

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

FREDERICK HUNT

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: December 7, 1987
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is December 7, 1987. This is an interview with Frederick Hunt concerning his early career in the Foreign Service. The interview is being done by the Foreign Service History Center of George Washington University. The interview is taking place at the Foreign Service History Center's office in the Gelman Library of George Washington University. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Mr. Hunt, could you give me some idea of what brought you into the Foreign Service, a little of your background before you came in, and why you came in?

HUNT: I am a fifth generation Washingtonian, sixth on my mother's side, and there is a lot of military in my background. I was not particularly interested in that. My older brother went to the Naval Academy, but I was poor in math and science, and decided on the liberal arts. I loved history, and my father did not have any business for me to take over or go into, so it was obvious that being in Washington I would work for the government.

Q: Had you gone to George Washington University?

HUNT: I made up my mind about the time I was a senior in high school. I went to Western High School, which was then the most fashionable school in Washington, and is now the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Georgetown; in my last year I went to Severn Prep School in Severna Park, Maryland, which was a boarding school where nearly everyone was heading for the Naval Academy.

Q: I have to add, I went to Severn, too, for a year, in 1940, and I moved away from there rapidly because it was so Naval Academy oriented.

HUNT: I liked the navy, and all that, and I have many friends I made there, but another factor was that through my mother particularly, I met many social acquaintances who worked in the State Department in the Foreign Service, people I saw at parties and things. I decided that I would best remain in Washington for my college education where I could keep up these contacts. Furthermore, this was the Depression period, when it was cheaper to live at home. So, that is what I did. At that time George Washington had a very good program in the School of Government. Instead of being divided two ways, it had two curricula, one domestic and one foreign. I took that. I was a four-and-a half year man because I didn't have enough of the necessary required courses, though I had enough credits. At that time the Department of State had a moratorium on incoming Foreign Service, which last for three years.

Q: What time are we talking about now?

HUNT: I'm talking about 1934. I was G.W. Winter, '35. In '34,'35, '36 there was a moratorium on it because Wilbur Carr, then Assistant Secretary of State, and there were only three of them in those days, told the Congress that if they wouldn't give him any money he couldn't take in any more employees. Maybe they should do that now, I don't know.

So, there was a gap of three years when no one took the exam. Unfortunately, I came out in the middle of that so I had a temporary job in the old Bureau of Foreign-Domestic Commerce, in the Commerce Department. I learned a lot there, and did a four-month stint in the office in Philadelphia of the Commerce Department, and it was very good for me from the economics side later because I found out what the importers and exporters were interested in.

Q: What type of work were you doing for the Department of Commerce?

HUNT: I was an odd-lot man, because I wasn't permanent. Everyone knew it, and so I started out working in the office of the gentleman who was in charge of their foreign service division. Then they needed someone to work on the Mexican yearbook, then they needed somebody in the staff, then they needed somebody in Philadelphia for a short time. So, I was an odd-lot man, but that was my whole career was as a generalist.

Q: I'd like to ask a question about the relationship of the Department of Commerce as far as a foreign trade was concerned.

HUNT: That's a good question because although the commercial and economic sections supposedly have gone back to Commerce now, it isn't the way it was set up then. At that time they had a foreign service of their own, and so did the Agriculture Department, and while a man could not ever be an Ambassador, he could rise within his own service fairly well. They had five classes, the Department of State had eleven. They had three unclassified, and then eight more.

Also, it was a period when business was increasing and many of those who reached the top, or got near the top of the Commerce service were offered jobs as export managers for big firms and moved off the top, making room for the bottom to come up. So, it was very interesting. I became very interested in it. Then they announced that there were going to be some exams for the Department of State. I went to cram school, and at the same time there was an exam in the Commerce Department, because they were rebuilding their service which had been greatly reduced after Herbert Hoover's time. Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce had built it up and as President of the United States built it up further, and President Roosevelt cut it down, small, and it was building up again. So it was attractive.

But, then they announced they were going to give exams, and I was torn a little bit. The pay was the same in both instances. You started at \$2,500 a year with either Commerce or State. I ended up taking both exams. Now, at that time, the State Foreign Service exam took three days, and it was a tough exam. It is interesting to note that there were twenty points weighted in this three day exam. It was assumed that anyone who arrived at that

state in his life knew at least one modern language, usually French, Spanish, or German. So language only counted one in twenty. Now, if you had an exotic tongue, fine, or if you another language you could take a separate test and get an extra mark for that. But it was assumed. And you weren't expected to know a lot of math, so that was only one point. But it weighed heavily on economics, history, and political science.

Q: And on writing too, I assume.

HUNT: Well, in those days true and false questions were not very strong. You got essay questions, you gave essay answers. They did have some selection, like three out of five. They'd give you five questions and let you pick out three of them. I remember in history and telling everybody afterward, in American history you could always depend on the Jacksonian era as being one of the questions so bone up on that.

Anyway, you had to get 70 in the written to be eligible for the oral. When you took the oral, for which you really couldn't prepare, you had to have an average of 80 between the two. I ended up getting 71 on the written, which was very good, and got the oral too. In those days there was no United Nations but you could very often get a question on the League of Nations, what you think about it. There are all kinds of funny stories about oral exams, that sometimes they didn't ask you anything of a political nature or anything like that. The Board of the Foreign Service officially was the three Assistant Secretaries and, as I said, the whole hierarchy was the Secretary, the Under-Secretary, the Counselor, and three Assistant Secretaries. European Division was a division then. A man got 6,000 a year; we thought that was pretty good.

The exam usually boiled down, in the days when they gave it every year, to about 300 taking the exam. Out of that, about 35 would complete both exams. Feeding in 35 a year, into a service that was around 600-650, was just about right. That sounds awfully small, in the old service it never exceeded 800 commissioned officers. After three years though, 700 took it and so a hundred and some came in. Therefore, in the exam I took there was more competition. The thing was, it was a long exam over three days. You had six sessions, in other words.

Q: Now, you also took the commercial exam. Was that a different kind of exam?

HUNT: It was only one day, it stressed economics a good bit, foreign trade, economic geography, language again you were expected to know. A lot of people don't realize, the Rogers Act, 1923, effective 1924, never said an applicant had to be a college graduate. It never was stated. But, without four years at the university level you could never have answered the questions. It was the same way with the Commerce exam. And, while it wasn't required, it was nice to have a recommendation from your congressman.

Q: What happened now?

HUNT: I finally came in, there was no particular job, and I was asked about going to Canada. Then that slot was filled. One day, meanwhile I was still working for the Bureau of Foreign-Domestic Commerce, I was asked if I had anything against London. Well now,

the custom was to send people to a nearby post, Mexico, Cuba or Canada, and there to stay six months doing visas and things, and coming back and spending a couple of months in a little school where they taught you protocol and such things, then going off to a permanent post.

Well, it so happened at this time the Hull trade agreements were the hot item.

Q: This was the breaking down of the tariff system.

HUNT: This was the first time, yes of the tariff of 1930, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff. It was called the Hull Trade Agreements. The small countries were holding back. They were waiting to see what the big fellows would do. At that time our largest trading partner was Great Britain, and it was figured if you could get the British into it, then the little ones would fall in. So, I went off to London and I was assigned to this economic-commercial side right away because coming from the Bureau of Foreign-Domestic Commerce lent itself to this, you see.

In August, 1937 I embarked on my first post, and on board the ship were Senators and Congressmen going to the junket known as the Interparliamentary Union. A couple of them were friends of my mother. I enjoyed the trip and got to London.

At that time, the Embassy there was all split up around town. The political were down by Victoria Station, the economic and commercial were in Bush House, down on the strand, the Consulate was someplace else. But not long after, we moved into Number One Grosvenor square.

Well, I thought that was a factory. We had two-and-a-half floors of a relatively small building, in fact, it's the Canadian Embassy now, but they've taken the whole building, as we did during the war. You could put it all in a corner of the present one, but I thought it was tremendous. We had everybody consolidated. We moved in the 1st of October.

Now, a new Ambassador just arrived. The former Ambassador had gone home ill before I arrived there. He was publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal. My first official act was to put on my striped trousers and go to Westminster Abbey to a requiem to the American Ambassador, who had died at home.

Q: Robert Worth Bingham.

HUNT: Yes. Mr. Bingham and his family had sort of out-Englished the English in their living style and so forth, so when it was announced that Joseph Kennedy had been appointed, why, the press picked that one up and played it up. The fact is poor boy made good. Irish immigrant grandfather and so forth. So this was something new and different to the people in London. He arrived, he had nine children. The present Senator was eight years old then, I'd say.

Q: This Teddy Kennedy.

HUNT: Teddy was eight years old. The headline the day he arrives: "Nine children and nine million." And they were talking about pounds. At that time the pound was \$4.95. As

I told you, my salary was \$500, my rent allowance was \$100 a month. Rents were high, everything quoted in guineas.

However, he invigorated the Embassy, you might say. He really did. He was very dynamic and he brought a personal staff of five people with him. That upset some people, because everybody had just settled in the building. They had to move some offices to make room. He had his own speech-writer who was from the New York Times, he brought a man from the RKO, on the RKO payroll, we'd just reorganized RKO and saved them, he had a fellow on the Maritime payroll, because he'd been the chief of that. He had his own, personal secretary, an older man. Then there was a girl from Washington whom I knew, who worked for the speechwriter. He wanted them all around his office. Well, the British government people took to him right away.

Q: Why was this? You think of Kennedy coming from the Boston Irish, who, particularly in that era, twisted the lions tail all the time, and were quite anti-British.

HUNT: I think he was refreshing compared to Bingham and his predecessors. And, as I say, he was a very dynamic fellow, and the press had played him up. As you know, Mr. Kennedy knew how to handle the media. No doubt about that.

Q: What was the effect on the Embassy? You say he was dynamic; was it a hands-on operation? Did he get down to find out what everyone was doing?

HUNT: He held a staff meeting every Monday morning. In those days a lot of us first-, second-, third-secretaries would go off for the weekend and visit people, go to country houses and so forth, and pick up a lot of gossip. Anything substantive, we would tell him at that meeting. He was probably the only Ambassador in London who could pick up the phone and call any member of the Cabinet in the middle of the night and get him. He had that much influence.

But, on the other hand, I remember one time when one of the staff did say something he'd heard at a dinner-party and, unfortunately Kennedy called up the Minister concerned then--of course it was denied. Kennedy accepted the denial, and said: "I don't want any of this cocktail-party gossip. I want real things. It killed that fellows contact. That was a mistake.

Another time he got mad, he said, give me a couple of good newspapermen, I could run this place. He was angry about something.

All and all he did have influence with the government that so many other Ambassadors did not have.

Q: Moving back, we'll return to Joseph Kennedy, but what was your job? What were you doing?

HUNT: Meantime, I was put to work there. The economic side had expanded because of the Hull trade agreements, along with the normal commercial attaché work. There were already three commercial attachés and two or three assistants. Agriculture attaché and three assistants. We went to work and they said help later. This was GATT, incidentally.

The main thing was looking at products, which products we could demand reciprocity on, and which we might give up .

Q: We're talking about reducing tariffs, and looking at "do we reduce in on whiskey or do we reduce it on hog-bristle.

HUNT: Yes, that's right. Just as GATT does.

Q: GATT, by the way, is General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

HUNT: Right, which was formed after the war. But, at that time, 1937-38, the motion picture industry was a tremendous power in this country. Most of the movies around the world were Hollywood movies. Therefore, one of the principle things we wanted to do was to get the agreements on getting the royalties out, 100%, and getting them promptly, and so forth.

So movie royalties. Well, in every place there is always a budding industry that wants to be protected, and the British was one of those. That was one of the big items.

Q: And, of course, Joseph Kennedy, coming from RKO, had an interest in it.

HUNT: That is correct. I had forgotten to say that. He had an interest in that, pushing that one. The electric industry in the United Kingdom was very strong. Especially those who made electric motors. They go back as far as General Electric does in this country. General Electric and others in this country wanted the tariffs on electric motors. Anything electrical. This the British fought. I was the low man on the totem pole in this Embassy staff. I was the lowest man there on the Ambassador's staff. So, I would do research kind of work for these kinds of products. Now that's where my four months in Philadelphia came in handy, you see. I knew what those fellows wanted to hear and what they wanted done; those were exporters. I really got rather angry with the British over this electric motor. Finally, they just insisted that, no, we're not going to talk about that. If you want to talk about movies... Even then I thought we were giving in too much, and I definitely believed it later. We were so anxious to get the big fella into the whole agreements, for the reason I told you, that we kept giving a little all the time.

Now, I don't blame that on the Embassy people; I blame that on what happened back in Washington, because that was where the policy was made. We finally did get the British in, and some others fell by the way, but we didn't get nearly everything we wanted. Now then, that was the peacetime part in the agreements.

Q: Soon the war clouds loomed. Did your role take on a ... and the Embassy, but particularly your role.

HUNT: As I say, I was the low man on the totem pole. We had a staff about five people with the rank of second-secretary, a middle grade in those days. One man, practically his whole job, he was really working more for the Treasury Department than anybody else because he job was to keep track of the gold market. Of course, the gold market was

effected by the winds of war on the Continent. We had a great many refugee coming out of Germany into England.

Anyway this fellow use to consult particularly with a man named Montague, who seemed to be the big guru of the gold market. Every night he would telephone the Treasury Department to give them the background on gold. Telephone wasn't very good in those days. A lot depended on the weather; it was a wireless radio. That was his job.

In those days the Consular Department was absolutely separate, and in fact, I had free entry privileges when the Class one Foreign Service Officer was Consul-General, did not.

Q: Ah yes, this is still sometimes a problem.

HUNT: Since the War they've changed. They decided for the Consul-General they would give him the privileges, but the rest of us used to buy twice as much liquor as we needed, and so forth to give it to the consuls and vice-consuls.

Q: Was the Counsel section in the same building with you?

HUNT: After we moved to Grosvenor Square they took up the whole ground floor.

Q: What was the attitude, you mentioned German refugees, this is before the war, but certainly Germany was beginning both political, Jewish...

HUNT: The Jewish immigration pool really got going about 1933. By 1937 it was quite a lot.

Q: The Foreign Service, the State Department too, has been under a lot of criticism over the years by saying they were unsympathetic to the plight of the Jews. Although you weren't directly connected with it, what would you say was the attitude of the counselor officers in dealing with this particular problem?

HUNT: Well, you see, the quota system, as far as immigration visas were concerned, the quota system existed, based on national origin, and the Germans had pretty good quotas because they had come to this country in its early days--not as big as the British...Russia, in fact had a large quota but people couldn't get out of Russia. You felt more sorry for people in countries like Romania and Czechoslovakia and so forth. So, later on when I did do some work of that nature, in Romania particularly, we found you would often get a little fraud in there, and offers for bribes for visitor's visas. Once in this country you can get lost. It's not like the European countries. There were a lot of people in whom you just smelled it out that they weren't visitors. They always seemed to have an account in the National City Bank in New York. They always had a cousin in some place or other. There was a lack of sympathy on visitor's visas.

Q: Well, also I suppose there was not the feeling of desperation for those who were already in Britain. They were already passed beyond the point you thought they were under real pressure.

HUNT: Later on, when the war was actually under way, it was a little different situation. But at that time, no, I must say they couldn't feel sympathetic for a fellow who'd come out of the country, brought a lot with him, had an account in New York in dollars, or in London. I didn't feel terribly sorry for them, and very often they would come into the section where I sat because they wanted to see about doing business in the United States. In that respect, I ran across some people who were in this situation.

One fellow came along, he had some kind of invention that had to do with airplane engines. I looked at the thing, talked to the fellow, took him to the library, he showed me his papers, told him I keep in touch. I immediately went downstairs to see the Assistant Naval Attaché for Air, who was a real nice fellow. I said: "You know the technical side of this--I was thinking about Pratt and Whitney's engine and so forth--this looks like it might be a good thing." He sent it back here--turned out it was something we could use. The fellows just doing political work weren't going to run into these people.

Q: When you say these people, you really are talking about not just Jewish emigres, but German emigres, and people from all over.

HUNT: People from all over. I forgot whether this guy was Jew or Gentile, to tell you the truth, but I remember the instance because later on I was commended by the Naval Attaché who said: "You know, you ought to go in the Navy reserve on ONI.

Q: With the war coming, you moved from tariff problems to what sort of problems.

HUNT: Once we got that done there were all kinds of odd lots. When the scare came, at the time of Chamberlain's visit...

Q: This was the Munich Conference.

HUNT: Yes, the counselor section was overwhelmed. Another thing about Ambassador Kennedy, he'd come to work early, which his predecessor didn't. He would go riding around the park in the morning at 7:00. At 9:00 he'd come to the Embassy. Well, that was unheard of in London. So, he comes around one morning and sees this line of people that runs out into the street, and a very indignant doorman. A real Old-English doorman we had, who was so mad at his countrymen who were all rushing in there to get visas, who suddenly found a reason they should go somewhere. He was really angry about it. The Ambassador comes in, picks up the phone, calls all the different sections of the Embassy and says: "Anybody you can spare, get them down here to the Consulate." Here's old Fred Hunt, he's the end of the line, so down I go. And I remember so very funny cases, especially with the American ex-patriots, who all of a sudden looked in the back of their dresser drawer and got out their American passport and rushing around with a poodle under the arm. That lasted a few days, but night life went on. Incidentally, I forgot to say about the night life, you say what does a junior officer do? Well, a young man with a tailcoat attached to an Embassy usually gets around pretty well. My age was 25, going on 26; I went to the debutante parties. Also, an old friend of my mother's had married a peer and she introduced me to other people. That's how I met some of the

royalty. I had a good in there socially, I'll admit that. I had a good time. I hated the weather, but I had a good time. I remember that that Munich Crisis period, that's when Ambassador Kennedy was saying we shouldn't get into this war. Well, I'd read some contemporary history and I kept up with the papers all the time I was here in school, and knew about Stanley Baldwin, the preceding Prime Minister of England--he was Prime Minister at the time of Edward VIII. He had a disliking for Edward VIII, so he was on of those out to get him, because Edward VIII took an interest in politics. If you recall, he went to Wales and said something should be done about the poor miners. For political reasons he thought he would not condone a large military budget. He allowed the military descend much further than it should. The result was that by the time Chamberlain came into office the English were not prepared for anything. Kennedy recognized, as we all did, poor old Chamberlain--he got bad publicity--had to play for time. Kennedy was telling the British government this, and he was telling the State Department this.

Q: Was he telling the Embassy this too?

HUNT: This came up in the weekly meeting.

Q: Was it a feeling that it wasn't time, or was it a feeling that this wasn't going to be our war, and lets just stay out of it. There is a difference.

HUNT: Well, apparently he did feel we should stay out of it, and I must say I wasn't for going into it either, but in these meetings we were concerned with the British government more than anything else at that time. I'm talking about '39. Forty-eight years ago, it was a European war that was looming. The French, of course, had their fights with the Germans, but the British just weren't ready. The situation got so to appease the people, one day they rolled anti-aircraft guns into Hyde Park, supposedly demonstrating that they were ready. They didn't have any ammunition for it. The English, though, who were old enough to remember World War I had a terrible of fear of poison gas. Poison gas caused the worst casualties that the English suffered in World War I. At least those were the ones they saw, because so many of their battles were fought by Anzacs and Indians and so forth. Ones they saw so much of those coming back from gas.

Q: And of course the effects lingered for so long.

HUNT: That's right. It weakened their lungs, and caused early deaths. This was a great fear. So, they found in a warehouse a whole lot of World War I gas masks and started handing those out in the populous areas. This is what happened today in our press. Some newspaper said there were any sizes for children. These were made for soldiers. That was a blowup in the press. But, Chamberlain came back and it subsided.

Q: When did you leave Great Britain?

HUNT: I was there through the Munich Crisis. During that time I did visit the Continent several times, I went to Brussels on weekends, I was a bachelor and I went to Holland and

so forth, and I was very anxious to be transferred to Brussels. The Ambassador, George Davies had come there as ambassador who was a good friend of the family, so forth. A vacancy occurred they were a hurry to fill in Bucharest, so when the telegram came transferring me to Bucharest I said they got the b's wrong.

Q: When was this?

HUNT: That was in the middle of '39.

Q: So this was before the War started. The War started September first.

HUNT: That is correct. This was in May, and I left about the first of June. I went to Paris about the end of May to visit then took the San Plan Express to Bucharest.

Q: You'd finished your regular tour but in those days there was not home leave and consultation?

HUNT: No, I was just told to go to Bucharest. All the while I was in England I had come home on local leave by using fast ships. And incidentally, on one of those visits, I tried to get home at Thanksgiving and leave right at New Years. On one of those visits I did take the physical exam for the navy. A man named Wilson, who was the Naval attaché in London, incidentally had a daughter my age, he recommended me and my step-father was a Naval Academy man had a good friend of his at Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). Wilson had said, "You know, we need fellows like you to man the desk when those Naval Academy fellows should be on ships come the war." Well, that was fine. I took the physical exam on New Year's Day, and --I was very skinny then--they said I was underweight but I could get a waiver. I said I may be underweight but I'm told I going to get a desk-job so we could get a waiver for that. The papers went through and I was actually in the navy, not more than a month, according to the papers, when the Secretary of State wrote to the Secretaries of War and Navy to say that it was noted that several Foreign Service Officers had commissions in the Army and the Navy reserves, and they wanted them to know that they would be needed in time of war just as much in their old job. Therefore, we were urged by the two services to resign. Maybe that was a mistake, because a couple of friends of mine took military leave later.

Q: Yes, I spoke with Douglas MacArthur II, who had a commission as a first-lieutenant, and he resigned too.

HUNT: He did not. I resented it later, but I'll tell you about that later. I'm just saying that I did do that at home.

So, you asked about my going to Bucharest. I got there and there again the Commercial Attaché was just leaving a couple of days after I arrived, so his work was being done by a second secretary but they wanted him to do something else. So, I more or less had that job. At that time, import-export...

Q: I was going to ask you, if I were to draw up a list of priorities trade or political events in Romania would probably come about as far down the line as one could think with the United States in 1939.

HUNT: Import-export business, yes. You must remember the Standard Oil Company owned the Romana Americana and the refinery at Palesht. So the Romana Americana was very important to us. IT&T ran the phone company, so that was important to us. In that respect, the political-economic side was very important.

Q: Important because of American commercial interests.

HUNT: Yes, and then the fact that Romanian oil was going up the Danube to Austria, which was then Germany, so you kept your eye on that, so the general trade between the Balkans and Germany and the Balkans and France too, quite a lot.

Q: could you describe the staff of our embassy there at the time?

HUNT: We had a minister, there was a legation. We had a minister who had come in to diplomatic service at the upper level. He was not really a Foreign Service Officer. The counselor legation was the number one Foreign Service Officer. Then we had two first-secretaries, two second-secretaries, and one third-secretary. I was the bottom one again, but we did have a non-career vice-counsel. Maybe I should explain what a non-career vice-counsel is. In the old days you had senior clerks who had had long experience in counselor work. They were commissioned; they were like the petty-officers of the service. The warrant officers of the service. They would usually stay at a post longer. The Foreign Service Officer was supposed to be a generalist in those days. He was supposed to know a little of everything, and know where to get the expertise if he had to. Local employees, by local employees I mean nationals of the country, were usually people who came from families of substance. It was a distinction to work for the American counsel or the American legation. So you get some of the best people. They were excellent contacts because many of them had a brother-in-law in the customs, another one in the Finance Ministry, another one in something else, and you could often through them learn a lot. I would say that's not so true today. It's more prestigious to work for IBM or Nestle or somebody.

The non-career vice-counsel, an American, would stay longer. Also, in Romania we had American citizen clerical people, who had been born in the States because before World War I, when the Hungarians were so hard on the Romanians in Transylvania, many of them left, and around Akron, Ohio for example, the tire industry is Romanian, and around Chicago--around that area. A lot of people went from the Balkans. They came back after the Treaty of Locarno bringing children.

Q: The Treaty of Locarno was 1921-22, something like that. It was an early post-war treaty.

HUNT: Yes. So, many of these children had been to school and spoke with American accents and were also very useful because they were bilingual. We had one who was a lawyer who'd come back from American high school and he'd taken law in Bucharest, and he was our lawyer. That is the way it was staffed. And I want to tell you, therefore you had a minister,...

Q: Politically appointed minister.

HUNT: That's right. Well, you're always a political appointee when you're chief of mission. And he was. He liked to travel. He liked to go to see his friends in Switzerland and all. We were glad, because we liked Fred Hubbard, who was really our boss. He was one of the finest officers I knew. We were not overworked, in spite of all the things that were going on, the threat of war. When I first arrived, I became very friendly with the military attaché. We had an excellent military attaché, his name was Ratay, he was a major attaché. As you know, in the period between the wars, if you out of World War I a major, you were a major until 1940. Major Ratay (he shortened his name) was a Pole born in Poznan when it was German. He was quite a linguist. He immigrated from Germany with his father when he was a boy. In 1914 his father got the word from the Consul-general in New York he should go back and do his service in the army. The boy refused to go, he stayed here and ended up a second-lieutenant in France. He was a little anti-French from that period, because he got there and found the Germans and the French sitting there in the trenches opposite each other saying "if you don't shoot, I won't shoot". He thought that was no way to win the war. I could understand the French and Germans were very tired by that time.

However, he was a great linguist, and of course if you know one Slavic language you can get along in all of them. He had been sent as a language officer to Peking. He ended up writing the textbook for the students. He had been as a junior officer in the mission in Berlin, of course, he spoke German and he knew the territory.

Anyway, I got in with him, and he was interested in driving around looking at everything, and I was interested in going with him. I was a good tourist. I've always been a good tourist. I had no wife, so I'd go off with him for, say, three days in a car, and we into southern Poland and into Bessarabia when Bessarabia was still Romanian. I always remember his remark about the roads of Bessarabia. He said no one is ever going to invade this place because they'd surely get stuck in the mud.

Q: Was he being a tourist, or was he being a military attaché?

HUNT: He was being a military attaché. He was learning the country and what people were doing in these places. What the terrain was like. Every military attaché ought to know that.

Q: A question I'd like to ask at this point: we really didn't have much of an intelligence apparatus at this point, did we?

HUNT: We had G2. And the naval attachés.

Q: And that was it.

HUNT: That was it.

Q: There was no such thing as the CIA or anything like that.

HUNT: OSS had not yet been born.

Q: Had you been tasked with making reports that would be considered more in the intelligence field, or not, at that point?

HUNT: In the old Foreign Service every Foreign Service Officer was supposed to do that. Any opportunity he had to find out things or to report it was SOP--standard operation procedure--to report on railroads. A lot of things that OSS did was send out layouts of the country. Well, the Foreign Service had usually already done it. All that kind of intelligence was expected of you.

Q: This was sort of ingrained in you. You got there in 1939. Was war in the air?

HUNT: Very much so. You see, from the time of the Munich Crisis, war was in the air. Which meant that you were always looking for anything that had to do with preparations for war. The Russians were always making noises, and they had their eye on Poland too. Major Ratay was interested in the terrain and the borders, what was on the borders of Romania. Romania had set up another American company, the Harnischfeger corporation, incidentally was building entrenchments on the border but they were aimed more at the Hungarians, the ancient enemy, than they were at anyone else.

Q: What was the Romanian attitude towards the United States?

HUNT: They liked the United States. They were pro-American; they were terribly anti-Russian. Later on, after the war began we it came to a point when Americans were telling the Romanians they should stand on our side with the British and so forth, the Romania attitude was sure, that's fine, but you're over there and England's over there, and we're here with the Hungarians and the Russians, and the Germans, and we've got to pick the lesser of two evils. The older Romanians, who remembered World War I, remembered that the Germans were so much better than their Russian allies. The Russian allies were in there and they raped the women and drank all their wine. Then in 1917 when the political commissars came down and told the Russian soldiers to quit it left gaps in the Romania line which permitted the Germans to come in. The Germans were very proper. The one thing they held against the Germans was the Germans made everybody clean the snow in front of his house. It snow from November to mid-March. But they were so proper. The Romanians remembered this. If we have to have one or the other, lets pick the Germans.

Q: Did we have much influence politically? Were we really interested in the area at the time or were we pretty far away.

HUNT: Well, as I say, you had Harnischfeger, you had AT&T, so we had that interest and we were politically interested and economically, it's all the same, what was going up the Danube River to Germany.

Q: You say you were doing almost everything. Were you dealing with visas?

HUNT: We had a non-career vice-counsel and another secretary who was senior to me. He took over the counselor section. I did it part of the time; it was something nobody wanted to do. We were kind of shuffling it around among the juniors. It was a terrible burden because we had so many people wanting visas.

Q: Who were these people?

HUNT: They were mostly Jewish people. There were an awful lot of Jews in Romania. There was one town up in north-eastern Romania where the telephone operators all had to speak Yiddish. As you know, there are many people in Russia who didn't speak Russian, for example, they spoke Yiddish. We had about 50,000 applicants for immigration visas with a relatively small quota. Russia had a big quota, but they couldn't get out. We had a keen eye out for fake documents. Because they would come in with fake birth certificates saying they were born in Russia. In World War I, births, marriages and deaths were recorded usually in the churches and synagogues. Many of them suffered from fire at the time of World War I. It was even done in this country--pick out a church that had a fire and claim birth. So they tried to claim they were born in one of these places and would come in with the patriarch swearing. That was a nuisance, and bribery--that came along after the Polish war. After the Polish war we really had pressure on the consulate. Terrible pressure.

Q: Were you given any instruction at the time as it went on to go easy, not to go easy, or what?

HUNT: We were getting letters from Congress because if a fellow in New York had a first cousin he would write to the Congressman in New York to please send a letter supporting the emigration. All of a sudden it seemed every synagogue needed another rabbi. We had a special easy immigration if you were a minister of the gospel. A lot of people went a rabbi, seemed like a chicken market when they got to the States. This is where you become accused of being anti-Jewish. You had so many of these things happen. You'd get a letter from a synagogue swearing they needed somebody who could speak Hebrew for the Sunday school. I remember writing a letter, I wrote to the visa division. I said Yeshiva College in New York is turning out a lot of good rabbis. Don't forget that. This was a pressure on us.

Q: Were you getting any pressure from the State Department?

HUNT: No. State Department took the attitude...An inspector who was about to become chief of the visa division went all around saying "hold tight, hold tight. Don't open the gate." That was the visa division of the State Department saying that. So we said to him: "Well Mr. Warren, will you defend us against all this congressional pressure. "Ah, yes, you don't realize we get a lot of letters from the Hill. You don't realize how many we've stopped before they got into the field." The idea was to try to prevent a great Mariel [Cuban exodus in the late 1970s] boatload. -- which we did have from Portugal a couple of times. That's the way the attitude of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid was at the time. Everybody is against us. You were trying to carry out these laws, but one trouble was that most of the applicants were Jewish because they had the money.

Q: They were also under the greatest threat.

HUNT: Well, there were some others under threat too, but they were too poor. Coming back to '39, however, I got in with this fellow Ratay, and we went around like that, but when the war broke in Poland around Labor Day we weren't, I guess, really surprised. The war had been cooking so long that you got sort of jaded, but we were surprised it went so quickly. There again, here's where Ratay came in. He knew the territory. We would listen to the radio, and they would tell us where the government of Poland was, and which pressure was coming. In the meantime, you see, the Russians and the Germans had made a deal, as you know, and a friend of mine--and as I say I was a good tourist. I used to go on special courier trips. I went to Berlin and an old friend of mine I'd know in the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce was commercial attaché at the time, named Sam Woods, who knew all the politicians in Washington. He said, "I want to show you something you never would believe." We got down on the street, the Hotel Berlin, and there on the Adeline Hotel is a Russian flag. He said: "All the yakking about burning the Reichstag and all this, who would expect that?" "Well," I said, "I don't know, but I'm very suspicious of the Russians. Actually, all of us were. We were all suspicious of the Russians because the general feeling was the Russians were going to sit back and let the French and the British and the Germans all beat on each other, and when they are all dead tired the Russians will move in and take over. Which was their plan, undoubtedly. But later on the Germans attacked them. But at that time it certainly looked that way. And when the attack came on Poland, I remember Ratay and I were interested in what action the Russians were going to take moving westward. Now, the military attaché in Warsaw was about the same age, a good friend in the army with Ratay. I can't remember his name. He did not stick with the Embassy. He took his own car and he set out going east. He wanted to see what was going on in the east of Poland. He told Ratay a story that was very prophetic, I thought. Completely overlooked in Washington, however, when the story got there. He is going down a dirt road and he sees tanks coming toward him--Russian tanks. He stopped and--since he could speak Polish--all Slavs get along--this captain in the first tank greeted him. Our man said: "Where are you going? Are you going against the Poles?" He said: "No, were looking for the Germans."

You see, the suspicions that the Russian army had right there. They wanted to make sure the Germans didn't get too far eastward. It was so obvious. They didn't care about the Poles. They wanted to make sure they were there if the Germans came too far. That was a giveaway. Right there. This young captain he just had his orders. And that filed report went through Ratay, because we became the point of communication with Washington when our Embassy was moving.

Q: The Embassy in Warsaw moved with the government.

HUNT: The Embassy moved with the government. I have to tell you first, we had the consular officers there as well, but we had a huge Consular-General in Danzig. So the consular people, along with some dependents went north to Danzig and left with those people for Norway. They went out that way. And the Embassy, the political people and so forth, and political-economic, they followed the government. That meant moving often. I don't think they ever stayed any place more than forty-eight hours. All the time on the radio we were hearing about the armies moving and so forth. Ratay, knowing the terrain, would go to the map--we had a nice big map of Poland on the wall--and he'd say "Well, let's see, they're right there about now...I figure they'll come this way. This is the normal route." Next day, listen to the radio, that's the way they went. Ratay was marvelous. So, we were getting telegrams. Can you imagine the Polish government and the diplomatic corps all descending on some town that had about ten telegrams a week in the post office, all descending on the post office, and the press too, with messages, many of them in code. The late Burke Elbrick, whom you may remember...

Q: He was my Ambassador when I was in Yugoslavia.

HUNT: Also Ambassador to Brazil, where he got hit in the head. He was one of our first casualties. Burke Elbrick was the Third Secretary in Poland. His wife and little baby went out through Danzig, but Burke was the fellow who carried the iron box with the codes. It's always the junior guy who gets the coding and decoding. I always said when I finally got enough rank that I didn't have to do that--it was the junior officers and senior clerks that did it--somebody invented a machine.

Anyway, you're bound to get garbles in these little post offices. Many garbles you could get out from the sense of the sentence. But garbles of Polish names were an absolute impossibility. Meantime, the Prime Minister in Romania had been assassinated. I was the only fellow who had a valid visa and laissez passer from Bulgaria. I kept all my visas and lese passes

for every country around. There were seven of them. I was a good tourist; I was ready to move. I came in from lunch and the man had been sassy on his way home to lunch, and he said "you've got a Bulgarian visa hasn't you?" I said yes. "Well you're the only one who does. The radio is closed. I want you to go down to the border over the river--you had to take a ferry across the river then--and send a message to Washington. That's a story in itself because I did and took this Romanian-American lawyer with me. I remembered the place because I had come the opposite direction--we used to take courier trips down to Sophia too, you see.

This all lent itself to war tension. I got down there, and they said the border's closed. Of course, no ferryboat was going. I said to my friend, let's get some fellow to row us; take us across in a small boat. Here comes a Romanian, rolling up a flag. He had a Bulgarian flag and a Romanian flag and he changed flags in the middle of the river. That was his normal. He said they're shooting over the river. I'm really not anxious. Of course, if you pay enough, you can anything in Romania. I remembered that I'd come...I had a friend in the telephone company who had a car. We lived together when I first got there. He had a car with a trip-tique and he had to renew it every year. So we went to Varna one time and came back that way. We brought the car back, and there was a lot of fuss and trouble there at the court. I remembered in the port captain's office there were two phones. A fellow picked up a phone which was on the Bulgarian line and call to clear something about this and that was fine. I said "let's go over to the port captain's office. So, we went over there and gave them a lot of palavers and cigarettes--cigarettes were valuable even then. I got on the phone, clerk tapped on the other side I guess it was, or somebody on the other side and I said could you put me through to the American legation in Sophia? I got through. I told them what had happened.

They said, well, we've heard all this kind of thing on the radio. We've already sent one communication. I said "I'll give you the details." Then I went around to the regular phone office in the town and called Fred Hubbard. I said "I'm still down here." He had heard about shooting down there. He said: "Don't go across the river." I said "Hold on, I'm coming back because I've done the job." I told him how I did it, and he said that was fine. I got back in time to attend a party that I was afraid I was going to miss. You see, I had these angles on this.

I told Fred Hubbard: "This is ridiculous, this coding and decoding." We had a code that was really a supercode. Two books that were coded then encoded in the code. Fine for the coder, but terrible if you had it garbled. "Look, we've got a wonderful telephone company here. They have marvelous girls on those lines. Those long distance operators are magnificent, they all know languages." In fact, they employed some of these ex-Americans. You could hear them when you made a call across Europe--in those days you relay Bucharest, Budapest, Vienna, and so on. And they would fuss to get a line. I said, "We can get the girls who have been dealing with the Polish girls and we'll get our people on the line every day and talk in fast Americanese and that beats all. He said go down to the phone company and see what you can do.

I did. The head of the long-lines department, a very nice Romanian whom I knew very well socially--in fact, his sister was the wife of the Spanish Ambassador in Washington--He said all right, let's see what we can do. He talked with the chief operator dealing with that part. He asked us what time, and we said, "Let's say 4:00pm. We will tell you first where we think they are, general region, and you go from there. We had Ratay to tell us where they would probably be. So we did tell them. It worked like that. Get Biddle on the phone. Tony Biddle was Ambassador. Get him on the phone, well yes. All he could say was we're just moving. Really there wasn't much to say about it. We knew who was with him and all of that. Then we would make up our own story for the department for that day. So, things were moving along. As you know the whole darn war only lasted about four weeks. They were moving south, and all these refugees were moving toward, not as Herman Wouk had them going to Warsaw...

Q: We're talking about Herman Wouk who wrote several books.

HUNT: One of his latter ones was called The Winds of War, in which he has this Jewish family going to Warsaw. Well, they were going in just the opposite direction. They were heading for either the Hungarian or Romanian borders. We thought, we had the idea at the time the Poles would end up with a little pocket in the southwest corner, the same way the Belgians did at Ypres. Fred Hubbard said to me: "You're such a good fixer, how about you going up to the border and set up there and go across the bridge--the border was a river--and talk to Biddle and all of them then come back across the bridge and phone me. You can do that every day."

I said sure, I liked to go anytime. I took a car--in those days, you know, we only had private cars. We didn't have vast Embassy fleets.--and drove up to the border. Unfortunately, I was too late. People were pouring across the bridge. The Polish Army, poor little guys were all coming across there, they were interned by the Romanians. Romania was still neutral and stayed neutral for a long time. There again, you see, where you get the anti-Jewish feeling. The big Jewish merchants all rolling across in their big cars. Which, in contrast to the Polish Army didn't look good. Also I could see there wasn't going to be any Little Poland left. There again, within 48 hours I'm heading back to Bucharest, with this bunch of automobiles with the Ambassador and his wife and his extremely good-looking step-daughter. Tony Biddle and his wife. I think she had some connection--maybe she was the daughter of Big Bill Thompson, the mayor of Chicago. She had been married before and had an absolutely gorgeous 19 year-old daughter. We had a counselor, and pretty much the same setup we had in Bucharest. With family, with dogs, cats, birds, you name it.

Q: Did you also have a good number of Polish-American refugees and all coming across at that point?

HUNT: The particular group which I had, I guess we did, but a lot of them had headed off to Danzig earlier when they saw the consulate people going. There were some Polish-Americans who stayed on there because later on because the Polish-American organization based in Chicago through the International Red Cross and the International YMCA brought a lot of goods, clothing, things, to Poles and they came our way, generally. My concern was the Embassy staff. As I say, I had this motorcade heading down the road, and thinking all the time "what the hell are we going to do with them when we get them there?" We knew what to do with Burke Elbrick. Consular work. Put him in the visa. He was the low man in that group.

Q: I might add at this point, some years later I had the pleasure of presenting Ambassador Burke Elbrick with a check in Yugoslav dinars as repayment for things he had lost during that evacuation and the State Department had a surplus of dinars, and tried to foist these unnegotiable instruments on Ambassador Elbrick. This was when I was in Yugoslavia.

In many ways--this is the fall of 1939--the European war was over and moved into what was known as the Phony War period.

HUNT: Our term for it was the "Sitzkrieg".

Q: What were you doing then?

HUNT: I want to tell you about the war first. As far as we were concerned, the war had ended in Poland. The thing was that so many people had expected that once the Germans began their war, that the Italians would join. There had been a couple of meetings at the Brenner Pass between Hitler and Mussolini. It was a question whether Mussolini would support the other half of the Axis, as it was called. Most Italians were not keen on it, so I think Mussolini smelled the feeling in Rome, so they didn't do it. I had visited Venice during that period, too, and they weren't very keen on it. But Mussolini had a good army going for him. We had this group of our people from Poland around for a little while, about the time I was getting interested in the step-daughter, it was announced that they could leave because the San Fran express re-started, the Italians not being in the war. So you could go through northern Italy and on into France. Meantime, the Poles, the refugee Polish government had set up shop in a town in France. It didn't last long. Anyway, a lot of the people were to go there. Mrs. Elbrick, have gone around through Norway and through that town in France, sent a telegram to Washington that she wanted her husband back. So we lost him.

Everybody was still a little itchy, and these people were told that they could go on the train to France as the Embassy to Poland, but the cars would be sealed until they reached French territory. So we had two international sleeping cars. As I told you, we had dogs, cats, bird and so on with us. Well, figure it out. They tell me that when they opened the train after they came out of the San Fran tunnel you could smell it way off because the space between the two cars was the space where the dogs were kept.

So we had the Sitzkrieg. Life was perfectly normal. The thing was, though, the US dollar soared on the black market. Meantime, back in Romania we had an organization called the Green Shirts who were acting like the old Brown Shirts did in Bavaria.

Q: This is a fascist organization.

HUNT: Set up the way the Brown Shirts were. Now, as the Jewish Congress tries to claim, they weren't really so anti-Jewish as they just wanted to take over. They were pro-government for the king. The king had become very popular with the peasants and that irked the senators.

Q: This is King Carol.

HUNT: King Carol. He had been banished once, as you recall, to Paris. Madam Lepescu went with him.

Q: That was his mistress.

HUNT: She was divorced from an army officer, and the word for wolf is "lupo," so it was wolf, but it was Lepescu in Romanian. A handful of palace people were loyal to him and went with him. We all liked Madam Lepescu. She repaired the porch at the golf club, which was very fond. She took care of the king financially in Paris.

Q: What was the situation as far as we were concerned with the Green Shirts, the rise of fascism in Romania. How did our embassy deal with this.

HUNT: I was telling you about King Carol. The legation noted it, and reported it, what was going on, and we could see that the Green Shirts were following exactly the same pattern that the Brown Shirts had followed some years before in Germany. It was deplored. They succeeded in getting King Carol out again. As I told you, King Carol was very popular with the peasants, the big landholders (boyars) did not like him. The Senate was more appointive or senator by right because he was a tremendous landholder. And you had prince this and that who were not really princes, they were descended from the Greeks who collected taxes for the Sultan of Turkey, and so on. Naturally they opposed any reform that the king made, so the king dissolved Parliament and was ruling by decree. He had this strong feeling. The Green Shirts were anxious to get rid of the king. So they made a lot of trouble. But Prince Michael, the heir to the throne, was very popular. He could go out shopping when the king couldn't go out without a big bodyguard. So he abdicated in favor of his son, and left the country. In an incident that occurred at that time, he took with him those same fellows who wouldn't have gotten along behind--went to Paris with him before. He picked up a lot of mementos from the palace, like a gold cigarette box and various things like that which had considerable value. But there were also just coins--all sorts of little things in his luggage on the train. So the train departed and it goes out through Arahad and the northwest part of the country and the train got into Arahad and there had to refuel and so forth, took a little time and suddenly somebody said "the King is going, he's taking all this treasure out--we must stop him." So the word went out from the local Green Shirts, stop that train. Stop the King. The train was ready to go--this is at the station at Arahad--and you know the old European station master stands up with a little red thing and he goes like that and the train goes. And down at the other end of the platform here comes the Green Shirts running, shouting "stop, stop, stop." He signaled the driver of the train to go, let the train get away. They were so angry with that man that they shot him right there on the platform.

Q: Back to sort of us...

HUNT: That's one of the things we reported. You say what did we do? We reported incidents.

Q: During this period, until you left Bucharest in the spring of 1941, the Germans and the British were there?

HUNT: The British were getting very antsy. They had cause from the very beginning. When the war first broke out in Poland, everybody--the British and the French would be on one side of the swimming pool, the Germans were on another, and the Americans were used to carry messages back and forth, and things like that. But as things got worse, especially after France was attacked, and Belgium and so forth, I went up to Berlin a couple of times during that period and I remember the Dutch Ambassador had been the Dutch Minister in Washington, whom I knew, and he told me he was sending his wife back home because he thought they were going to attack the Netherlands. So we kept in touch, but the British Secret Service is like all OSS people, they always got the idea that they're smarter than the Germans. It wasn't true. The Germans were just as smart as they were. The British were censoring the mail, censoring the ships that came through Gibraltar. They let the Italian mail go, but the mail coming to us in Bucharest was censored. We resented that. The main thing the British were anxious to do was keep the oil, Romanian oil from going up to Germany. The Iron Gates, which are now, I'm sorry to say a beautiful section of the Danube River is disappeared now from a dam, but the Iron Gates were the rapids. Like the Yangtze River, that river rose and fell seasonally quite a bit. There was a group of people who lived on the Yugoslav side of the river who for generations had passed down from father to son the piloting up the Gates. They were very proud of it.

So the British thought the thing to do is to bribe them not to take tankers going to Austria. They hadn't done their homework. They didn't realize these fellows would not accept bribes. In Romania anybody would take a bribe. These fellows were so respected for their positions and so proud of it, they refused. Of course, the word got out that the British had tried this. That didn't go over well with the Romanians because their market was limited now. The Bulgarians were all using horse-drawn sleighs because the Romanians told them they had to pay dollars if they wanted gasoline. They told them they'd buy around them. But they were getting good money because they had a nice trade arrangement with Germany, which enabled us, incidentally to buy things like Zeiss binoculars and cameras and all at a good rate because of the rate they set up. And it was all part of that Berlin to Baghdad run. So, then the British decided that they would bring a big old flat boat terras, freighters that they used, up the river and at a certain point they would get it broadside. They would put explosives in the bottom and the hydraulic cement on top of those. Blow the bottom out and sink the ship and block the river so it narrowed to those Iron Gates. They thought that was a great idea.

Well, the boat comes around to the mouth of the Danube, past the ...and they make up a great story with the Romanian customs at the mouth of the Danube. There is a customs station, lighthouse. Of course, the Germans had people down there too watching what was coming down the river. Naturally. The Russians took over Bessarabia. They started up the river. The Germans down there tipped off their people in Bucharest to call attention to this ship to the Romanian customs. It got by their man down there without inspection and they better inspect it, before it passed Giurgiu which is where you passed over to Bulgaria. And the Romanians did. Romanians were scared to. They went on board and found that two-thirds of the crew belonged to the Royal Navy, at least half of them. So they discovered the plot. Nothing for the British to do but leave town. The British legation closed down and left, although Romania was still neutral.

Q: Did we have much contact with the Germans?

HUNT: Now, in the legation at the time of the Polish war everybody was friendly to everybody else. There again, Major Ratay pointed out at a meeting that if you try to be all things to all people, no one will trust you. So we ought to split up. Some of us hang around the Germans, so hang around the British and French. To tell you how good he was, I elected to go along with him and take the German side. I did not speak German, but they all spoke French. And the others did that and we'd get together before our communications to Washington were sent. We made it kind of apparent when we appeared at certain parties, or I would invite the Germans to my house. The German minister was an old-timer in their foreign service. This was obviously his last post. The number two man, the Counselor of the legation, had an American-born wife. So there was a little excuse to have them. Also, one of my best friends had been an Austrian baron, but he was an IBM guy in the United States. He'd come out there. So I saw a lot of him, and I still do to this day. He's retired from IBM now, but he was in the local IBM then, which the Romanians paid in dollars, incidentally. So there was another economic side we had. That was the contact we had. The British legation left town. The Germans had the plan to attack Yugoslavia and Bulgaria; they wanted to bring troops down the main railroad, and highways come down through Romania to Bulgaria. They sent a military mission to talk to the Romanians. They told the Romanians they could be neutral if they would give them right of passage. Here's where Ratay comes in again. These were all senior colonels, at least five of them. He'd known them all as junior officers in Berlin. He also, Ratay was long-time divorced and he had a girlfriend who was in the Romanian Ballet, and ballet dancers are noted for their looks, and she could speak six languages, including German. He had a lovely house, Ratay did. He had outside money, Ratay did, from his army pay. He'd invented something so that had paid off. He would have very nice parties at his house and have these colonels over. The Italians, we saw them too, and there was an Italian counselor married to an American also. We saw a lot of them socially. Japanese - not much. The Japanese were theoretically allies of Germany, of the Axis. So, one day, the Japanese military attaché...Ratay used to see the military attaché of Japan a lot when he had a party. As you know, the oriental doesn't hold his whiskey very well. Two drinks and they're...All these colonels were being [?], and this Japanese fellow was being [?]. So, he and some fellows had a couple of drinks and put his arm around one of these fellows and in so doing he spilled scotch on his tunic. So he rushed off to get a napkin or something, and the colonel says to our man, to Ratay: "And what do you think of our allies?" Ratay just looked at him and said: "I think exactly the same way you think, but thank god they're not my allies!" That was our relationship, the way we operated pretty much. Until 1940, when I went home for home leave.

Q: Then did you come back?

HUNT: Yes, I did. By 1940, France had fallen, and all the Low Countries. So you had another sitzkreig effect. The Vichy government was set up, Doug MacArthur was there. I waited for a couple of inspectors to come, and then I traveled with them. We went to

Budapest and spent a couple of days there. And we went to Vienna. Vienna had a brownout, they didn't have a blackout. Vienna and Prague and all were considered too far east.

Q: They were beyond the range of long-range bombers .

HUNT: In Vienna, for example, there was one streetlight on every corner. But electric signs and things like that were not on. Berlin was blacker than black. Northern Germany in the winter is black anyway. Whenever I traveled, incidentally, by air, I used to try to take a Lufthansa plane because Lufthansa might be late, but they'd always take off and they'd always land, when other airlines would cancel for weather. I remember leaving Athens in February, 1940, it snowed of all places in Athens. We landed in Sophia throwing snow all over the place. All the young pilots had gone off to the Luftwaffe, so the pilots of those old tri-motors were fellows who had learned to fly by the seat of their pants. They were the good pilots, the 50-year-old pilots. He might be a little late getting down to Berlin, but he'd get down there and find a canal or something and they would lead him in right on in. That was fine until you came out of the office of the airline looking for a taxi. You came from white lights into black. Taxis were not there. Everything in Berlin at that time, I'm talking about November, 1940, nightclubs were going, the theaters were going. If you really wanted to be nice to somebody, bring them coffee or butter.

I stayed in an apartment on the top floor of a building in the middle of town with a friend of mine, and I brought him some caviar, a whole kilo of it--it was dirt cheap at the time. He opened it up in his kitchen and said: "All that caviar and no lemon." We had Palestinian citrus fruit I could have easily brought to him. I never thought about it. I think that was my second bombardment in Berlin. I'd visited there before. From the terrace of this top floor you could see pretty well. But, it was late. The time it took the English to get there in the planes of the day, they didn't want to leave England until late in the day. They wanted to hit the European shore as it got dark. Berlin's a good distance; and they had to take a enough fuel to get back. That greatly limited their bomb load. They never got over to Berlin until 2:00 in the morning. Theaters got out at 11:00pm. There were, under these streets, bomb shelters, but they were all furnished and fixed up like they were in London. Whereas in London, if you wanted to, you could stand out on the street and watch, take your chance. In Berlin, I suppose it was in all the towns, every policeman was an air warden. When the siren went off, policemen were supposed to see that you got off the street. Sometimes you'd see a car tearing down the street with little slits on his red lights, policemen whistling at him but paying no attention. He wanted to get home because they didn't want to go down in those dingy places.

I remember one time a plane came. It was just like the Washington beltway. There was a ring of anti-aircraft guns and they shot off tracer shells. They'd go up like a curtain all around, and two big search lights would keep crossing the area inside that ring. Once one of those lights landed on a plane, curtains. That plane--guns would come in on him. So, it was damn well protected. The great danger was the shrapnel of these guns. Right in the churchyard not far from where I was staying, I heard a "crack" in the trees. That was the shrapnel returning. That is why they wanted the Germans to get off the street. The only

casualties they had were from their own shrapnel. I saw the American naval attaché in Berlin at the time, Admiral Schoeder, the attaché for air was Commander Peale--I think this is important because of the times--but I took it upon myself to report this. I learned from him that the French military attaché had been called back to Paris in January, 1939, because he put in such a fine report of the quality of the counselor division in Germany. But no one wanted to believe the Germans were strong. The hot item that everybody wanted to hear about was the Stuka dive bomber. It was new. Commander Peale had been all through the factory and made a complete report back to Washington on the plane, everything about it. Both of those men had German names, they came from our middle west. They were at least third-generation Americans. But of course they still spoke Germans.

So, I went down via Lisbon, hung around there for three weeks and saw everybody I ever knew in Europe. There again, a lot of refugees. Awful lot of refugees. The Greeks had been hauling them, decided to make the short-haul to Lisbon and back.

We were giving visas to anyone who could get a transit visa. The Turks and the Greeks were giving transit visas only if you had an American visa so it was a catch-22. We had this arrangement, and then they'd take from Pireaus or something to Lisbon and dump there. A lot of these fellows would stop and do one more piece of business once they had the visa in hand. And immigration visas are only good for three months, then you have to renew them. Lisbon at that time was full of everything. But the three crowded places were Pan American Airways office, American Export lines, and the American consulate.

Consulate had to move to another building. Had signs around the waiting room, which was jammed with people, "watch your hat and coat." It was over the American Export line. Suddenly there was a terrible scream, and a razor artist had cut himself. Notice all the Jewish refugees wore heavy coats in spite of the weather. They had double coins and every else. He was relieved of \$5,000. But to here these fellows talk, they were the poor refugees.

Q: Well, they were refugees, and of course they had something to take refuge from.

HUNT: That's right. But they were able to carry things with them. First, they were able to buy documents.

About that time, two Portuguese brothers filled up a ship, they charged everybody \$500, with or without visas to the States, and you remember reading in the newspapers about the ship that tried to go to the Dominican Republic. They wouldn't take them, Cuba wouldn't take them, then they appeared off Norfolk. An appeal was made through Mrs. Morgenthau to Mrs. Roosevelt. Here somebody had had a baby. Thejust put them ashore while they refurbished the ship. The ship took off, of course. When I got back to Lisbon, the owners of that ship told me: "You Americans are crazy." This is where I compare it with Mariel. "We're going to do that again. We made a lot of money out of that." So, I get back home around Thanksgiving, and I go to a dinner party. I am seated across the table from a lady I'd known, an American who'd been married to an Englishman. One of those who'd left England when things got hot. At the dinner table somebody asked where I'd just come from. I said Romania. She said, "Romania? How did you ever get out of that awful place?" There's the ignorance. I said in the first place, it's

not awful. It's paradise on wheels right now. I never had it so good. I said, you can't fly across Europe in one day anymore, you have to go by way of Berlin.

"Berlin? You were in Berlin?"

"Yes."

"Isn't it all in ruins?"

This is long before Pearl Harbor. I said: "Oh no, quite the contrary." And I told them the story I just told you. I could see her pondering that.

A couple of days later I was at a dinner party, and I got the same question that I got from a lot of people. What about the refugees? If a person is a refugee I wouldn't worry so much about it. The people you've got to worry about are the fellows still there. If a man's a refugee he had enough money to buy documents and he's got some money where he's going or some other bank accounts outside. I saw on the other side this fellow leaning around, listening very carefully, and he looked Jewish. One of my best friends in Washington was Sidney Sidon. Sidney played here for a [?] orchestra for years. He took me to lunch. He asked me the question: "Tell me, I'm always being asked to contribute money to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. What about this refugee problem?" I told him the same thing. "Furthermore, Sidney, these fellows can play the fiddle as well as you can and play for less." He said: "I know that, but if I don't give, they tell me they will see to it I never get a Jewish job." So that hold that over you; and he had some. That was the situation.

This was the peak of the bungles for Britain. No body realized how many nights Churchill slept in our White House. Everything was "bombs for Britain." We'd already started protecting the convoys. We moved Iceland into the Western Hemisphere. But the President had already made a speech; "Our boy's will never go." We'd already had our navy out there for months. I knew that, but it wasn't generally known.

Q: You were assigned to Shanghai. How did that come about?

HUNT: This is how it happened: The two things that a Foreign Service officer is expected to do when he came home are he went in the State Department and reported to his country desk, Chief of Foreign Service Personnel, Chief of Foreign Service Administration. Those are the people he had to deal with. So here I come home in this atmosphere, I go to the War Department, G-2 to say hello to them, thinking they might want some information. As soon as I said that a man got up from his desk, put his arm around me and said "Listen, Ratay is one of the finest reporting officers we have, but nobody wants to believe him." That's what they said about the two navy men in Berlin. "What do you expect of those Krauts? They have been there too long."

So, when I go in to see the Chief of Personnel, G. Howlin Shaw, who was a very unpopular man in the Service anyway. I must say that when I joined the Foreign Service I was told that you will never see your efficiency report, but one thing you could be sure of is that anonymous letters would never be put in there. That wasn't true. I had a lot of letters in mine, I'm sure. He said, "Well, I've been looking over your file. Maybe you don't belong in the Foreign Service."

"Why?"

"Well, get any more letters like this..."

One letter complained that I was pro-Nazi, the other complained that I was anti-Semitic. I asked him who wrote the letters. I think I should know about these kinds of letters. They were letters, they weren't official reports. He wouldn't tell me, so I figured they were anonymous.

Turn back to the two instances I thought were the case. So, he saw I wasn't going to quit. Maybe that's the time when I should have quit and joined the navy. But, I didn't. I was going to stand up to him, by golly, and I did. He told me he didn't think they could leave me in that part of the world in those circumstances. So he looked at a piece of paper--I guess he had his vacant slots there, and said: "I think we'll have to send you to Shanghai." Well, I was a good traveler. I resented the reason.

I went over to see Averill Warren who had traveled as an inspector, now was chief of the visa division, and told him what happened. He said, "Shanghai? That's no punishment." I agreed, but I said I resented it. All my years back in Bucharest. I wasn't prepared for this. He said, "Go around and see the Chief of Administration." I did that, and he said: "Your orders, that you hold now, say you're to come to Washington on leave, and you are to return to Bucharest. Hold those, stick with those, go back. We will send a telegram to Bucharest transferring you directly to Shanghai."

I went back the same way I came, saw my friend Fred Hubbard, and by that time he was stationed in Lisbon. Back to Berlin, I saw my friends there. The Germans were so nice to me. At that time, the new Congress had just come in and taken up the new Lend-Lease bill. They let me wander around; Stuttgart Airport was the entry. I wandered around; I looked a schtuppa[?] there. Everybody else kept to their own. I had to spend a couple of nights there in Berlin, and I was put in the morning on a Lufthansa to Vienna, then a plane from Vienna to Bucharest. I got to the airport, and the girl said: "Sorry, but we have a courier on the plane and that's your seat. She said to my friend, "Don't worry, we have a military plane that's going as soon as those fellows come out of the restroom. You can go with them. Here I was, an American, but they respected my diplomatic passport. These fellows all come out looking extremely healthy. Any time they could eat without a ration stamp they would do it. The plane was one of those fixed up with a desk and all--a command plane. We stopped in Prague, they went on into the restaurant; I wasn't hungry. They came back, and we went on to Vienna. I got off, they got off, I went over to see the Consul-General and told him about Washington. Then I went on to Bucharest.

I got to Bucharest, the ministers told me there was a telegram transferring me to Shanghai, and he sent one right back saying I couldn't go until they furnished a replacement. That took six weeks. That was the end of my European tour.

Q: How did you get to Shanghai?

HUNT: By a devious route. I had a choice. I could go by Trans-Siberian railroad, which would have been interesting, but I took a much better route. I took a real Cook tour; a mixture of railroad, airplane, and ship. I flew to the Black Sea. There again I had a Romania general friend to intercede with the Luftwaffe who controlled the airport down there and took a ship from there down to Istanbul. Then I stopped to see a friend of my step-father who was a naval attaché; he had an apartment overlooking the harbor. I also had another friend in the legation. I took a train to Baghdad, and a flying boat that the BOAC used to run used to make a horseshoe from Australia around to South Africa. I took that, and stopped at the Bosphorus. There I saw ships bringing troops from India. It was in the paper the next day; I wrote a letter to my mother about it. The censor got it and said I was a terrible guy. They told me it was a secret. Then I went on to Karachi. There I spent nearly a whole week, because we had a Consul and a Vice-Consul there at the time. The Consul was also assigned to Kabul. We had nobody in Kabul. I remind you that this was spring of 1941, and no one in Kabul. This guy once a year would go and make a grand march through the Khyber Pass, and come back. The Vice-Consul had been stationed in Bucharest, so he wanted to hear all about it. It was the height of the season; it was the time when the racetrack was open, the Governor's Cup--I was ready for that. I got a bearer from the Thomas Cook Company who--two famous Americans that he loved dearly. One was Tony Biddle, the other one was Believe-It-Or-Not Ripley. The bearer was modest. I took a train, it was still all one country then, up to Bengali and crossed eventually to Calcutta, but I stopped along the way, so I took about a week. At that time we didn't have any office in New Delhi. In India, we had a large Consulate-General with a very senior officer in charge in Calcutta. We had a fair-sized one in Bombay and a Consulate in Madras.

From Calcutta, I took the flying boat again to Burma, and overnight there was entertained. I flew on down, stopped at Penang, and so forth to Singapore. At Singapore I was around there for a couple of days. There was a Vice-Consul there who had entered the Service with me, then a Dutch ship took me up to Hong Kong. We were supposed to take American transport, so at Hong Kong I decided to wait for the President Lines. So I saw a little time in Hong Kong, and that was my first taste of China. It so happened that we were changing Ambassadors in Chungking then. Swapping with Australia. And a man who was number two...we had a big office in Shanghai. Also, the naval attaché's office was not in Chungking, but in Shanghai. It was a marine officer with a line officer-lieutenant.

The number two fellow, still there, came in and said: "Well Hunt, where have you been, on a world tour?" I said, "Just about." Apparently, to show you how things work, when my minister in Bucharest had sent word back saying I couldn't go until my replacement

arrived, the Department agreed with it but they failed...having sent a copy of the first telegram to Shanghai, they failed to send the second one.

So they were looking for me. When I went there, I found that the women and children of our office had already gone home. We'd been telling everybody to get out of China, and of course businessmen and missionaries said when they saw the consuls go, "we'll go". So, Washington decided that the women and children should go. We had one woman officer who took care of the China Trade Act. There were twenty of us, all bachelors.

Q: What was your job in Shanghai?

HUNT: There again, I got the economic treatment again. We just began, at this point, to issue export licenses. The commercial attaché was an old China hand. I was put under him, and I took care of investigating who was the importer and what he was going to do. The whole idea was, since that was such a big, cosmopolitan city, the idea was to keep the American stuff out of Japanese hands. Keep them from buying it.

Q: The situation then was that the Japanese basically controlled that area?

HUNT: In 1937, the Japanese took control of the Yangtze Valley. The League of Nations didn't do anything when they went into Manchuria, and they did nothing then.

Q: Shanghai...you were living in the international zone, is that right?

HUNT: International zone. But the Japanese had taken over what had been the old settlement, which was where all the dock area was. The Suchow Creek drew the line, and our old Consulate-General was over on the other of the creek alongside the Japanese and the Russian consulates. The creek was the No-man's Land.

Q: Could you get outside of the international zone?

HUNT: Oh yes. But I didn't go over to the Japanese side very much because they always had guard -challenge you at the bridge. They wanted to see health certificates, because they were nuts on that. Occasionally I had to go down to the docks, but I just kept right on going. It was known as the Japanese landing party. That was the name given to it in 1937. They made their headquarters on the [?], a battleship they'd taken from the Russians in 1905. They were sitting there in the mud in front of the Japanese Consulate-General but so situated. The river made a bend there, that it could see up river and down river. It had the flag of the Chief of the Japanese Naval Landing Party. The International Settlement and the French Settlement were still out of Japanese hands, and the Japanese didn't come around very often. When they did, U.S. marines manned entrances International Settlement by that time because the British had left. There used to be double thing. The police were British.

Q: Sikh?

HUNT: The cop on the street was a Sikh, but the detective and the chiefs and the top were all Englishmen. The French Consul-General wore two hats. He was supposed to be mayor of Frenchtown, as it was called, but there weren't enough Frenchmen to fill the municipal jobs. Most of them were French-speaking Russians. There was a whole new generation growing up from those Russians who came to Tientsin and Shanghai after crossing over with Admiral. That was the situation in Shanghai.

Q: You were dealing with economic...you got there in May?

HUNT: I got there seven months before Pearl Harbor. I was launched into this because there was a special job to be done. Chinese merchants would come in saying how they had to have this thus and so. There you get around to trouble with the English again. The British commercial attaché was also in Shanghai, just as we had...he was an old-timer. The great stupidity back in Washington, as I told you everything was buttons for Britain. Well, you had to have an export license to send something to China, you didn't have to have one to send something to Hong Kong. When I was in Hong Kong, on my way to Shanghai, I noted so many ships with British flags on them, coastal steamers, etc.--Hong Kong registry, Chinese crews, and they were loading British and American and other goods, going up to Vladivostok, where it was railroaded over to Germany. I learned this, I noticed this in the harbor, and I told our Consulate-General about that. "Oh yes," they said, "that's a sore point." So in my work in Shanghai, the Portland Cement fellow comes in, complaining to me that he can't get his shipment. When I asked him why not, he said: "Now it goes to Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong people route it up here. So the fellow imports from Hong Kong. "Really?" I asked. That was one of the times I went down with him to the warehouse to take a look. There was the American cement--via Hong Kong. That made me angry. I sent a communication to Washington, and of course being British it was all right.

By July 1, we figured something was going to happen sometime. Things were getting tough. We put our switchboard on 24-hour basis. The Fourth Marines were still there. Everybody will tell you now that they admit to hindsight, as to what they thought then, sure war was going to break out one of these days, but the Japanese were going to go south--they weren't going to go way off close to Hong Kong. They were going to head for the Philippines and Dutch East Indies. They wanted to get the oil out of the Indies.

So we thought that. As time went on, Admiral Koch soon came as a special envoy, and we used to talk about this among ourselves, all ranks. Sure something was going to happen, but as long as Japanese Peace Delegation stays in Washington we felt safe. But once he gets home, look out. So, another colleague of mine wanted to go to Peking for Christmas. He'd been a language officer up there in the old days, and wanted to show me Peking. We took the trouble to make our reservations through a Japanese travel agent through to Peking. Never happened. But even the day before, which was a Sunday the 7th, to me on the other side of the dateline. I still thought that way. We had be rationing gasoline, bringing small tankers up from Hong Kong, their argument being there

shouldn't be more than three days' supply in Shanghai so that if the Japanese took it over, they wouldn't get very much. It was a very generous allowance, however. Fifty gallons a week or something. You couldn't get it out of the city very well.

Q: What happened when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

HUNT: It got so that the import-export license business was slowing down to, and it was five o'clock in the morning when I was awakened by a fellow who worked in my office, Frank Duda. I was sleepy and I said: "What do you mean? You must be drunk. They've been talking about war for ages." I lived in the French Concession, four miles from the waterfront, and apparently about 5:30 the Japanese manned the guns under Hezuma and sent a net to cover the small boats that were heading up the river. What I forgot to tell you was that just about Thanksgiving--I remember it was my birthday--the Fourth Marines left Shanghai.

Q: This is the Fourth Marines regiment?

HUNT: Yes.

Q: That was the protection force there.

HUNT: They'd been there a long time. When they first came, the Chinese didn't like it, but there were many tears when they left. They marched down and got on the President Madison, I think it was. They were to go down to Manila. I remember them marching down that street, everybody cheering and waving and so forth. The next night, I was at a dinner party in the old Cafe Hotel, which is called the Peace Hotel now. About a month before, the gunboat Wake, which had been sitting up in Nanking and really been used as a telegraph office by our Consulate in Nanking, came down to Shanghai to join the others. I noticed that day carpenters working out there in the middle of the river on the gunboats, nailing up big boards all around. Gunboats sit very low in the water, and I thought, "That's interesting, but not on the Wake." That night, about midnight, which was just as the party was going well, Admiral Glassford Commander of the Yangtze patrol, got up and said he had a hard day the next day and had to go home early. He got up and left. When we came down to the bund the next morning, all the gunboats had gone except the Wake. The Italian gunboats, and the French one, but no Americans except the Wake.

It had been customary for the two flagships of the British and the Americans to anchor side by side with a meter between them. The old rule was that when the whistle went everybody on the American ship went over to the wardroom of the British ship and they all had drinks. Then again the whistle blew and the British came back to the American ship. As usual, the British would have the better drinks on theirs and the Americans would have better food.

So the Wake had pulled up--it was fairly close--I guess just behind. The Wake had been instructed by the Admiral, "Now look, if something happens, don't you waste a thing on

this hunk of junk. It was an old tub. Don't endanger the life of anybody. Give up." So, when the shooting began, the British ship fired back at the boat bringing the boarding party. They had six casualties, the British did. After that, they were put in jail, but they did. There was a barracks there that the British forgot to pull out before World War II, so the Japanese used that as a prison camp.

Q: What happened to you all after Pearl Harbor?

HUNT: Nothing that day. Here we all are in our respective places of abode, two people lived in the same building with the Counselor-General. There was a big building that had a post office and bank on the ground floor that belonged to one of the in-laws of Chiang Kai-shek, one of his sons. Upstairs, Coca-Cola had an office there, and above that there were apartments. Our number two counselor and Vice-Counselor both lived there. They were there when everything began. I finally decided that maybe my friend wasn't so drunk and I would pick up the phone and call down. I heard this Chinese operator say: "Aren't you Mr. Hunt?" "Yes." "Plenty trouble, plenty trouble." "Really?" I asked for one of the men there. He told me what had been happening, and the firing there. He said they'd taken all the codes down, and there was a great tall building that had a long chimney through the middle of it. The only trouble we had was with the janitor who couldn't understand why we wanted to turn the blower on. It wasn't that cold a day. They wanted to put the blower on in the furnace to make it burn. I asked if he wanted me to come down, but he said: "No, take your time."

I had a chauffeur, and he lived outside the settlement and he used to come in every day. He'd take the car out of the garage and wipe it off. He couldn't understand what I was doing up without him having to wake me. I told him the Japanese were making war on the Americans. I looked at the front door as I expected to see them come in. Anyway, I told him that when the chauffeur comes, tell him to see me. When he arrived, he had U.S. Air and U.S. on his other lapel. I told him to take them off, and he looked shocked. I told him the Japanese had made war on the Americans and that we were going downtown. We couldn't have the flag on the car or anything like that. He said: "Now I understand. When I came through the barrier, they grabbed me and said 'You're Chinese or American?' I said Chinese, of course."

We did go downtown, about 9:00am. We parked across the street from the parking lot, across the street from the American Club, and I told him to sit there with the car. I went across and on my way to the office, I saw some Japanese marines coming down the street. I went upstairs and emptied all the stuff that I had of a personal nature. When the U.S. marines left, they left us an auxiliary radio. They had a big, high tower. This had no trouble getting Manila. Good weather you could go way beyond Manila. We had a sailor from the Wake who could operate it, and we walked the next floor up, put him on the switchboard. This guy was up there just chatting away, giving a play-by-play account to Manila.

I went in and got my stuff, and about 10:00am Ned Brookheart, a son of the old Senator Brookheart was a colleague of mine, and also in London. I was going to take my stuff to the trunk of my car. Afterward, we noticed the Japanese marines had gotten that far and were going to take over the American Club. We thought we'd go over and check them out. It had a great long bar. Behind the bar was a big, big picture of the cruiser "Houston," showing the 1937 episode when the Admiral had parked himself in the middle of the Whangpoo River and threatened these guys not to hit him so they were shooting over this ship to the other side at the oil tanks and all that. I was a great big picture, seven feet long, I guess. We went in and thought to see about the liquor. I said: "Ned, let's take that picture." "Oh, no. Leave it up there for those yellow-bellies to see it."

The manager of the hotel was shaking, and the major commander of the Japanese marines, a very proper man, was talking to him. He asked if he had a lockup place down below. He answered yes. The major said: "I want you to put all your liquor down there. Lock it up, and don't let my men get to it at all." He took the cigarettes, everything, locked them up. Marines are marines everywhere.

We heard all this and decided we were going to liberate some stuff before it got down below. They were busy hauling cases down there, and so we decided to have a drink. Not usual in the morning, but we had one. We said to the bartender: "You've got some odd bottles and all that, give us two or three bottles." That's how we started out. They brought in carrier pigeons and were stashing them in the ladies' waiting room. In what we call chicken crates. The word had been that everyone had to be out by noon. Well, a lot of American businessmen lived there, and they had zipped out of there early in the morning not knowing the Japanese marines were coming, to get to their offices to get their papers and things. So, I felt badly about them. I remembered a picture. There was a pretty big photograph of the same ship, a little placard underneath it saying "friends of the Army-Navy club, thanks for the hospitality." I took the pigeons down and took the picture, went on over to the car. I put all that stuff in.

Then we decided to go back to the office. We found that there wasn't much we could do except...it was quite late in the morning, mid-morning, when the Japanese came around. You would think they would come there first. They came around; they had Chinese clerks with them with pots of paste and seals with which to seal up all the doors. The fellow who lived in the building called the sailor who was talking on the radio, and asked how he was doing. He said: "Oh, I've got Manila going, we're just fine." He said: "You're going to have to tell Manila that you're signing off because don't look now, but there is a Japanese outside your door. So you tell Manila that's the situation, you're signing off, and you're breaking up the machine." He had an axe there for that purpose. He did. He stepped out and was immediately grabbed by the Japanese since he was a military man. So he became a prisoner of war.

Another fellow from the Wake had been tooling down Nanking Road in a rickshaw about 5:30 that morning, the navy hours begin at 6:00, and a fellow from Jimmy's Kitchen, which was an American restaurant standing in the door way stepped out and stopped him.

"Don't stop me now, man. Don't stop me now. If I don't get back by 06:00 the chief will give me hell." "You're going to catch more than that." "What do you mean?" "The Japanese are shooting out there. You'll get more than what the chief will give you if you go out there." He couldn't believe it. He had to go see for himself. This fellow spoke Chinese, and told the rickshaw runner to turn around and take that man back to where he got him, which was a Russian girl's place. That girl protected him. We knew where he was, but nobody else did.

A lot of incidents like that occurred. I went back to my apartment, because I rented from an Englishman who'd gone on leave, and all his personal gear was there. I began thinking what I'd do. I took as much personal stuff as I could to stash in the trunks. I got a phone call after lunch saying I should be down at the Metropole Hotel at 6:00, and I'd better bring a suitcase. I had gone to pick up a girl, a Latvian girl who worked for a Swiss company. I picked her up early and had taken her to lunch. She was helping me with this packing. Her uncle, with whom she lived, he was a Baltic German, married to her mother's sister who was a Latvian. He belonged to the German Club; he had a business that made things out of aluminum. He told me once that if anything happened he could take my car as a business car and the Japanese wouldn't get it.

So, I went back down to the hotel, and said to my chauffeur: "Here is some money. This is the end. Take this lady where she tells you to go. That's it." He did take the car in. Good thing, because within a few weeks the Japanese were picking up cars bellowing to foreigners right and left. Anything that was more than five years old went to junk, and under five years old they used as vehicles. They didn't get mine.

Q: What happened to you?

HUNT: Only the night of Pearl Harbor did we go to the hotel. So, we went to the Metropole Hotel. It was still operating as a hotel. There were other guests there. The interesting thing was that these two men of equal rank, they were put in the same place, and they got in a fight. The British were accusing the American of being a coward, and the American saying the other man...there six families in England who wouldn't be happy with him. The Japanese had to separate them. Put them in different places. I don't know if that story ever got out.

Anyway, my brother was in the navy. He was on a battleship on a fleet in Honolulu. I happened to know before the gunboat left that his ship had gone up to Puget sound for overhaul of some kind. I had surmised, when they started naming ships and all, that his ship wasn't there. However, I got a telegram delivered to me at the hotel sent by my mother via Argentina, delivered to me telling me about my brother...

Q: The Japanese then interned the whole...

HUNT: Only the officers. The clerks could live where they wanted to live. We wanted house arrest, as had been done in small places like Tientsin but there were too many of us.

We were all brought to the Metropole Hotel. Then they wanted to consolidate the Belgians and the British. The British were all in there...they had their own enclosure. Belgians, Dutch, Panamanians, Mexicans, Brazilians. All had declared war. So they started looking around for a place. The Park Hotel, across from the racetrack was a good place that the Chinese owned and had a good supply of coal. The Germans knew that too; they moved in and they wouldn't move out. Finally, it was agreed that the only place to go was in the French Concession. They had been picking up everything that was British owned, and the Sassoons owned the two best hotels. That was a British thing they were taking.

The French Consul General was marvelous. The first thing he did on that day as acting president of the French Club was send out word to all members that you couldn't have guests because there was a handful of Japanese gendarmes. He held out. He didn't mind his colleagues occupying that hotel. But, he didn't want any Japanese gendarmes. They went around and around over this. Finally, they came to a compromise in which they could have four gendarmes on duty at any one time in plain clothes. You had to admire that Frenchman for holding out. He had nothing but Tonkinese police, that's all he had.

Q: How long were you kept?

HUNT: Seven months. It was much slower than we expected because they had to go back and forth through the Swiss and also, they wanted to trade old, sick missionaries for young Japanese who had been working in our schools and factories.

Q: Were you kept confined to the hotel?

HUNT: We were supposed to sign out. A Japanese counselor officer was assigned to us around the clock. They did it in 24-hour units. They were supposed to be the buffer between us and the gendarmes, who didn't speak English. One of the Japanese Vice-consuls was born and bred in Billington, Iowa, and spoke with an Iowan accent. He had been our liaison before the war with the Japanese. Another one had been to Oxford. So we got along well with them, but we were supposed to go out to exercise. The Japanese wanted us to take walks and all, but you had to get a pass from the gendarmes and you had to check it in when you came back. I didn't want them to get to know me, so I used to just walk on out.

When we were put in Cafe Mansions and consolidated, the British and the Belgians and the Dutch had all their women and children and everything else with them. They had suites and all, and there we were twenty men. It took a little getting on with them, but finally one of them had a birthday party and that broke the ice.

I was on the ninth floor; the elevator had to stop at the sixth floor. That was where the gendarmes were. I would walk down the back steps, all that way to get out into town. That way I didn't have to check in and out. Spring came early, I went to the French club, I had strawberries and cream. We could go to the movies. We had our radios. Every night,

about 9:00, you'd hear San Francisco Radio, shortwave radio. Their version of the war was entirely different from what we were seeing, I assure you. They were saying how good things were. They never mentioned the sinking of the Prince of Wales, which we saw on the newsreels. That really hurt our British friends.

Q: When you look at it, these were two battleships that really shouldn't have been there. They really wouldn't have changed things. But, they were put there, and they got sunk.

To end this, how did you get repatriated?

HUNT: Finally, after all this argument about who would go where, and what ships would take us, the last day of June, 1942...There were a lot of trucks there, but the Japanese Consul General had to hire Swiss trucks to carry our luggage. There was a gloomy, dismal rain and little Mr. Yamamoto from Iowa was shaking hands with everybody getting off the bus.

Q: This was the Japanese Vice-Consul.

HUNT: Yes. He later married a girl from Los Angeles. I said: "Yamamoto san, you know very well that you should be getting on this ship with us." "I know, I know," he said. I saw him later; we talked about what happened to him. I saw him at the Japanese peace treaty.

Coming back to this, we went on board, there had been some discussion about who would go on board. Of course, anybody with any diplomatic status, and then we had business friends, newspapermen and missionaries. There was a fellow named William Hunt, no relation to me, he had gone out there many years before as a vice consul, decided there was a lot of money to be made--in the old days in Shanghai. He ended up with William Hunt and Company, he had a coastal ship, and he represented the Philadelphia Banknote Company which furnished all the Nationalists' money. He would talk back to the Japanese. He would run down to Hong Kong, when he realized the war was coming. He had just gotten a big shipment of banknotes to go up to Chungking, and he spent one night down there with the CNAC plane running back and forth to a point far enough to be inside the protective zone. He moved all the money that night. Of course, he was captured there.

We had just the case of these few Japanese marines and some new recruits of the Japanese army, because the Japanese had taken the place before. All the tough army went south. They went to Hong Kong and Malaysia. We didn't have that. Furthermore, Shanghai was so cosmopolitan, nationalistic, and had so much stuff in the warehouses, that they wanted to buy it all up before they did anything. So we really had it soft. Everybody back here was worrying about us, but we had it soft.

In the meantime, our Consul General's wife had left. She was on her way back, got as far as Manila with an inspector. The daughter of the secretary of the international settlement,

who happened to be an American, he was half Chinese, half American, his daughter had gone down to see her old girlfriend who had married one of our marines. They got caught down there. The Japanese military brought Mrs. Lockhart and this girl back by military plane to Shanghai to join us. They brought Bill Hunt back from Hong Kong. They had great respect for him because he would talk back to them. So they asked his advice about the ship. There was a big go around. The Conte Verde which used to come from Trieste, make stops all the time back and forth, built for the tropics. The people from Tokyo and Hong Kong went on a ship built for the North Pacific. A much bigger ship, a lot of inside rooms. The number one at our Embassy, Mr. Grew had a fine suite, but the number two did also. He said: "Oh, those poor missionaries and all." He put all the Vice-Consuls and all back in the lowest, worst part of the ship. Bill Hunt said to the Japanese, this is a diplomatic exchange so you begin with your number one diplomat. The number one diplomat we had was the Consul General in Shanghai. Give him the best, then work down from him through the lowest of them.

You take your missionaries and you put the lowest one of them and you put him at the lowest place on the ship, and you work up through them. In between you put the journalists and the businessmen. That's what they did. I had a beautiful room. But, that ship made so many stops it didn't make its own drinking water. So, we were limited on baths. But it had a swimming pool, and they put in a second swimming pool in the stern. Up in the lido deck, we were determined to keep the missionaries out of it, so we got the girls to dress skimpily and use cuss words when they saw a missionary coming, and put a bottle of whiskey on their table. That settled that. They had their own pool. It was Bill Hunt who really fixed this. The commander of the Japanese naval landing party sent him a note, which he opened in my presence. It said after the sailing, introduce yourself to the Japanese captain. That brings me to telling you that when the Italian wouldn't give them a charter because they had their crew there, they had to take care of their crew. They didn't trust Italians. They didn't trust anybody. There was an Italian frigate in there, they only gave him enough oil to keep his generator going.

So, they had seven naval officer they disguised as NYK personnel so they had somebody on the bridge and somebody in the engine room around the clock, and then one chief. He didn't even have to introduce himself. The next thing you know, the bell hop came along and said the Japanese captain sent this to you. He opened it up. He had a case of scotch whiskey which was like gold there, and a case of French champagne. My remark was that we Hunts have got to stick together. We were the only people on the passenger list named Hunt.

Q: You eventually came to Lourenço Marques?

HUNT: The people from Bangkok had all been brought up to Hong Kong. The two ships came together at Singapore, tough Japanese boarded, a Swiss man representing the Swiss foreign office was no good to us at all. That was another trouble we had in Shanghai. They had so much business there, they were not being nasty to the Japanese by any means. But the Italian captain, an old Austrian from Trieste, he stood up for us.

Q: Did the department pay you for the time you were interned?

HUNT: We got our regular pay. We were able to draw local currency as we needed it from the Swiss, which was charged against us. Eventually, when we got off the boat we could then draw all the back pay we hadn't received. We were paid our regular salary. But we did lose things like automobiles and local currency accounts.

Q: On that financial note we will have to end the interview. Thank you very much.

End of interview