished to become a sergeant, but I could finish only one year. I went to the Székesfehérvár School and the Soóstó airport. After 1944 I worked with my father as a laborer.
- (A3) He was a brick-layer.
- (A4) I had one year of gymnasium, with further schooling after 1946.
- (A5) In 1946 I re-entered the army and received the rank of corporal because of my previous one year of school in the Air Force. In two years I became lance-sergeant. From January 1947 to March 1947 I studied radio-telegraphy and then was sent to the border, Kőrmend, and other points. I worked in contact with Pest. From 1947 to 1949 I attended the Honvéd Kossuth Academy.
- (A6) On March 14th, 1949, I received the rank of master sergeant. Out of a group of 18 communicators only 2 became officers. The course of study had been planned for 3 years, but it was squeezed into 18 months. Officers were needed desperately and many were flunked out. I finished second highest in a class of 18. I could feel that my previous experience in the Horthy army delayed my advancement in each case. On April 4th, 1950, I was made Second Lieutenant.

It was not until April 4th, 1953, that I became First Lieutenant, when I should have had this rank a year earlier according to the rules. After three years I should have been a Captain, that is in 1956, but I didn't get it. In fact, if things would have moved as they should have, in 1955 I should have been a Captain. I was very much acquainted with the whole area of border communication and radio monitoring. I had experience in every field, but still I did not get the advancement. The rules governing advancement said that a reason would have to be given in each case, if an officer is not advanced. But they did not give me any reason. There were always others who were not moved ahead on time, either. 90% of our group or unit was composed of First Lieutenants, only 4 Captains and 1 Master Sergeant.

(A7) The Hungarian Army Honvédség.

(B1) Life in the army was very interesting. At various units differences are apparent, officers' education is different, some of the officers were 1) well-educated; 2) there were those who were very rude; 3) some were opportunists. *Our* life in our unit was balanced, 90% of our officers had a maturity certificate. Thus we had a high level of education. There were some sides of the army which were not liked. For example the fact that one had to have a bald hair-cut for one year, furloughs and passes were limited, there were certain

problems in food; there was a discipline problem, officers in certain cases did not have to account for the reason they disciplined a soldier, if that disciplining was within the limits of their rank. Sometimes an officer jailed a boy for a few words he did not like, and this grieved the boys. With regards to sports and recreation, and cultural possibilities, we received a lot. We had a cultural hall; twice a week there were movies; we took the boys swimming; there were circles such as "Drága Magyar Szabad Hazánk" or "Dear Free Land of Hungary", which circle or group visited points of interest, toured memorial places in Hungary. In other units of the army the enlistment was for 2 years, whereas in our unit it was 3 years: one year attendance at radio-telegraphy school, after that 2 years of service.

(B1b) The Russian arms which had been manufactured in 1943 were given to us. They were merely renovated and painted over. Discipline in 1946 was rather loose, not strict. Old officers were waiting to be dismissed. They tried to keep discipline through little political talks, were trying to convince the soldiers to behave, rather than through harshness. At the frontier guard in 1956 all discipline was very loose. In 1948 discipline became stronger and this took two directions: 1) Disciplinary methods; and 2) to convince the boys through political talks and thus try to establish discipline. This started non-discipline. There was an

opposition between the officers and the men. The Party caused this by saying that the boys could criticize the officers. Thus the soldiers could push down an officer and the prestige of the officers was lowered. Officers did not dare to discipline those soldiers who were in the Party. I was accused of being too hard on Party people even though I was a Party member. I would answer by saying that I should be harder on Party members just because they are Party members. (Discipline during the Revolution can be noted that the soldiers wanted to shoot the political officer in our unit. There was no power in the hands of the officers to discipline the soldiers. They left freely.) In the Hungarian army or in any army when the army begins to talk politics discipline is *gone* in the army. The Russian army didn't have so much political party influence. We were not allowed to slap the soldiers but if I had not slapped a particular boy he would have refused my order and for that he would have got one and a half years prison. The Communists were trying to instill self-discipline into the soldiers but our boys had not arrived at that conscious understanding of why some discipline is good. Morals were low sometimes, numerous crimes and in other units numerous *abuses*; Officers were beaten up, soldiers escaped, would be gone for two weeks and would report back without being punished. The officers in the army were young also and they were

responsible for everything. They had to make *monthly* reports about merits and punishments. If an officer had too many punishments, the *superior* officers said that the discipline in that unit is bad and therefore subordinate officers frequently covered up some discipline or did not carry out discipline. Again this was the Communist ideology creeping into the army, that there is not to be punishment or disciplining in society. Socialist society is good. The subordinate officer then was reprimanded if he accumulated too many actions of punishment against his men. In my mind, however, the only way an army can be built and maintained if proper punishment and discipline is dealt out. The officers and soldiers were not allowed to listen to foreign broadcasts and sometimes we had to cover up this also if our soldiers did it. The kind of work the men did in our unit depended upon their mood which in turn depended upon the kind of meals they got and other factors. It was hard work listening to two or three broadcasts and it was more difficult for the superior officer like me to inspect and control the work of each man to make sure that he was getting everything done. If I would be too severe then the work he produced might be inferior. Thus an officer got into a conflict with himself. He couldn't do what he wanted to do. In the infantry soemtimes an officer had to make a hole in a bull's eye of the target so that the *record* of

his unit would look good. In my radio unit if one soldier would be punished, that is imprisoned, I would find it difficult to replace him at the radio recruitment and thus even this prevented us from disciplining the soldiers as we should have. The ~~tisztahelyettes~~ (deputy officer) was not selected on a basis of what he knew, but everyone who reported for such a position would get it. At our unit the deputy officer started with the corporal. This ruined a certain amount of discipline and fairness.

My unit of 32 men in the Revolution when the whole barrack was already empty were still there with me. They asked me what we should do. I told them to go home and they went home. Before that they asked what will happen to me. I said we cannot attack the Russians alone. After the Revolution my group was the first to report back again. After that we worked for the Russians in communication, sending to them the messages.

With regard to clothing we had enough clothing although the quality was very poor. After three or four washings it would fade and after five washings it began to fall apart. In 1956 the officers got new clothing, dark blue pants, and the quality was a little better. But the uniform was the Russian type clothes, closed at wrist and at the neck. Uniforms were hot in the summer and cold in the winter. ^{Our} ~~the~~ clothing was supplemented in the winter with under-garments. The cut of the uniforms was the Russian pattern. We received new uniforms every two years.

Every year we received a pair of boots for drill and every year a pair of boots for dress wear. I had six suits of clean clothes accumulated. At our unit we did not have to do too much drill or exercise.

The type of feeding was done on a basis of norms, that is from 1 to 6. The lowest norm was 1 which was five or six frts a day. We received No. 3 which was 13.40 frts a day. It was rather good. We received egg and milk products. In the morning we had milk coffee with 10 deca (bread?) of butter and jam. While in maneuvers we had the No. 4 feeding. The food as to its preparation depended upon the kitchen officer. We had night service and got a night snack for those who worked at night. The food was better now under the Communist's army than in the Horthy army. We ate at tables and had tin plates. The new barracks that were built all had dining halls and cultural halls. Norm No. 6 was the feeding for the Air Force. They had cakes, chocolates, everything. The general type of breakfasts was the kind that the Russians had, that is a soup for breakfast, either gulyás or rántott soup. We received meat three or four times a week, had noodles in some form twice a week, and our supper was a one-dish meal. The difference between the meals No. 1 through 6 was in calories. The lower numbered meals as 1 did not have milk, cheese, and butter.

Our barracks were new having been built in 1943.

(B2a)

I had a very nice picture of the army life. I liked that life. In 1943 while in the Air Force I admired the uniform and the regulated life. I did not have any political ideas. I imagined that as an officer I would be able to find a certain amount of assurance and security and also be able to take my own ideas into the methods of teaching and education of the soldiers. I found that I was not able to do my own thinking in my own area. I had to follow everything, even in teaching methods. Methods which I had developed in teaching and which worked for me I could not use. We repeated old material because it was required year after year in the instruction periods. We had eight hours of service and two hours of classes. The political hours that were required of the soldiers were too many. Six hours of political study and then six hours for improvement of their skills. The joke which went around in our unit was the reason we have a guard at the gate is so that knowledge and logic may not enter into our establishment. The trouble was that experienced officers could not develop their own ideas and inexperienced men were the superior officers. From below we recommended certain things for years and only now after the Revolution some of these things begin to develop according to our recommendations.

We taught the soldiers to be thinking men and thus the soldier would try to get out of something that he was

ordered to do. He would say: "We can't do this". Whereas the upper or higher command always tried to force their thinking upon the lower officers and not allow the lower officers any possibility for individual thinking to develop but the ordinary soldier would retaliate and try to do individual thinking and sometimes refuse orders.

The job of the commissioned officer should have been merely to give orders and then the subordinates should work those orders out. However, the commissioned officer had to work out in detail every order before it was given. Otherwise it would not be carried out or there would be difficulties. Beside all of that work the commissioned officer had to study Communism, prepare for political hours, and at the same time train himself in his skill. 80 percent of the officers were over nervous. I had two nervous breakdowns. In three years four officers committed suicide.

(B2b) No, not at all.

(B2c) I was disappointed as I indicated above.

Financial position of officers.

Our group was exceptionally well-paid in comparison to the other units. The *platoon* commander was in category No. 13 and received 1,800 frts in our unit. In another unit the same officer would be designated in category No. 19 and would get 1,200 frts. The political officer was designated in a category one lower than the

commander. The second lieutenant or propagandist received the category of No. 12 with 2,000 frts. The lecturer on motors got No. 15 category and about 1,500 frts. One interesting thing was the supplemental pay. A second lieutenant received 160 frts, master sergeant Al Nagy received 140 frts. The supplemental pay was taken away in 1955 and under a new system we got less. In 1955 I got 1,960 frts, under the new system 1,861 frts. Just at that time when this change was instituted I was given an assignment or asked to give a talk on how the standard of life has risen. I told the political officer that I couldn't do this. "Look at what happened to me!" and I would not.

In the matter of housing it was difficult to secure rooms. Many who were married for a long time lived in one room or shared an apartment. One officer lived with his mother. Housing for the deputy officers was worse. Sometimes when an individual had friends he could get ^a house.

The cultural life of an officer was very inadequate because he had to put all of his extra time into studying preparing for political classes. I had to go to three classes and I taught at three different places. During the day it was impossible to prepare for my other classes. My wife argued with me that my life is one of constant study. In 1957 they started the practice that everyone had to study a language for his field. Frequently we

received a newspaper article from the political officer who told us to make notes on it and turn it in. Everyone could not honestly do everything that was required. 24 hours were not enough. Officers even had Party work to do, that is frequently the soldiers had to be called into my office and I had to talk to them as Party members because they were undisciplined politically. I had to read required literature and the new Hungarian and Soviet literature. Although we tried to imitate the Soviet army in the Hungarian army it did not happen. Even the Soviet advisers said that we should not copy the Soviet cloths^e. They said we have a national uniform. In the early days of the Communist regime they said that they would take over from the old army that which is good, but even the good was not adopted.

(B3) We could tell who were the Communists in our unit both the convinced Communists or the other type, the opportunist Communists. The propaganda or political officer had his finger in every activity. He was a fanatic. During the Revolution it became evident that he changed over and then after the Revolution when we went back to the barracks he wanted to be on good terms with all the soldiers. The officers were afraid of one another and we could not find out what the other thought. Even if he worked next to me I did not dare to talk to the other man. Only after the

Revolution did I find out that a man who worked next to me was not a Communist and was healthy in his thinking. In fact I can thank him for telling me that I was about to be arrested and that I should leave immediately.

In the Revolution the officers did not know where they should stand. They were *vacillating*. Two groups from our barracks went into Budapest to the main post office and were ordered to defend it and to keep it. One of the officers had three flags in the post office: the Russian flag, the tri-colour red-white-and-green flag, and a white flag. He would stick out the various flags at various times in order to save the post office and to stop the Russian and the Freedom Fighters or whoever was on the outside from shooting. The Russians wanted to blow the post office up. Through the post office which controlled the telephone and telegraph lines on November 2nd we knew that the Russians were coming from Czechoslovakia.

(B4b) He was of worker origin. He was 26 years old, a fanatic Communist, and half Christian. He was convinced of Communism and followed the Stalinist line. He stood out next to the Communists and after the Revolution he began accusing people in the unit. One other officer followed the line of the Communist writers.

(B4c) The one officer criticized the stupid things we did and were ordered to do. Now he is replaced. Another officer when Stalin died said he should have died earlier. This

was overheard and he was imprisoned for three years.

- (B4d) I can't recall anyone because we were not sure of one another.
- (B5) No one trusted one another and therefore they did not discuss politics honestly and their feelings about Communism openly as they felt.
- (B6a) No.
- (B6b) Yes, but I didn't know who they were; At first, I then discovered two officers who had been assigned to us. They worked for the AVH.
- (B6c) Yes, they were feared.
- (B6d) In connection with the Yugoslav situation two men disappeared in 1952. In 1954 one of the soldiers came back to be discharged. He had been sentenced for six years transmitting Yugoslav propaganda. The weaker political officers who were politically unreliable were sent out for further education.
- (B6e) No, because if they were unreliable they would never be brought to our unit since our work was secret special.
- (B7) In general to the *question* as to why the Russians were there we were told that the Hungarian army is not strong enough to defend Hungary. *Only* on higher levels in the army was their close contact with Russian officers and Russian direction. Our own group, communications and radio *monitoring* did not have any special contacts with the Russians. Our radio equipment was Western manufactured

with the exception of the arms. We had some Hungarian experimental radio equipment. The Russians received the information we gathered. We saw the Russian advisor only on special days at our level of command. Our unit works outside of the army in time of war.

The Russian command above the army directed our group through channels to listen to the Yugoslavs on a 24 hour basis when there was trouble between Hungary and Yugoslavia. And then later came the order to change this

(B7b) (Respondent mentioned number of innovations in the army previously with regard to kinds of food eaten, that is the breakfast and other things mentioned above). Not only the soldiers but even the population did not respect the Hungarian officer's uniform which was patterned after the Russian. Previously Hungarian people looked up to the Hungarian officer's uniform.

(B7d) In general just as the Hungarians did not like the Russians, the war had created such a hatred against the Russians by the way they behaved toward our women. The war situation and occupation pushed us toward the Russian leaders who sent the Russian soldiers here. In our barracks during the Revolution there were Russians and Mongols. One could recognize the Mongolian characteristics in their faces. The eyes slatted, they were short, their skin was dark. Their clothing was rather bad and at our barracks they redressed in our own equipment. While they were there

we even gave them some of our food which they liked very much. The Russians were really looking for Fascists and the Suez. They were told to save the Hungarian people from the Fascist danger. The Russian soldier was an obedient soldier and was held in hand by the officers. Especially this group which came into Hungary under the second attack. The Russians that were stationed in Hungary did not always do what their officers told them.

(B7e) We did not have too much experience with the Russian officers and occupying force and they did not come in contact with our unit.

(B8) Our commander was in Russia for two years. He was a good man, a human person, but he was very much influenced and allowed himself to be influenced. He made exceptions. The Party people could influence him greatly. However, he was a very skilled person in his knowledge and training of radio. He attended the Zrinyi Academy. His behaviour was influenced by politics. The superior commander, Fölöttes Parancsnok, was in the academy at the same time I was. He was one year younger than I. In the *Academy* we liked him. But when he came to our unit later he did not recognize me nor wanted to know me from the academy days. In two years he became lieutenant colonel from first lieutenant.

After the Revolution about 80 percent of the officers

of our unit drank heavily. Previously they did not do that. They did not know why they did this. At night they would go out to drink.

(B9) When I was a young officer I believed what they taught us and I believed that ~~the~~ Marxism-Leninism was right. We learned that every man has rights. But then later I saw as my life evolved and the more years I was in the army it became evident that it is not the man who is skilled or knows who is advanced and succeeds or is treated justly. If Marxism and Leninism could be put into practice and really practised it would be all right ^{because} ~~the~~ the ideas are nice. But until men cannot buy what he wants to buy, cannot say what he wants to say, can be sentenced to prison ~~when~~ if he says what he should not say, then that is not right. The Revolution brought to light and to our knowledge much that we did not know. We did not know or believe that people were tortured at the AVH. In the early days we were sent out as Communists to the collective farms and to the individual farmers to talk about Communism and to agitate. We told them how much better things were under Communism but we soon discovered and it was then difficult to talk as to who had the better crops, a collective farm or the individual farmer. The individual farmer was able to produce better crops. As long as our society is ^{greedy} the order of socialism that is spoken of cannot be a reality. Nor can it be a reality

when people work for starvation wages. When I was married I had *quilts* that I owned and that was all. We went to the theater and to the movies very little. The army officer had very many financial problems.

90 percent of the officers looked at the Revolution indifferently.

(B10) There were none in our unit.

(B11) The *non*-commissioned officers in our unit came out of the academy about the same time. The former old officers were made into civilian employees in 1952. In 1950 and 1951 officer training courses were given for sergeants and others. Thus the non-commissioned officers were developed into our officers. Although I had done this work of radio and communications for six years I still did not know the entire field. They wanted me to be an instructor and as a result I went into all the areas.

Later these commissioned officers received higher pay than the officers above the commanding positions. The non-commissioned officers frequently argued with their superiors. But when an order in writing was given the subordinate officer could not argue. There was no real opposition, however, between the two groups.

(B11b) See above in previous questions. One officer was hated by all the men and he was sent away. I heard that sometimes an officer for punishment such as slapping a soldier was jailed. Each officer within his command had certain

rights and powers of discipline if the particular officer stayed within his rights concerning the length of time which he was able to punish someone. However, if he wanted to deal out a punishment for a longer time he had to get permission from ^asuperior officer. Kinds of punishment were restriction to the barracks, second, guard house or jail; third, restricted food or meals every other day. No questions were asked if the officer remained within his own jurisdiction and did not overstep his bounds. The soldier could register his complaint only after he had served his time of punishment. Leaving the barracks or camp without permission was dealt with under two categories: 1) Voluntarily leaving and 2) escaping. The first case if the soldier came back in 24 hours was considered a breach of discipline. However, if he did not return in 24 hours it indicated that he went to leave and was trying to escape or desert. The commander would decide whether it was the intent of this soldier to do 1) or 2). Higher command officers could increase the punishment upon the request of lower officers.

(B11c) Yes, definitely. The Air Force and the tank ^{Corps} ~~unit~~ had a particular attraction for the youth. However, in the armed services they tried to eliminate this kind of rivalry between the various groups and there wasn't any more prestige associated with one or the other group. However, officers according to their talents and abilities and the

service in which they served did ~~not~~ get better pay. The technical officers received better pay than the corresponding officers in the infantry. Technical officers received a supplement and also a pay on the basis of years of service. The frontier guards received double pay, 60 frts, while the other unit men in other units got 30 frts in 1951-52. The 1001 night of service was celebrated in the three year period of service in our unit. At one time we were not allowed to let the soldier sign a particular discharge motto which was going about.

(B12) Within our group there was a close relationship because our unit was a special case. We needed to control the soldiers and also needed to develop a desire within them to work.

(B12b) There was not much problem in our group. Sometimes an operator would tell the superior officer to do it himself if the operator could not do it because of wheather conditions the reception was bad. Also by this method the operator tried to test the officer to see whether he could really do what he was telling the operator to do.

(B13) The best answer is given by the Revolution. The soldiers all tried to learn the material that was given to them to learn but during the Revolution the soldiers were with the students and others who directed the Revolution. They had the same ideas *and think* the same way. They said that it was right and proper that things could not go on as

they were going. The soldiers would not shoot into the crowd but the AVH did. The Russians held the heavy artillery whereas the Hungarians had only rifles, carbine pistols, light machine guns, and 76 mm tank artillery. That is all. The kind of tanks we had went up to the T-34 tank. The Russians did not give us the best. We got the arms which the Russians could not use, those arms which were outmoded after World War II. The automatic pistols were very bad. It was very difficult to load them, sometimes almost impossible to load them. We did not have any T-50 or T-54 tanks.

(B15a) Well, it is a difficult question. After the Revolution 50 percent of the officers took their discharges, that is left the army because they did not wish to serve any longer. A few of us did leave the country. Now Kádár has had to give the officers more pay because the officers have seen that the leaders of the country do not do what they say and teach. During the Revolution in 24 hours the whole army either escaped right away or dissolved. No one in the ministry was able to say what the army should do and was able to control it. If the army could have held together and ~~opposed~~^{opposed} the Russians, the Hungarian people would perhaps have won the Revolution and then today the Russians and Communists could not try to explain the Revolution as they do by saying that it was counter-revolutionary forces and reactionaries who directed the Revolution.

tion. If there had been a central control in the ministry in favour of the Revolution, in the matter of 12 hours the army would have dismissed all those men who are Communists. Thus the army would have purified itself.

(B15b) It is difficult to say because at present time the events of the Revolution opened the eyes of the youth. Two years ago the Soviet could have used the Hungarian army against the West. Today the men who are still back in Hungary in my former unit know that all the radio reports go to the Russians. Previously they did not know that. The soldiers perhaps can be forced to do things because as in my case our livelihood depended upon it. No married man dared to do anything against the regime. If we tried to do something and were kicked out we could not get a job in a factory later.

(B15c) This is difficult to say also. In that period when there was trouble between Yugoslavia and Hungary three years ago we hated the Yugoslavians. They shot at us and in fact wanted to steal our radio station equipment. But what the situation would bring now is difficult to say.

(B15d) Here again it's difficult to answer. All of this depends on how a soldier can be won by propaganda and how the soldiers obey their officers and how much they like their officers or the behaviour of a soldier depends upon his officer. I had had *pleurisy* and on October 23rd at 6.30 in the evening I was in the clinic in the doctor's office

on Gorki street. There I heard that the crowd was going to the Stalin statue. When I left the clinic I went there to the statue and I saw a boy in a white shirt, a medical student, climbing up the statue to tie a cord around the statue. A ~~weeper~~ truck was pulling on the other end of the cord. This failed to break the statue and I went to tell these young people that they would need different kind of equipment to do this. I told them what to get. They came back with heavier trucks and *acetylene*. The Stalin statue fell exactly at 9.37 p.m. I know this because I was watching my watch as the base of the statue was being cut and pulled with the cords. After the statue fell someone came and shouted that they are killing people at the Radio Station. By this time also streetcars were not running and I started walking home. It took quite a while to walk home to Buda. When I arrived my wife told me that a military truck had just been there for me and that they would return to pick me up so that we could go back to the barracks. 150 or 160 men had been called in. It was our task to defend the barracks. I was in charge of the street side of the barracks. Inside nothing particular was done. The korányi sanatorium asked for our help. A truck took some food to that hospital. This officer on return from the sanatorium was told to go to Pest. On the way to Pest he was accompanied by other soldiers. Driving at full speed the truck did not stop when someone in the

road was waiving a light at them. It was the green AVH who wanted them to stop and see where this truck was going. But the truck did not know who was waiving the light at them in the night. They did not slow down and in response to this the AVH with machine guns riddled the truck and killed the officer immediately and the truck turned over. Those soldiers who lived when the AVH ran over to the overturned truck they cursed at our soldiers, kicked two of them in the side, and took them to their headquarters. There an AVH lieutenant told them that they would be just as dead as their officer the next morning. All seven of the boys who returned told the same story. We got them out, however, alive.

In our barracks only one officer who had been very pro-Communist before the Revolution began to come up with various demands saying that we should form a revolutionary council. He came up with various demands such as the regulation of haircuts to be eliminated. He said these demands should be sent to the ministry. It was then that our discipline disintegrated. And then came the various escapades in which groups of our soldiers went out voluntarily to raid certain places. One of the groups went out to take down the star from Jánoshegy. Another group went out to the villa of Gerő, however, they did not find Gerő there anymore. Such raids as these went on sporadically from the barracks in voluntary uncontrolled fashion up to October

26th. We also knew of the movements of Russian tanks and also heard in our radio ^{monitoring} ^ that the American Air Force had been alerted in Germany. All of the international wires came into the post office where one of our units was stationed to guard the post office and keep the telegraph wires and telephone in operation. We knew where the Russians were coming from, what they had, and we also knew that we could not do anything against them. We did not know where to send our information and material that we gathered. The ministry was not asking for it. At the ministry no one knew what to do. One of the members of our unit went up to the ministry for orders and took some material up. There they said they didn't know what to do with it. We waited constantly for orders but they did not come. Our superior who was at the post office had to defend the post office against the Russians who wanted to blow it up. Well, we at the barracks played cards. This was at Budakeszi barracks, 2 1/2 kilometers outside of the city.

The defensive units of the AVH did not remain intact. It was this group that regularly protected the post office and radio. They were the post and radio guard. The offensive units of the AVH remained intact and did not break up. They were the non-uniformed men. The informer group also remained. Near us was a letter censure station, that is near the barracks. Foreign letters were sent through there. It was guarded by the AVH. We found a photo machine there

and also a safe. In the safe we discovered the records of the AVH post office network and also saw that almost every házmester (~~hazmester~~ ^{Concierge}) was an informer. At this particular censure station they took letters and photographed them for later use. The AVH offensive group was well organized. They changed over into police clothing or into soldiers' uniforms. That is why we soldiers were afraid frequently to go out because some AVH had been wearing soldiers' uniforms and the people knew of this. We were afraid of being mistaken for AVH. Before the Revolution the government was even afraid of the military officers. Only the highest ranking officers could take their guns out of the barracks. I had to leave my gun in the barracks and could not take it out with me only with permission for cleaning and that was for a period of one hour. On November 4th at dawn we got an order for mobilization. We called every one together in preparation to leave the barracks. At 10 or 11 o'clock we were to expect the ~~Hungarian~~ ^{Piliscsaba} Hungarian tank group to come to the barracks. However, that group never got there because the Russians surrounded their barracks and captured the officers. The soldiers of ~~the~~ ^{Piliscsaba} ~~unit~~ then were allowed out of the barracks. The soldiers came to us and told us. On November 4th at 2 p.m. there were only 60 soldiers left in our barracks. The rest of them had all left, gone home on their own way. I went up to see our commander and asked him what to do and tell him

that there was no one in the command office even. He said I should do whatever I wanted to do. I sat upon a motorcycle but I did not go home. I went over to Széna tér where fighting was going on. I could not go through the Széna ter, however, I went around and up to Szabadság Hegy to the home of a friend. There was a great deal of bombing there. The Russians had converged upon the Gellert Hill and from Szabadsag Hegy or Liberty Hill one could see that at various points Csepel was burning, also that in Budapest the department store Divat Csarnok was burning. The next day I went back to the barracks. Two civilians met me there. They were supposedly guard^{ing} the gate. I saw people were taking food from the barracks, whatever they could find. Some in reality were looting. When I got in I reprimanded some of them. This became a little dangerous for me. For example, some wanted to take some of the radio equipment in order to broadcast to America or somewhere else. They were th^{roughly} ignorant of what our equipment could do. Then two trucks arrived from the Széna tér and asked for ammunition. They took whatever we could give them. We also had 70 pigs which were the property of the barracks. I gave ten of the pigs to the people of Budakeszi and the rest of them were sent over to the hospital. At about three or four o'clock I went back to Liberty Hill where I stayed until November 8th when I went home in civilian cloth^{es}. During this time

I kept in contact with my wife by telephone. On November 9th I went looking for our superior officer and received the information that on November 10th we are to gather at the nearby AVH headquarters and then go up to the barracks from there. On arriving at the barracks we found that a Russian unit was there. We gathered up our equipment and tried to put the barracks in order. The Russians had a section of the barracks to themselves. After a number of days they left. About November 15th or 16th we began our work as a unit in radio and communication. In January our unit was working as well as it was before the Revolution. However, 52 percent of the unit was not with us. They took a discharge. Two military doctors did not wish to sign the Kádár papers either. Some of our former soldiers were re-employed by us as civilian employees.

On January 20th in our barracks the five-man committee (Ötös Bizottság) was formed. Every officer had to report before it concerning what he did during the Revolution and every officer had to tell everything that he knew about the activity of other officers. The five-man committee told me they knew what I had done during the Revolution. My deputy political officer who was a member of the committee told me ^{when} ~~that~~ he met me in the hall of the barracks ^{that it} ~~was~~ would be better if I disappeared. That's all he said. That was enough for me and I left immediately. I went to my mother's home. At first I did not know what to do. I

thought that perhaps I would commit suicide. But then I decided that would not be good because it is no way out. My mother suspected something because I had two guns with me which I never carried before. It was a terrible torture. I couldn't sleep. I finally decided to leave the country. (The respondent had some very harrowing experiences in attempting to leave the country.) Even during the Revolution and after the Revolution I could not figure out how some of the officers stood politically. Even then they did not reveal themselves. After the Revolution the Foreign Ministry asked me if I wanted to accept a post in China as a radio telegrapher. But I did not accept it because I did not want to be away from my wife for six months and now I have been away from her for more than six months. She is there in Hungary with our baby whom I haven't seen at all except on pictures.

Looking back at the Revolution and looking at the part of the army played; at the barrack our unit fell apart in ten hours. The officers did not dare to command and no commands were given. However, if the Honvéd Hungarian army could have stood next to the people and if some officer in the ministry or at the ministry would have given an order the soldiers would have begun to fight in organized fashion. But no order came from above. We waited for orders to come. The other thing which should have been done was to draft everyone into

the army automatically, anyone who had arms and wanted to fight against the Russians. Thus would have been eliminated all of the various small groups, parties, revolutionary councils, and so on that formed and disrupted a unified front. The frontier guard group of the AVH ~~was~~ ^{went} over to the people's side during the Revolution. It was that group which shot down our soldiers as they were driving to Pest and it was that group that called our boys dirty scoundrel Fascists, that is ~~székes~~ ^{Piszkos} Csirkéfogó Fasizták. However, the offensive group of the AVH did not suffer any losses or derupcion in its work. For the success of the Revolution the Hungarian army should have taken over the situation immediately and drafted all those who had guns and were ready to fight, that is the army should have said that anyone who is fighting against the Russians is a member of the army and no other group. There would not have been the groups that made for disorganization.

(02) No, I didn't see any Russians in action although I heard that the Russians were present to fight against the Fascists. Those Russian soldiers that were in our barracks were not very eager to fight. They put on our own clean clothing. Theirs was in poor shape. They were not very likable. They were there in the barracks for three days. Later we could see Russians for a time at the various bridges and they surrounded the Parliament Building.

(03) We waited for some kind of help from the West. We knew

from our radio that the US Air Force in Germany was alerted. We also knew that in certain places some airplanes went up in the air. We did not want any serious intervention nor did we expect the U.S. to come in with an army. But we had some kind of hope of Western help. To point out how the Russians controlled the roadways and even the actions of the Hungarian army: Maleter sent one of my friends on a mission to Austria. His papers with Maleter's signature were made out for ^ZSomathely but the Russians did not let his truck out of Budapest. He had to turn it around and go back. Thus Budapest was completely encircled, completely controlled.

(C3b)

We at the Budakeszi barracks didn't even know what was going on in Budapest and did not think of any special Western interference. According to me it would not have been good because it might have brought on World War III and thus made Hungary a battle field. At that time the West could not do much more. But at the present time am very disturbed, disappointed, and almost disgusted with the behaviour of the West towards the refugees. The people as Tamás Aczel, General Béla Király, and the journalist Mérai and others who are opportunists and made good money in Hungary and came out of Hungary early ~~are~~ the ones who have been allowed into Western countries, but those who came out at the last minute and in the last hours in December and January are still in Austria. Those

other guys who ran out of Hungary in October and early November - in fact General Kiraly came out with an armed guard and some of those soldiers who guarded him are still here in the camp. They haven't been able to go to the West and he himself has forgotten about them.

Interviewer's comment about the respondent:

This young officer as I came to know him during the interviews was one who by his very nature regarded the army as a disciplined organization. For example, when he was not able to discipline the men under him and to make soldiers out of them this bothered him greatly. He was a very talented radio operator and telegrapher according to the prizes he won in communication contests. From his earlier experience in the Horthy army he had learned and appreciated discipline. He knew that men could not be disciplined with talks which tried to convince the men and persuade them of certain behaviour. As an officer he also had hoped that he could develop certain ideas which he had about training. But this individuality could not develop in the Hungarian people's army. He was an obedient soldier waiting for orders from above. These orders never came and therefore he never carried out any orders during the Revolution except that he was interested in certain human problems and did not wish to see property destroyed and malicious and unthinking loot-

ing to take place in the barracks. He had a sense of justice and a sense of right and wrong. However, he did not openly in any organized fashion oppose, or fight against, the Communist regime. He along with the rest of the army officers by and large waited for orders from the ministry concerning their movement. Since these orders did not come the officers did not know what decision to make and therefore the army was without a head and in reality no decision was made either for or against the Russians, the Communist government, or the Revolution.