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## Russell Hershberger Oral History Interview: Polar Bear Oral History Project

Deborah A. Lenning

Nancy L. Johnson

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POLAR BEAR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Mr. Russell W. Hershberger

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Holland, Michigan  
1977



Mr. Russell W. Hershberger

The Hope College Polar Bear Oral History Project was conducted from summer 1977 through fall 1979. Three undergraduate History majors, Ms. Nancy Johnson, Ms. Deborah Lenning, and Mr. Glen Johnson, researched the American Intervention in the Russian civil war, located the survivors, and did the interviews. They also typed the rough drafts and attended to the many administrative details related to getting the manuscripts into final form. The latter task was cheerfully completed by departmental secretaries Myra Jordan and Carole Boeve and their assistants. The students worked under the general supervision of G.L. Penrose of the Department of History. Ultimately, the project depended upon the diligence of the students and upon the willing responses of the veterans.

Department of History

Hope College

Holland, Michigan

1979

Table of Contents

Map I: North Russia, 1918-1919. . . . . iv

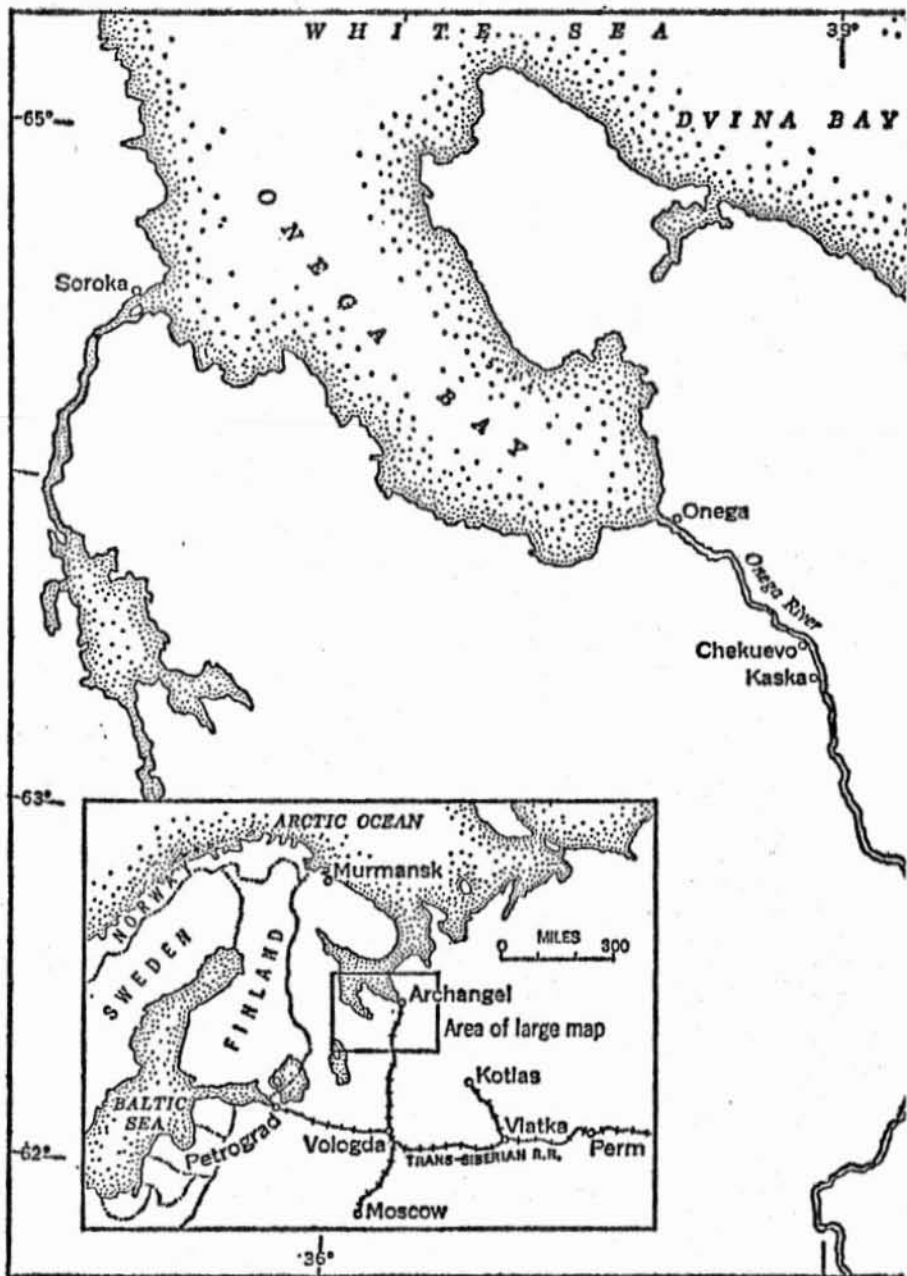
Map II: Offensive Against Kodish and Emtsa, December 29-31, 1918. . . v

Preface . . . . . vi

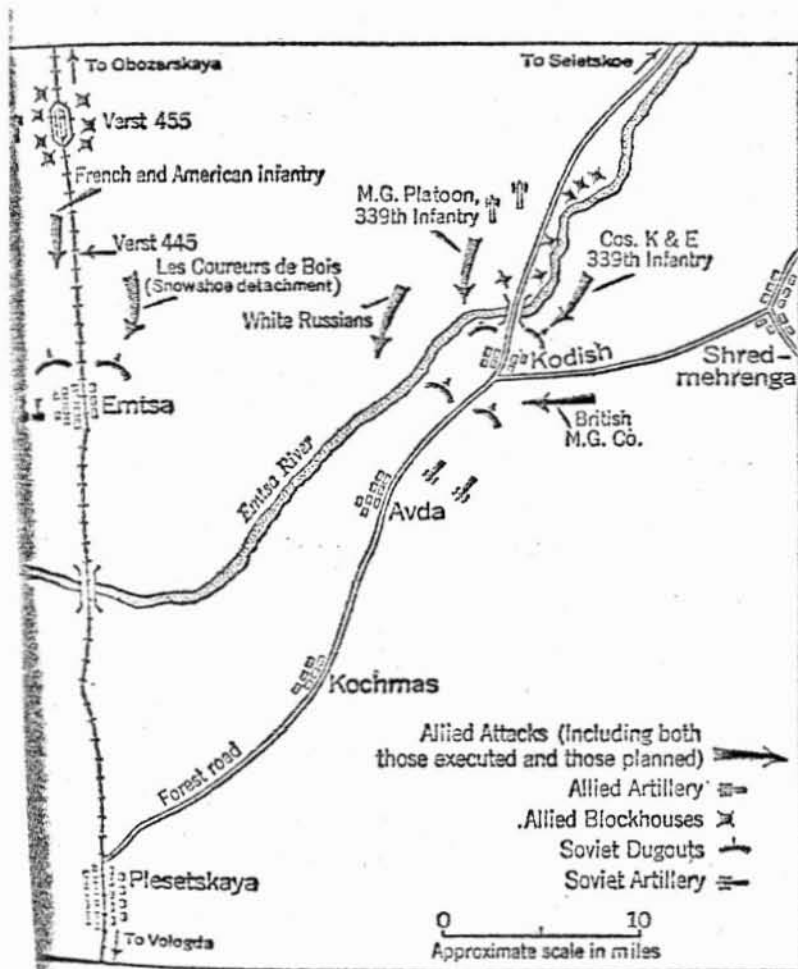
Biographical Sketch and Summary of Contents . . . . . vii

Interview. . . . . 1

-----  
Index. . . . . 40



14



OFFENSIVE AGAINST KODISH AND EMTSA, DECEMBER 29-31, 1918

Preface

Interviewee: Mr. Russell W. Hershberger

Interview I: June 20, 1977

Mr. Hershberger's home in Muskegon, Michigan

Interviewers: Ms. Nancy L. Johnson

Ms. Deborah A. Lenning

Associate Directors - Polar Bear Oral History Project

Hope College, Summer 1977



RUSSELL W. HERSHBERGER

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Russell W. Hershberger was born in Oceana County, Michigan on November 5, 1895 to Noah P. and Melinda Luke Hershberger. He attended Shaw School in Oceana County until about 1911, then farmed in Elbridge Township until he was drafted on June 5, 1918.

After three weeks of intensive training at Camp Custer, near Battle Creek, Michigan, where he volunteered for the Machine Gun Company of the 339th Infantry Regiment of the 85th Division, he left with the regiment for Camp Mills, New York. After a few days there, they sailed for England for six weeks of further training. The company then boarded the H.M.T. Somali and set sail for Russia. While en route, an epidemic of the Spanish flu broke out. Mr. Hershberger was one of those stricken.

After landing in Archangel on September 5, 1918, the first platoon of the Machine Gun Company, which included Mr. Hershberger, was assigned to duty in Archangel. However, since Mr. Hershberger was still ill with the flu, he was immediately taken to a makeshift hospital upon debarkment. He rejoined his company in November, and shortly afterwards the first platoon of the Machine Gun Company was sent to the Seletskoe sector. They spent a few weeks establishing and fortifying the Kodish Front and battling the Bolsheviks for the town of Kodish. After taking it in late December in a fierce battle, Kodish was burned on January 6.

The platoon was then relieved and they returned to Archangel for three weeks. In March of 1919, they were entrained to go to the railroad front. In early summer, the American troops evacuated North Russia, and Mr. Hershberger's company was then shipped back to the United States via Brest, France.

After his discharge from the army in July of 1919, he returned to

Elbridge Township to continue farming, During this period from 1919 to 1921, he was also employed by the highway department as a truck driver on a road-work crew. He then went to Muskegon for a few years to work in a foundry. He returned to farming in Oceana County until 1929, then took a job in Muskegon as a machinist with Muskegon Camshaft. With the exception of three years of unemployment during the depression, he remained with this company until his retirement on March 17, 1961.

On June 7, 1952, Mr. Hershberger was married to Lulu Mary Taylor, a widow with nine children. An active veteran, he has served as chaplain, junior vice-president, senior vice-president, and commander of the Captain Howard H. Pellagrom V.F.W. Post in Muskegon, and has participated in fund-raising activities as well. He attended the biennial Polar Bear reunions in Detroit for several years and still attends local meetings whenever possible. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, camping, enjoying home life, and gardening.

Mr. Hershberger's interview is exceptionally interesting not only because it contains detailed information on a variety of subjects, but also because of Mr. Hershberger's concise, colorful, and often humorous recollections. Highlights include his accounts of the battle of Kodish and Bolshevik propaganda, his experience with water-cooled machine guns, and his opinions on the American expedition to North Russia.

JOHNSON: First of all, were you drafted or did you enlist for World War I?

HERSHBERGER: I was drafted.

JOHNSON: How did you feel about that?

HERSHBERGER: I wanted to get in before, but my mother was put in a stitch about it. I wanted to enlist, but she didn't want me to. She said, "You'll be in soon anyway."

JOHNSON: What was your training experience at Camp Custer like?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we was only there three weeks at Camp Custer, and some of the guys that was in along quite awhile before said we got more training in three weeks than they did in their first six months of training.

JOHNSON: How did you become a machine-gunner?

HERSHBERGER: When we got in Camp Custer, they asked us. An officer came to where we were inducted, and he described the company, and he said, "It's one of the most dangerous companies in the outfit." And he wanted volunteers. Well, I was one of them. (laughter)

JOHNSON: Were you adequately prepared in your three weeks of training at Camp Custer for Russia?

HERSHBERGER: No. We didn't know anything about going to Russia really until we were in England. Then some officer from another outfit--I think it was an English officer--came and give us a few pointers on a very cold climate. And he didn't tell us then we was going to Russia, he just give us a few pointers on your care in a very cold climate. And that's about the first inkling we had of where we were going.

JOHNSON: Did you continue training while you were in England?

HERSHBERGER: Yes--Well, just hiking. Hiking and studying machine guns. We had machine gun schools there where we studied the machine guns. We had to learn to take those machine guns apart blind-folded if anything happened that the gun stopped. We had to be able to take that gun apart, repair it, and get it in action again blind-folded.

JOHNSON: So, would you say then that when you did get to Russia you were prepared for manning the machine gun there?

HERSHBERGER: To a certain extent, yes, but they took the machine guns that we were trained on away from us and gave us different guns that we never had seen before. And the guys were sent out on the front lines with those guns that they never had seen before and had to figure them out, how to fire them. They fired altogether different. The guns we had here had a pistol grip. You gripped it just like you would a pistol. And that gun that we had there, we had to have both hands on it like that (gestures), and then instead of a trigger, you pushed a button with the thumbs to fire it. And they had to figure that out there on the front lines.

JOHNSON: So when you got to Russia, you really hadn't been adequately trained?

HERSHBERGER: Not for that kind of guns at all.

JOHNSON: Did you have Vickers guns or Lewis guns?

HERSHBERGER: We had the Vickers.

JOHNSON: How did they work?

HERSHBERGER: Well, that's the ones that where you had to use both hands on to fire that.

LENNING: Did they require anti-freeze?

HERSHBERGER: Yes. They used glycerin in them. They were water-cooled guns. Can you imagine using a water-cooled gun up in that climate, where for twelve straight weeks it never got above fifty below zero? And using a water-cooled gun!

JOHNSON: How did you deal with that?

HERSHBERGER: We used glycerin in them. And at night, many times it was three of us slept together, and we'd take them guns between us in the bed to keep them from freezing up. (laughter) That was a good bedfellow. (laughter)

JOHNSON: What ship did you sail from England to Russia on?

HERSHBERGER: Somali, I believe.

JOHNSON: What was that voyage like?

HERSHBERGER: Well, that voyage to Russia wasn't too bad, but coming out of Russia was pretty rough. But going up to Russia wasn't too awful bad. It was on a cattle-boat; it's what it was. It was what was used before for a cattle-boat. And the same thing as the one we came from Russia back to France on.

JOHNSON: Was there an epidemic of the Spanish flu on board the boat?

HERSHBERGER: I landed in Russia with the flu and went right in the hospital. And I don't know just how long I was in the hospital, but I was in the hospital some time with the flu. The hospital was just an old, well, what we'd use for a hay barn. And that was our hospital where we were hospitalized in. And we had to get in there, and the sick men had to go out and hunt up wood and things to build a fire to warm the barracks up. When we got there, it was

raining. And they had to get out and hunt up the wood themselves to build a fire, and then stoves to warm it up so that we could keep warm in there. After we got the fire going, they just lined up in a line and marched around inside the building to keep warm until the fire got to going so they could get it warmed up.

JOHNSON: Were the medical supplies and medical care adequate?

HERSHBERGER: They knew there was medicine down on the dock, but we was under English command, and they couldn't get the medicine.

JOHNSON: Why not?

HERSHBERGER: We was under English command. The English had it, but we didn't.

JOHNSON: They wouldn't give it to the Americans?

HERSHBERGER: The Americans couldn't get it. And liquor, among the officers, was free. They had lots of that. But medicine--nothing.

JOHNSON: Were there enough doctors at the hospital to care for the patients?

HERSHBERGER: We had a pretty good doctor, if he'd have had the medicine. And we had pretty good orderlies, too. But we couldn't get the medicine to treat the flu.

LENNING: Did you catch the flu on the boat?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I must have, because I had it when we landed there.

JOHNSON: What kind of medical supplies did they have on the boat?

HERSHBERGER: Well that I couldn't tell you. I don't know.

JOHNSON: Were you treated on the boat?

HERSHBERGER: It was just a couple of days that I had it on the boat. I don't know as we got any medicine while we was on the boat. (Mr. Hershberger discusses the article in Harry J. Costello's Why Did We Go To Russia concerning the medical treatment on the voyage and in the hospital at Archangel)

JOHNSON: When you were in England, they never really told you that you were going to Russia?

HERSHBERGER: Well, they just told us we were going to a very cold climate. Kind of prepared our minds for that.

JOHNSON: Where had you thought you were going before that?

HERSHBERGER: We figured we was going to France, to the big show. But all we got was a little side-show. (laughs)

JOHNSON: When did you first know for sure that you were going to Russia?

HERSHBERGER: I guess when we was on the ship and when we landed up there. Something of that sort!

JOHNSON: How much did you know about Russia at that time?

HERSHBERGER: Nothing to speak of. Just--nothing there to speak of that we knew about Russia, only what we got in our schooling.

JOHNSON: Did you know anything about Bolshevism at all?

HERSHBERGER: Not till we got there.

JOHNSON: Were you given any lectures or information to tell you about Russia of Bolshevism?

HERSHBERGER: They did after we got up there. Then they give us some lectures on that.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what they said?

HERSHBERGER: No, I can't tell you what they said.

JOHNSON: Did they tell you why you were fighting in Russia?

HERSHBERGER: They were trying to establish an Eastern Front to relieve the pressure on the Western Front. That was the idea that they gave us. And then we had big stores of ammunition up there in Russia, and we was supposed to go up there and guard that ammunition. The only way we could get it was to go out and have the Bolsheviks shoot it back at us because they had it all! (laughter)

JOHNSON: How did the citizens in Archangel react to the troops when you landed?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I landed in the hospital, but as far as I know, the people themselves weren't too bad. But I landed in the hospital, and I was in the hospital for probably a couple of weeks. And the doctor did the cooking for the people in the hospital. And that was right across the street from where we were at. And I was pretty much for sick. I was--well, I had a fever of 103, 104, or better. I'd eat what they brought to me, but I couldn't exist on what they brought to me then. That was for a dead patient. I'd get up everyday, as sick as I was, and go across the street, and there they fed good if I could get across there. I went across to the hospital mess hall, and there we got a good meal of roast beef, or roast pork, and all the other things we got there if we could get over there to get it.

JOHNSON: But the food you got in the hospital was not very good?

HERSHBERGER: The food we got there was good--what we got. But they didn't



bring us enough. A little bit of toast, and tea, and things like that.

LENNING: Which hospital was that?

HERSHBERGER: It was just an improvised hospital that they had for us when we got up there--just like a big old hay barn, that's what it was.

JOHNSON: Were you in a British hospital or an American one?

HERSHBERGER: I think it was an American doctor that we had, but it wasn't really a hospital. It was just a big building, a storage building of some kind.

LENNING: When were you sent to the front?

HERSHBERGER: It was shortly before Christmas. I spent Christmas on the front lines. I think we were on our way to the front lines on Thanksgiving Day, and then we spent Christmas up on the front lines.

LENNING: Were you in the hospital up until the point where you left for the front?

HERSHBERGER: Pretty much. I went back to the company, and right away after that we were shipped off to the front lines.

LENNING: Where were you sent? Was it to Kodish?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, Kodish. We were at Kodish I can't tell you how long, but we were in Kodish for quite a while. They burned the town down while we were there. And then we came back to Archangel and was back in Archangel for a short time for rest. Then we went back on the railroad front and was stationed there. Then we came back from there and after that's when we came home. I was just on those two fronts. I wasn't even on the worst fronts. Some of them

other fronts was much worse than the ones I was in.

LENNING: I've always heard that the Kodish front was one of the worst.

HERSHBERGER: Well, that was bad. That's where I was. I was on the Kodish front and I was on the railroad front. Some of the others had such long marches out through the wilderness, through the wild woods. It took us, I think, two days to travel by foot from where we left the railroad to get out to the Kodish front. If I remember right, it was about two days of that.

LENNING: What were your first instructions when you went out there?

HERSHBERGER: That is hard to tell. We were just sent out there and set up behind them machine guns in action. That's about it.

LENNING: Whose command were you under?

HERSHBERGER: Captain Kenyon was our captain, and my lieutenant was O'Callighan. And the guy that compiled this book was one of our lieutenants. That was Harry J. Costello.

LENNING: He was with the machine-gunners too?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, he was a machine-gunner. Yes, he's the guy that compiled this book. And he was one of our lieutenants. There's a picture in this book of them two lieutenants together, Jack O'Callighan and Costello.

LENNING: What did you think of them?

HERSHBERGER: They were very good. They were very good, and Costello was a wonderful man. Lt. Ballard was killed in action, and of course, we had a replacement lieutenant for him. And he wasn't so much thought of. He was a good lieutenant, all right, but he wasn't so much thought of as Lt. Ballard.

Lt. Ballard would get right out and drill with his men, just like one of the men. But this other lieutenant, he was more of a high-class. (laughter)

LENNING: Did you ever have any encounters with Major Mike Donoghue?

HERSHBERGER: I seen him several times, but I never had any direct contact with him.

LENNING: What did the men think of him?

HERSHBERGER: A wonderful man. Mike Donoghue was a wonderful man. Wonderful.

LENNING: What do you remember about the American commander of the troops, Col. Stewart?

HERSHBERGER: He had not much to say. We were under English command, and they had to get their orders from the English. If we got a commander over that was higher-ranked than theirs, they would right away get a man in that was higher-ranked than he. (laughter)

LENNING: Did you ever see any of the British generals like General Poole or General Ironside?

HERSHBERGER: I seen General Ironsides quite a few times. He'd pretty near have to stoop down just to stand in this room. (laughs) He was a very tall man, and he'd have to stoop to go through one of these doors.

LENNING: What did you think of him?

HERSHBERGER: He was a pretty nice man. He was English, but he was a pretty fair man. Of course, the Americans up there didn't think too much of the English. You can imagine that; being under English command, we didn't think too much of the English.

LENNING: You said before that you were going to establish an Eastern front, so what did you understand to be the purpose of fighting the Bolsheviks?

HERSHBERGER: That was hard to tell just what our purpose was there to fight the Bolsheviks. See, the Bolsheviks were just a little, kind of a disorganized group when we got there. They was on the run for a while, but they soon got so they stood their grounds and got organized better. And they stood their grounds pretty good.

LENNING: When did you first encounter the Bolsheviks?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I was on the Kodish front before I come in contact with any of them.

LENNING: So you were at Kodish during the terrible battles around New Year's Day?

HERSHBERGER: Oh yes. I was in Kodish on Christmas and New Year's.

LENNING: Would you like to tell us about the battle?

HERSHBERGER: Well, that's hard to say too much. You know, you don't like to say everything you've seen. We were down by a little old river, a small river, firing across. And they fired there for quite a while. Finally, we quit and was going to cross the river, and we ended up swimming across with one machine gun. That's all that they opened up with from over there then. And I came pretty close to getting it, but I didn't get hurt. And then we opened up again for another, probably for a half an hour with our machine guns. Then we went across the river up to the little town of Kodish. And then we were stationed right in the little town of Kodish for quite a some time. Then the English sent up an order to burn the town.

LENNING: At that time, were there any Russian peasants living in the village?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know if there were any living. There was none in there when we got there. Nobody lived in town when we got there. We drove the Bolsheviks out. And we occupied the town there for some time. And then the British sent up orders to burn the town. And then we had kerosene, set it on fire, and we retreated back across the little river.

While we were in Kodish, there was a line of us was going to make a little advance out--like skirmishes out in the woods. And we looked up and happened to see it coming over us--you can see one of them bullets when it gets pretty near spent. And we seen that one coming, just rolling end over end, and a couple of us hollered and the rest just spread out, and that bullet landed right where we was standing. When that artillery shell landed, it didn't explode. And that's why we was lucky. If it had've, there wouldn't have been any of us left. And you know them shells, when they get pretty near spent, the back end of them starts down, and they start rolling like that (gestures) as they come. And we see that one coming, and we just ducked.

LENNING: So it turned somersaults in the air?

HERSHBERGER: Just like somersaults in the air.

LENNING: After you burned the village and retreated . . .

HERSHBERGER: We retreated back to that little crick, and we built log buildings there to live in while we was up there. At first, we just had logs laid across a bunch of logs so that we could crawl under them and sleep, just like rabbits under a brush pile. (laughs) We slept under that. That's where we had to sleep with our machine guns. And see, we laid them up and then we'd pile brush on top of the logs, and then more logs on that so that if a shell hit on there, it'd be cush enough that it wouldn't break down through where we were. And the same way on that log building that we built. It was probably fifteen or twenty

of us slept in that building. And then we built a big log mess hall where we ate in and where the cooks slept.

The building that we slept in, that had the double roof. It had a log roof, then brush piled on that, and then more logs on that, and more brush on that, so if a shell hit on top, it would be cushion enough that it wouldn't break down through. And we had to go out in the woods and cut the trees down and cut the logs to build our own buildings out there on the front.

LENNING: So when you weren't fighting, you were building?

HERSHBERGER: That's what we were doing.

LENNING: Did you ever go back to Kodish after retreating from there and burning it?

HERSHBERGER: No. I didn't. Some of the men did. Some of them just went back to look it over and came back. All that was left there was one little church. The church wasn't much bigger than--I doubt if it was hardly as big as this house. And this isn't very big. And that church wasn't burned. I don't know how it escaped, but that church wasn't burned. One of the big things of the Bolsheviks, they were trying to abolish all churches. There's an article in this book (Costello's) about that. They were trying to get rid of all the churches, and of course that didn't set very good with us, either.

JOHNSON: Did you realize at that time that the Bolsheviks were trying to do that?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, we knew it. And they don't explain it too good in that article, but it tells something about it. They were trying to get rid of all churches and all of that. And another thing that they were trying to do was abolish marriage. And the women worked the same as the men. And if they was

to have a baby, they had to work up till, oh, a certain length of time before the baby came, and then a certain length of time after that they had to go back to work again. That was just rumored, of course, that they were trying to abolish all marriage.

JOHNSON: Where did you hear those rumors?

HERSHBERGER: Oh, the rumors flew freely up there in that country! (laughter)

LENNING: What kind of machine guns were the Bolsheviks using to fight you?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know just what they had, but they had pretty good machine guns.

LENNING: Were they better than the Vickers guns?

HERSHBERGER: No, I don't know as they were, unless they were air-cooled guns that didn't have to have water in them.

LENNING: I was wondering about the range that they had on their guns.

HERSHBERGER: I think they used about the same ammunition we did, 303.

LENNING: What about replacements? If a machine-gunner were killed, were there men that were trained to replace him?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, we were all trained to a certain extent. And there was a gunner that set back of the gun. Number two man lay right side of the gun to feed the ammunition belts right in the gun, and then the ammunition carriers carried ammunition up to the gun. And they were all trained so that they were capable of handling a gun.

LENNING: So there were three men per gun?

HERSHBERGER: Oh, there was more than that. There was generally about--well, there was eight men in a squad, and there usually was one machine gun for each squad. There was two men right at the gun at all times, and the others was carrying ammunition up. And they had to carry it sometimes quite a ways.

LENNING: What was the size of the detachments you usually operated in? Was it a squad or a platoon?

HERSHBERGER: Usually a platoon in a place, a platoon of the machine gun company. And that was, if I remember right, about four or five squads in a platoon-- something like that.

LENNING: Were the platoons ever divided up?

HERSHBERGER: Not the platoon itself. Not as far as I know, they weren't. Our platoon wasn't. Now, I don't know about if some of the others was. We was divided up on so many that . . .

LENNING: But up at Kodish you had a whole platoon of machine-gunners?

HERSHBERGER: We had a whole platoon of machine-gunners on that front.

LENNING: Are there any particular experiences at Kodish that you would like to tell us about?

HERSHBERGER: Well, not too much. When we got in there, there was several bodies laying around in the town and several bodies that were in the buildings. I know one guy was right inside of a window. There were all log buildings, and apparently he was standing right inside of window, and a shell landed right on the windowsill. And that guy from his waist up, there wasn't a spot that big (cups hands) but what there wasn't a hole in his body from slivers from that log, and the shrapnel that's in that shell, and pieces of shell, and everything else.



He was just, just full of--there wasn't hardly a spot the size of a dollar bill but what there wasn't a hole in his body. He never knew what hit him.

LENNING: So it was pretty bad up at Kodish?

HERSHBERGER: It was. It was quite bad. Then when we burned the town, there was probably, oh, a few bodies laying around town there, and they just took them and put them in the buildings and burned the buildings. There was a couple of dead horses in the buildings that was killed--killed in action. (chuckles) And they was burned up with the buildings.

LENNING: Was it in January that you were sent back to Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: I would imagine so. Along in the middle or latter part of January we went back to Archangel. And we went back there for a couple, three weeks, something like that. Then we went back out to the railroad front. And there we didn't see much. Oh, we had a little firing, but not too much.

JOHNSON: How did the citizens of Archangel react to you?

HERSHBERGER: As far as I seen, they used us pretty good. The general public used us pretty good. And of course, just before we landed there, they were used pretty rough by the Bolsheviks. So they was glad for anything that wasn't that way.

JOHNSON: What were your first impressions of the city?

HERSHBERGER: Well, it wasn't much of a town. It was more like a little backwoods town here, all wooden buildings, log buildings, and sidewalks was just board sidewalks. In places, the street sewers run out and down a ditch underneath the sidewalks. And that was not all of it. Of course, in our barracks where we were, we had our latrine--our toilets--and that drained out in a big

tank out in the ground, and, oh, every day or two guys came there with what they called droshkis, and tanks on them, and pumped these tanks out into them and took them out in the fields and dumped them.

JOHNSON: Was there any modern plumbing of any type in the town?

HERSHBERGER: Well, in the barracks where we were located there when I got back to the company, they had regular toilets and big washbowls, and things like that. But as far as other plumbing, I couldn't say that it was very modern. (laughter)

JOHNSON: What were your first impressions of the people there?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I'll tell you the women did most of the work. The men just walked down the streets and argued, and the women did cutting wood and things like that. As far as industry was concerned, it was pretty much at a standstill when we got there. And fishing is their main industry up there. And of course, in the winter they couldn't do much of that when it was froze up solid. And there's pictures in the book (Costello's) where the women went down to the river and cut holes through the ice to do their washing. That's how they did a lot of their laundry.

LENNING: You'd think their clothes would freeze. (laughter)

HERSHBERGER: I don't know how they could stand it, but they did.

JOHNSON: How much did you know about the political situation in Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: Well, not too much. I don't know too much about it. The political ideas was pretty much at a standstill, too, when we were in there. Anything of any value was taken out of the town by the Bolsheviks. And, as far as that's concerned, I don't know why we were there at all. Nobody ever has been able to answer the question that I know of.

JOHNSON: Did you know that the very night before you landed, there had been a coup where the Archangel government had been overthrown?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we had ideas of it, but we didn't know. Just rumors on the ship and things like that. That's all we knew.

JOHNSON: Did you find out anything more when you landed?

HERSHBERGER: Well, from the looks of things it did look pretty much so. It was very much disorganized.

LENNING: Who seemed to be in control of the city?

HERSHBERGER: Well, now I can't tell you too much of that. See, I landed in the hospital and went right from the hospital back to the company. And I was only there a short time before I was out on the front line. I can't tell you much about that.

JOHNSON: Did you ever encounter any Bolsheviks in Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: You couldn't tell who you was talking to, whether he was a Bolshevik, or whether he was a peasant there, or what he was. You couldn't really tell.

LENNING: Did you suspect that the factory workers or some of the residents in the city might have been Bolsheviks?

HERSHBERGER: They could have been because they all, I guess, left with the Bolsheviks. Most of the factory workers, I think, left with the Bolsheviks. But then whether they left on their own or whether they was forced to, I don't know.

JOHNSON: Did you ever encounter any prisoners who were arrested because they

were Bolsheviks?

HERSHBERGER: Oh, that we had captured Bolshevik prisoners? I seen some of them. We seen some of them but not too many.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea as to how they were treated in Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: They were fed well and clothed well and had their billets to be in. They weren't treated too bad.

LENNING: Were the British in charge of them?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know just which--I think the British had charge of that. We had one guy from our company that was a prisoner of war in the Bolsheviks'. And he was treated with royalty there. Oh, he was really--he had the run of the town where they had him in. He could go out in the morning and be gone all day. All he had to do was be back there at night to sleep--just had to report back at night. He was just as free as he would be here in Muskegon.

LENNING: Was that George Albers that you were talking about?

HERSHBERGER: George Albers, yes. And he got home before we did. When we landed in Detroit, he was one of the first guys we seen there. (laughter)

LENNING: Had you any idea that he had returned safely?

HERSHBERGER: No. We didn't know until we got back, and he was one of the first guys we seen when we landed in Detroit.

LENNING: What had your commanders told you would happen to American prisoners?

HERSHBERGER: I don't remember that. They didn't . . .

LENNING: Were you afraid of becoming prisoner?

HERSHBERGER: Never gave it a thought too much. We were there, and if we-- that's all we knew about it. (laughs) It didn't worry me any.

JOHNSON: What do you think the people in Archangel wanted as their form of government?

HERSHBERGER: Well, they liked our government pretty well. They didn't care too much for the English there, but they liked the Americans real well, better than any of the others. See, there was French, and Italians, and British there, and Americans. They seemed to like the Americans the best of any of them.

JOHNSON: Why do you think that was?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I don't know about the others, only the British. If two or three British soldiers was walking down the sidewalk and met some Russians, the Russians had to get off and walk out in the street. They couldn't walk on the sidewalk with the British. That happened a lot of times. The Russians had to get off the sidewalk; they couldn't even be on the sidewalk with them.

JOHNSON: So do you think then that the Russians wanted to model their form of government after the American form?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I think they would have liked to have had our form of government. As far as I can see, the general run of the public would have liked our form of government better than any of the others.

JOHNSON: Why do you think that?

HERSHBERGER: Because of the way they acted toward the American soldiers there.

LENNING: Then you left Archangel and went down to the railroad front?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we went out to the railroad front, and we had boxcars there,

and we had blockhouses there that the Americans had built for us to be in. The blockhouse was about an eight-sided building, and in each one of them sides, there was a loophole there to fire out through with machine guns. That's what we had to sleep in. We had pretty good sleeping quarters there and all.

LENNING: Better than at Kodish?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, better than at Kodish.

LENNING: Were you at Obozerskaya?

HERSHBERGER: No, I went out to what they called Verst 446. Now that's where we were stationed at. But I wasn't at Obozerskaya.

LENNING: Did you participate in the battle at Bolshie Ozerki?

HERSHBERGER: No, not at Bolshie Ozerki. I wasn't there. Some of the others were, but I wasn't. I was on two fronts. Kodish and the railroad was the only ones that I was really on.

LENNING: That was during the late winter and spring that you were on the railroad front? How was the spring?

HERSHBERGER: Well, it was quite an experience all right. I really enjoyed it up there. I didn't mind it too bad because I was used to the wide open spaces. I was raised on a farm, and we was outdoors more than we was in. We knew pretty much how to take care of ourselves in the cold.

LENNING: Was the fighting as severe at Verst 446 as it had been at Kodish?

HERSHBERGER: Not, not near as bad as it was in Kodish. We had a few little skirmishes there, but not so serious. A few artillery shells burst over us and things like that.

LENNING: How common was frostbite?

HERSHBERGER: Well, both thumbs--my hands was quite frosted at one time. I went into the British first aid--that was right out on the front lines--and told them I'd frozen my hands. "Ah," he says, "They're not froze, they're just a little frosted." (laughs) But they didn't do me any damage, as far as that goes. They was just turning white. And everybody was supposed to keep watch of everybody else. Your cheeks would start to turn white from the frost. Well, then you'd start working that spot to get the circulation back. And if you seen anybody with frostbite, you're supposed to tell them about it.

LENNING: Was that very painful when your thumbs got frost-bitten?

HERSHBERGER: Not too bad.

LENNING: How was that when you had to use your thumbs on the machine gun? Was that very difficult?

HERSHBERGER: Well, that was all out before I had any of that to do.

LENNING: Did you think that your clothing was adequate?

HERSHBERGER: We had pretty good clothing. We didn't get too cold. As far as I was concerned, I didn't get too cold. We had heavy underwear, heavy pants, and a long fur coat. The coat was fur-lined and the outside was like canvas, and it hung pretty near to the ground. And one guy up there--I didn't see it; I heard about it--where one guy had both his feet froze that they had to amputate both feet. Now all I knew about that's what I heard, that he had both feet frosted that they had to amputate both feet.

LENNING: Why do you think that that happened?

HERSHBERGER: If I remember right, I think he was lost out in the woods for a

bit and didn't get back till the next day. And I think that that's the way that happened. I'm not sure. All I knew about that's just rumors that we heard about that.

LENNING: What about the food?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we had pretty fair food. Of course, an awful lot of it was canned rations. The British had very good food in their billets, but the Americans had mostly canned rations. "M & V", they called it. That was meat and vegetables, and the meat was mutton.

LENNING: Did you like mutton? (laughs)

HERSHBERGER: Well, if you get used to it, it ain't too bad. It wasn't too bad.

LENNING: Did you get much variety?

HERSHBERGER: Oh, we had a little canned corn beef, and at times we had canned salmon--not much. Most of it was just that M & V--meat and vegetables, and more vegetables than meat. There wasn't much meat in it.

LENNING: Did you ever hear of any cases of malnutrition?

HERSHBERGER: No, not really. They didn't have too much to eat, but they didn't starve or anything like that. But they didn't have too much to eat.

LENNING: Did you feel as though you had enough to eat for the physical labor that you were required to do?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we had enough to eat, such as it was. We had enough to eat.

LENNING: Did you ever hear of any cases of food poisoning?

HERSHBERGER: No, I never heard of any food poisoning all the time I was up there.



LENNING: What were the sanitary conditions like at Kodish and the Railroad front?

HERSHBERGER: Well, there was no sanitary conditions. It was just like out in the woods, that's all.

LENNING: Did you get any opportunities for bathing while you were on the front?

HERSHBERGER: I was on the Kodish front for twelve weeks, and I never had my clothes off once during that. Never had my feet undressed all that time while we was out there on the Kodish front.

LENNING: You wore the same pair of socks all that time? (laughter)

HERSHBERGER: Yes. At night, you didn't dare take your shoes off and sleep without them, or they'd be frozen stiff in the morning. You couldn't put them on. Yes, for twelve weeks, never had a shave, or change of clothes, or bath, or anything. I seen more than one guy reach in his underwear like that (reaches into shirt) and say, "Betcha a quarter I got one!"--got a louse, (laughs) a cootie. I've seen that happen more than once. They couldn't stand me. They never bothered me. (laughter) I guess just about the time we was relieved from the front, I got a few. But not many.

LENNING: Did you still have to go through the delouser?

HERSHBERGER: Oh yes. Yes, we had to go through the delouser.

LENNING: Did you ever stay in a peasant family's home?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, on our way between the railroad and the Kodish front we stayed in one of their homes. And they were very, very considerate. They was very good. They had to give up their own beds for us. They would've slept

anywhere they could to give us their beds.

LENNING: Did you feel that the Russian peasants were just as friendly as the Archangel residents?

HERSHBERGER: Well, what we seen of them were. About the only peasants we seen were mostly just in that one town between the railroad front and Kodish. That's about the only place where I seen any Russian peasants, other than in Archangel. And they seemed real friendly. Very friendly.

LENNING: Did the peasants' reactions to the American soldiers change at all, or did it remain the same?

HERSHBERGER: Well, after they got acquainted with us, they was pretty nice to the American soldiers.

LENNING: Then you think it improved?

HERSHBERGER: I do. The longer we was there, I think the better they were to us.

LENNING: Do you think that the Americans aiding them medically helped at all?

HERSHBERGER: If they could have got the medicine during that flu epidemic, they could have done very good. And when they got medicine, they done a lot better.

LENNING: Did you ever hear any cases of the American Red Cross or the medical officers helping the Russian people?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I guess they did. If any of them was sick or anything, they took care of them as best they could.

LENNING: Did you ever witness the forced evacuation of a village?

HERSHBERGER: The only one was Kodish. That was the only one.

LENNING: Were you there when the peasants left their homes?

HERSHBERGER: We was back firing into it. And when we got into it, they were all gone. There was nobody there, only the dead ones.

LENNING: So you never had to kick a family out of their house?

HERSHBERGER: No, no.

LENNING: Did you ever notice any difference between the peasants' attitudes toward the Americans and the other Allies?

HERSHBERGER: Well, not too much. But they were really friendly toward the Americans. I know that, because I was one that they was pretty friendly towards. But the French and the Italians, I couldn't tell you how they were with them. I guess they used them all right, as far as I know.

LENNING: Did you fight with the White Russians at all?

HERSHBERGER: We had a few of them on our front, the White Russians. Not many, but a few.

LENNING: How did that work out?

HERSHBERGER: Well, when we was on the railroad front, the artillerymen started shelling our own front lines, at one time. But they soon got that stopped.

LENNING: Was it the White Russians who did that?

HERSHBERGER: It was the White Russians. And they must have got their orders mixed up. They phoned back to them to shell a certain place, and they shelled back on our position.

LENNING: Was anyone wounded?

HERSHBERGER: No, there was nobody that I knew of that got hurt.

LENNING: Did that affect the feelings between the Americans and the White Russians?

HERSHBERGER: Well, it didn't set too good for a while, but they got by with it.

LENNING: Did the Americans feel they could trust their allies?

HERSHBERGER: They seemed to, pretty much, up there. They seemed to trust the Russians in Archangel pretty good. But the Bolsheviks, of course, that was different. They were way out in the woods. And of course in Archangel, you couldn't tell who was Bolshevik-minded and who wasn't. If you'd talk to them-- and of course we couldn't talk too much with them 'cause we didn't know their language.

LENNING: Did you fight with the Royal Scots or the Canadians?

HERSHBERGER: No. We didn't, not where I was. There was some of them up there, but not where I was.

LENNING: While you were at Kodish, for example, how much did you know about the situation on the other battlefronts?

HERSHBERGER: Not too much.

LENNING: So there wasn't much contact between them?

HERSHBERGER: The officers would get it by phone, and things like that. They would get word, but the fighting men didn't get too much of it.

JOHNSON: Did you ever encounter any Bolshevik propaganda?

HERSHBERGER: That came in there by the bundles. That was free up there.

(laughter) They'd bring it in there by the armloads. How it got in there, I don't know. But it was all over town.

JOHNSON: Was this in Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, in Archangel and some of it even out on the front lines. You'd see it stuck up in trees, in the crotch of a tree. You'd see a bundle of papers up there, and that was mostly Bolshevik propaganda.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what it said?

HERSHBERGER: They wanted us to come over on their sides and all that--what their theory was and all that. But we didn't want any of it anyway. (laughter)

JOHNSON: Then it was written in English and directed at the soldiers?

HERSHBERGER: Yes. It was printed in English, so they must have had some folks over in their lines that could print the English papers. Of course, now, they might have been forced to print that. We don't know. But I know after we'd have skirmishes a lot of times and drive the Bolsheviks back, pretty soon you'd hear machine guns back of their lines just roaring. Our theory was that any of theirs that retreated, they'd just mow them down. Now, that was our theory. Of course we don't know. But that was the idea that we had: that if any of them did dare to back up, they'd back up into their own machine guns.

JOHNSON: So the Bolshevik propaganda had no effect on the soldiers?

HERSHBERGER: (laughs) It just made them that much more hostile, if anything.

JOHNSON: Did the British also employ propaganda as a means of raising the

morale of the troops?

HERSHBERGER: Well, the British couldn't have raised the morale of the Americans any because the Americans had such a low opinion of the English. That's why they couldn't have did much to help the Americans in that. They had some propaganda, of course, but not so much. Most of it was Bolshevik propaganda. When we was out on the front one night between the railroad front and the Kodish front, an orator came out on that bridge, and boy, did he talk. He'd holler, "Americans! Americans!" And finally, one of the Americans hollered, "Where the hell are you?" Well, then that fellow knew that we heard him, and he opened up with his propaganda. And boy, did he talk there for about an hour. (laughs) 'Course, we couldn't see him; it was dark. And he really talked. He was a good talker. Talked there for about an hour on the bridge. Finally he went back.

JOHNSON: And the Americans let him talk and nobody tried to do anything about it?

HERSHBERGER: If you would have, they was probably prepared. What we were afraid of was that they was prepared. If we'd have opened up with a shot down that way, they would have saw the flash of that gun. Then they'd have known right where we were. So we didn't dare open up with anything.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea as to how the Bolshevik prisoners at the front were treated?

HERSHBERGER: No, I don't. I didn't see any of them out at the front lines. But when they got back into Archangel, I guess they were treated as good as possible.

JOHNSON: Did you ever witness any atrocities by the Bolsheviks or the Allies?

HERSHBERGER: I didn't see anybody inhumanly treated, myself. Some of them were. But I didn't see it. I know one night--I heard it--a Bolshevik got tangled up in the barbed wire outside of a French blockhouse, and he was a-moanin' and a-hollerin' and a-moanin' and a-hollerin' out there till the Frenchmen couldn't sleep. And one of the French got mad and got up and took an ax right out and knocked the Bolshevik's brains out, and went back in and went to sleep. See, those French and the Italians that were up there had went through the Western front. They had been through it there, and they were really war-hardened. And some of the British had been through the Western Front.

LENNING: The Royal Scots?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know if they were or not, but the British were.

JOHNSON: When did you first receive news that the armistice had been signed?

HERSHBERGER: It was way after Christmas before we really heard about it.

JOHNSON: How did you find out about that? Were you in Archangel when you found out?

HERSHBERGER: I think it was about the time we left the front lines or about the time they came back to relieve us to go back to Archangel. I think they're the ones that brought us the word.

LENNING: So that was in January?

HERSHBERGER: I think that was in January.

JOHNSON: How did you feel when you found out that the armistice had been signed?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I don't know. There wasn't much that we could do about it.

We just was under the British rules, and our officers had to take orders from the British. And that was all there was to it.

JOHNSON: Did you feel that there was any hope that you would be going home soon?

HERSHBERGER: That we didn't have any idea about at all because they couldn't get us out until the waters opened up so they could get in there with ships to get us out. They were frozen so hard that the ships couldn't get in there. The transports couldn't get in there to get us out.

JOHNSON: How did the men feel about continuing to fight after the war had already been over?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I couldn't say. There wasn't much they could do about it. You didn't hear too much ~~g~~rumbling about it. They took it in their stride and let it go at that.

JOHNSON: What was their outlook on the Russian situation at that time?

HERSHBERGER: Well, their hatred was so much toward the Bolsheviks that they would just as soon have run out and did some more fighting, as far as that goes, because their hatred was so strong towards the Bolsheviks.

JOHNSON: Did you ever hear any rumors of mutinies or uprisings?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, there's an article in the book (Costello's) about one company that did kind of refuse a little bit to go, but within a couple hours' time that was all settled, all clear.

JOHNSON: Did you hear anything about that while you were there?

HERSHBERGER: Very little. We heard very little about it while we were there.



JOHNSON: Did you ever receive any letters from home mentioning news reports of the expedition?

HERSHBERGER: No. No, we didn't get much of that. Not in my mail. Some of the guys did get paper clippings and things like that, but I didn't get any of those.

JOHNSON: Did you ever read any of those paper clippings?

HERSHBERGER: I read a few of them.

JOHNSON: Were they accurate reports?

HERSHBERGER: Apparently they were pretty accurate reports.

JOHNSON: Was your mail censored?

HERSHBERGER: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: Both outgoing and incoming mail?

HERSHBERGER: The mail coming to us wasn't censored near as close as that going out. But in the mail going out from us and coming to this country, you had to be awful careful what you wrote. If you didn't, they'd just cut out a piece, and if you had any wrote on the other side, that was cut out, too, so that it just ruined the whole thing.

LENNING: Did they ever tell you why your mail was censored?

HERSHBERGER: Well, if you wrote anything that would be of assistance to an enemy, and those letters fell into the hands of the enemy, that would help them out. That was a whole lot of it. And if anything really serious was going on over there, they wouldn't want the folks at home to know about it till we got back and told them ourselves.

JOHNSON: What kind of things did they censor in your mail? If you complained about anything, would that be censored?

HERSHBERGER: I think it was. I don't know if I ever had any of my mail censored, had any of it cut out. But I don't know.

LENNING: Did they tell you what you were allowed to say and what you weren't?

HERSHBERGER: Well, to a certain extent they did. I know one guy wrote a letter home, and you hold it up and it looked like a screen door. (laughter) About all he had was the opening and closing of his letter. (laughter) They asked him what he wanted to do with it, and he said, "Put it in the envelope and send it." (laughter) Then the folks would know, at home--just from that they'd know a whole lot of what things was like up there. And they'd know that things wasn't too good. If they was too good, he wouldn't have wrote anything like that.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea as to what kind of things they would censor on incoming mail? Did they ever censor newspaper clippings that you know of?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know about that. None of my mail that I got was ever censored. I guess my folks here knew pretty near what they could write and what they couldn't write.

JOHNSON: Did you ever read the American Sentinel while you were in Archangel?

HERSHBERGER: Yes. If I remember right, I seen a couple of them and read a little of them.

JOHNSON: Do you know if the British censored that newspaper?

HERSHBERGER: I couldn't say to that. I didn't see enough of it to know hardly

what it was.

JOHNSON: Did you ever have any dealings with the Y.M.C.A. in Russia?

HERSHBERGER: We went over to the "Y" to do our writing of letters and all that. And they used us very good. We were treated very good at the "Y".

JOHNSON: How about the Red Cross?

HERSHBERGER: The Red Cross was good. But they didn't have any Red Cross hut that I got in there. But the Red Cross men was out on the front lines, and the Y.M.C.A. men came right out on our front lines. They had their Victrola and records, and they'd come out and play that for us and give us a little entertainment that way at times. But it had to be on a quiet day when you'd do that, not when there was any shooting going on. (laughter)

JOHNSON: And the Salvation Army?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, they were very good. The Salvation Army, as far as I knew, they were very good.

JOHNSON: Did you ever pay for anything at the Y.M.C.A.?

HERSHBERGER: Pay for anything? No.

JOHNSON: Everything you got from them was free?

HERSHBERGER: Everything. Paper was there and everything there, and all we had to do was at the top of the letters write "Soldier's Mail"--instead of a stamp, just write "Soldier's Mail". And everything in the "Y" was free.

JOHNSON: Cigarettes and everything?

HERSHBERGER: Cigarettes, yes. Not a lot of them, but they'd give us a pack

of cigarettes when we'd go in. And about every so often, they'd come around to our barracks and hand out a few cigarettes. And the Y.M.C.A. guy and those, when they came out to the front line like that, they'd always be loaded down and give the guys a pack or two of cigarettes.

JOHNSON: So as far as you know, there was no corruption in any of those three organizations?

HERSHBERGER: No, as far as I know. Yes, they was all very good.

JOHNSON: How did you spend your holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving?

HERSHBERGER: (laughs) We had got our log building built for us to sleep in up there, and we had our mess hall. The mess hall was probably twice as big as this building where we ate in. Well, we all met in there, and if any of them had any poems or anything that they could recite, or sing Christmas carols and-- there's an article about that in the book, too.

JOHNSON: You were at Kodish then, is that right?

HERSHBERGER: Yes, we were at Kodish. And we'd sing Christmas carols. I don't remember what our dinner was the next day, but it was just a regular army dinner.

JOHNSON: Nothing special at all?

HERSHBERGER: Nothing special at all.

LENNING: So when you were over there, as far as you knew, the purpose of the expedition was to establish an Eastern~~E~~Front?

HERSHBERGER: That's what they told us. And to guard the ammunition that was stored there--that had been stored there. But the ammunition was all gone. The

Bolsheviks had it.

LENNING: Did your orders come down to you from the British?

HERSHBERGER: Yes.

LENNING: At the time you were in Russia, did you know that American troops were put under British command on the condition that they stay out of the civil war?

HERSHBERGER: No.

LENNING: President Wilson said that American troops could only fight the Germans . . .

HERSHBERGER: Well, we didn't fight the Germans.

LENNING: So you didn't know that when you were over there?

HERSHBERGER: No, we didn't know that when we was up there.

LENNING: Were any of the men suspicious about the legality of the orders that the British gave them?

HERSHBERGER: Well, the Americans had to do about all of the front line work. The British set back in Archangel, most of them. There was a few British got out, but the Americans did most of the fighting.

LENNING: Did any of the men ever wonder if the Americans back home knew what you were doing?

HERSHBERGER: I don't know. That I don't know.

LENNING: How did you personally feel about interfering in Russia's internal affairs?

HERSHBERGER: Well, in all of those wars over there, I always figured we should let them fight their own battles. But on that big front in Germany, if we would have, first thing we know, the Germans would have been over here, too, because they'd battled them countries down, and them countries over there couldn't do it. They couldn't handle it alone without our help. And if they got them licked, then they'd have been over here after us.

LENNING: So you feel that the Americans were justified in going to Russia to fight the Germans?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I don't think we had any reason to go up in Russia whatever. Now, that's what I don't think--that we had any reason to go up in Russia whatsoever. That question has never been answered yet, why we went to Russia. So far as I know, that question has never been answered.

LENNING: So you think it was unjustified?

HERSHBERGER: I think it was unjustified all the way through.

LENNING: Did the British direction of the expedition affect the morale of the troops?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I don't know as it did too much. The Americans was too strong on their own ideas. I don't think that the British had too much effect on the morale of the Americans.

LENNING: Several accounts of the expedition claim that the British used the Americans for their own purposes, that they placed excessive hardships on the Americans in order to pressure Washington into sending more troops so they could expand the expedition . . .

HERSHBERGER: Well, now I don't know about that. I couldn't say about that. As

far as I'm concerned, we had plenty of food, plenty of clothes, and all that. Only thing is, I think they should have sent more British out on the front lines than they did.

LENNING: How did you feel about the Americans being greatly outnumbered by the Bolsheviks?

HERSHBERGER: Oh! About ten, fifteen, sometimes as much as twenty to one that they were outnumbered. But they still came out on top. We lost an awful lot of men, but we still came out on top.

LENNING: What do you mean by that?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we didn't lose out. We didn't have to back up too much.

JOHNSON: I'm not quite sure I understand what you mean. Eventually, you had to evacuate.

HERSHBERGER: Well, we evacuated because they wanted to get us out of that country. It wasn't that we were licked or anything like that. We weren't licked or anything like that, but . . .

LENNING: But you didn't lick them either?

HERSHBERGER: No, we didn't lick them. It was a draw. It was just a draw.

LENNING: Looking back, what do you understand to have been the purpose of the expedition?

HERSHBERGER: Well, I couldn't say why it was for. I couldn't figure why we was up there and never could.

LENNING: Does this affect your feelings toward America at all?

HERSHBERGER: No. This is my country.

LENNING: Did it affect your feelings toward England?

HERSHBERGER: Well, we didn't have too much love for the English while we were there in England or after in Russia. The English soldiers tried to tell us that the beauty of the world lied in England. (laughter) Well, I never seen the beauty of the world while I was there. (laughter) But, might have been. You see, we was just in camp. But the Americans didn't have too much love for the British.

LENNING: Do you think that the experience made you more patriotic?

HERSHBERGER: Well, it didn't make any less.

LENNING: Did your experience in North Russia affect your outlook on life at all?

HERSHBERGER: No. I really enjoyed getting back, that's for sure! (laughter) And I went back on the farm and farmed for a few years. Then in 1929 or 1930, right around that time, I came to Muskegon and worked in a foundry for a while. I went back and farmed a couple years, and then I worked up there in Muskegon Camshaft making automobile camshafts.

LENNING: When you were in Russia, when did you first discover that you were coming home?

HERSHBERGER: Well, that's hard to tell. From Christmastime on, there was rumors of it. But they couldn't get in with any ships to get us out. It was froze up so hard that they couldn't get in with any ships to get us out.

LENNING: What about Murmansk? Wasn't that ice-free?



HERSHBERGER: Yes. Well, the only way they could have got us there was by rail, and we'd had to went right through Bolshevik country to get there.

LENNING: But that's the way your mail came.

HERSHBERGER: Yes. Well, the mail came through from Murmansk. If I remember right, George Albers was taken to Murmansk, and then he was shipped home from there. He was home quite awhile before we was.

JOHNSON: When you got home, how did people react?

HERSHBERGER: Well, they was really friendly, and everybody was happy to see us. They was happy to see us home.

JOHNSON: When you got back, did you find that they had heard much about the expedition?

HERSHBERGER: Well, they had just what they got in the papers. After that, that was all.

JOHNSON: When you were in Russia, did you ever hear that they were lobbying in Congress to get you home?

HERSHBERGER: Ah, we heard rumors of that. Yes, we heard rumors of those things.

LENNING: Well, thank you very much.

HERSHBERGER: Well, I don't think you got much information. (laughter)

## INDEX

- Albers, George 18,39
- American Sentinel 32
- Archangel 7,15,16,26,27,28,29
- Armistice 29
- Ballard, Lieutenant 8
- Bolsheviks 6,10,11,12,15,16,17,26
  - propaganda 27,28
- Bolshevism, lectures on 5,6
- British
  - as commanders of the Allied Expedition 4,9,10,11,30,32,35,36
  - rations 22
  - relations to allies 19,38
  - troops 19,26,29
- Camp Custer 1
- Canadians 26
- Censorship 31,32
- Communications 31,32,39
- Costello, Lt. Harry J. 8
- Donoghue, Major Michael 9
- Eastern Front 6,10,34
- England 1,2,3
- English (see British)
- French troops 25,29
- Frostbite 21
- Germans 35,36
- Hershberger, Russell
  - as machine-gunner 1,2,8,11,13,14
  - at Kodish 7,8,10,11,12,14,15,34
  - boot camp 1
  - drafted 1
  - feelings toward British 9,38
  - first encounters Bolsheviks 10
  - in Archangel 7,15,16,19,27,28,29
  - in Russian hospital 3,4,6,7,17
  - knowledge of Russia before arrival 1,5,6
  - on railroad front 7,19,20
  - opinions on morale 28,29,30,36
  - opinions on purpose of expedition 6,34,35,36,37,38
  - opinions on Russians 12,13,16,17,19,23,24
  - returns to U.S.A. 38,39
  - stays with a Russian family 23,24
  - voyage to Russia 3
- Ironside, General Edmund 9
- Italians 25,29
- Kenyon, Captain 8
- Kodish 7,8,10,11,12,14,15,25,26,34
  - burned 7,10,12,15
  - living conditions at 11,12,20,23
- Machine Gun Company 7,8,13,14
- Machine guns 2,3
- Medical care 3,4,5,6
- Murmansk 38,39

Obozerskaya 20  
O'Callighan, Lt. Jack 8  
Poole, Gen. F.C. 9  
Prisoners of war 17,18,19,28  
Red Cross 24,33  
Russian hospitals 3,4,6  
Russians 12,13,16,17,19,23  
Salvation Army 33  
Somali 3  
Spanish flu epidemic 3  
Stewart, Colonel 9  
Verst 446 20  
Western Front 6  
White Russian troops 25  
Y.M.C.A. 33