

Transcript of Legacy Interview with Tim Mulligan

Patrice Brown: We are here today to talk with Tim Mulligan a long time Archives employee and a much honored Archives employee. We are here to discuss his experiences working at the Archives over how many years Tim?

Mulligan: 34 years

Patrice Brown: 34 years, very long and honored time here I am sure. Let's start talking about your higher education and your decision to work here at the Archives.

Mulligan: Ok, well actually my education level did not effect my decision to work at the Archives very much at all because when I came to the Archives all I had was a Bachelors degree. Initially, I had gone to what was called the Office of the Chief of Military History, it later became the Army Center for Military History, about a job there. They said you really need to have more education and more experience with primary sources and such. They suggested that I might try working at the National Archives for awhile and that was one of the reasons that I applied for the job. As I say when I started I was an archives technician, I did not have any graduate work at all. I started doing graduate work a year after I started at the National Archives.

I worked toward my Masters which I accomplished in spring of 1976 and then continued on eventually finished my doctorate in 1985. It was interesting to observe that when I started in the graduate program at the University of Maryland I was still working full time at the Archives. The archives at that point, this is 1973 1974, had no program for providing any kind of assistance either financial or time to employees who were going to graduate school. So I had to do all of that on my own, for example that meant taking off work on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, using my own annual leave, walking up to New York Ave to the Greyhound bus station, and taking the Greyhound bus up route one to College Park to go to class. Finally, as I was ending my masters program the Archives began to change its policy and began to provide financial assistance for classes that directly related to the job that you were doing and providing you leave time for doing that.

The education that I had received in getting my Master's Degree opened the door for me to go from being an Archives technician to being an Archivist. I finished my Masters in the spring of 1976 and I was able to apply for and obtain an Archivist position in the central reference unit. Of course, that meant a promotion and advancement for the next two years. When I finished my doctorate in 1985 another door was opened for me to work with the Captured German records. For my Doctoral work I specifically worked with the various German records that we had. My doctoral dissertation dealt with a topic that required me to become familiar with a variety of captured German records and our holdings. That was a great benefit to me in my future work in the Captured German Records section of the National Archives. On the other hand it proved in the long run not to be that developmental, it wound up for me being too specialized. Once one became

completely associated with Captured German records it kind of closed doors for any other possibilities but I made the most of it.

Patrice Brown: That sounds very interesting Tim. Do you feel that working at the Archives first helped you to develop your interest in pursuing some further degrees?

Mulligan: Yes, very definitely. When I started to work at the Archives, I wanted to write. I wanted to do things on my own. I wanted to be working in the field of history. I always had a number of interests, not just captured records. That was always one of my most concentrated interests but I did not have a specific focus when I came to the Archives. I was working in different areas, but I made the decision to concentrate on European History and German History in graduate school, based in large part on my experiences here working with the records. And because I became familiar with what we had available in captured German records, I thought that was something interesting to try to focus on and try to get to.

In my development here it took me a long time to actually get to captured records. First of all, I spent some time in Records Declassification, then in Modern Military Records as a technician, first in projects then in reference. Then as I said because the opening for an archivist position first became available in Central Reference which meant I worked with the Central Reference Unit. That required you to know something about all the records that we had in the National Archives. As I said I worked there for two and a half years before going back to Modern Military. The decision to do what I did with my doctoral work specifically reflected on the decision that okay I am going to focus on the German materials, on German history and how the two work together. You had to know the history of Germany in order to work with the records. It wasn't enough just to know the language.

Of course you have to know German to be able to look at the records. You also have to have a familiarity with German history. With the institutions, with the people, with the decision making process, with records that are available in Germany which of course were those that we restituted after World War II in the 1950's. It also includes many records that are only available in Germany. This also meant understanding how the records we have on microfilm fit in with those other German records available only in Germany.

At the same time one of the most beneficial aspects of my job, was getting to understand how other American records fit into the Captured German records to provide an overall context. For example, you have a huge amount of American intelligence records which directly relate to political events, personalities, military events, and interrogations of individuals. Learning how these American intelligence records directly supplement what you find in the captured German records is instrumental in working with World War II records.

The Archives collection of World War II war crimes records, Record Group 238, that's another good example. There you have literally thousands of German documents that were removed from their original files. Collected, assembled, arranged and described as independent documentary series for Judicial purposes and used at the first international military tribunal at Nuremberg and then later the twelve supplemental tribunals of war crimes and then all the U.S. Army sponsored war crimes trials which were basically held in Dachau.

Well that documentation is very significant in understanding what's been available there and how that compliments what you are going to find in German official records. That was always an important part of the job for me. One of the most rewarding and enriching experiences I had was being able to understand how these different records worked together and fit together in one context and being able to provide this information to help researchers on those questions. That was very rewarding.

Patrice Brown: You seemed to have a very comprehensive background and you were hired and worked prior to the CIDs (Career Intern Development) program. What type of training did the Archives provide you to become so well versed in the World War II era (German and American history).

Mulligan: I became an archivist in 1976 that was pre-CIDS. There really wasn't a central program in place for training archivists. The result was that an office would train its archivists according to its own needs. In other words training was decentralized and apparently I am under the assumption that once you start working for a particular office, then you are going to work there the rest of your career. Which is one reason why the Archives went to a more general and centralized program within a few years?

The training that I received in association with my duties in the Central Reference Unit required me to go on rotations with each of the reference units that existed in the National Archives. So I became somewhat familiar with all of the holdings the Diplomatic Branch, the National Resources Branch, the Judicial Branch, the Modern Military and the Old Military. Also, you had to perform certain functions such as preparing an inventory and preparing a microfilm publication. Those were standard functions you had to perform which were carried over into the CIDS and subsequent program at least for awhile. With those you learned the basic archival principles.

First of all you learned ideas and concepts such as provenance, organizational hierarchy, and respect des fonds. You learned those kinds of things that every archivist has to know in order to approach any job that requires archival knowledge and expertise. You simply don't get that in the historical field. We learned about records from constantly talking with researchers, and also by rotating to these other NARA units, to get a good sense of the substance of their holdings. You learn what kind of records we have and also what kind of records we did not have. That's just as important when you are a reference archivist and especially for that function I initially was performing in the Central Reference Unit to be able to say to researchers okay you have this topic, we have these

records that match your topic but we don't have these other records which you are going to need to look at.

That was part of the training program that we had, an understanding of an overview of records, not just the National Archives holdings. What was available elsewhere? We didn't do rotations of course at the Library of Congress although that was at one point discussed among us at the time in the seventies. Maybe it would be a good idea for us to do those kinds of rotations. That didn't happen but it was an interesting revelation of thinking at the time. You had to have some general command of primary source materials that related to historical research beyond that which was in NARA's custody.

Patrice Brown: Do you find it lacking in the subsequent training course?

Mulligan: Things have very much changed. One of the most interesting aspects of working at the Archives in the early seventies, it was a very small agency. Of course we were not independent we were consumed within the General Services Administration. Everybody knew everybody else which always meant that you were very much familiar with the personalities and personality quirks of individuals who worked in the agency. There were no secrets everybody knew everyone else and all this.

There were some disadvantages to this situation however there was an absolute clarity among everyone that worked who I knew about our function, about our mission. Which was above all to serve the American public and above all reference work, everything was geared toward providing superior quality reference to the research community. Whether that was the American general public doing genealogical research, whether that was veterans coming in to look up their old unit records or whether it was students coming in from the United States or Europe with PhD dissertations. That was our function.

Today we have many stakeholders making many claims. Our mission has broadened; above all we have to develop a sense of what needs to be done with information technology, to be on the cutting edge of that. That is all understandable and of course there are budget restrictions that will probably only get worse. So all of that serves to the situation, but I believe we had clarity then which I am grateful that we had and I don't know if we have that anymore.

Patrice Brown: I think you have highlighted various impressions of the agency when you began your career. Do you have any other impressions about the early Archives as opposed to the cutting edge turn of the century Archives

Mulligan: Well I must say, you felt something working in that building, at least when you went into the building. Being in this neoclassical building on Pennsylvania Ave, you had a sense that you're at the center of things, that you knew what you were doing, that we had a mission and it was clearly laid out. There was a certain pride I think at the time, this is where things are happening as far as the records, the documentary heritage of the United States government, this is where it is. You're working with it; you had to deal with the problem that you had no windows or very few windows in the old building and

not the best facilities which required us to have labs that were separated outside the main building and other offices that were located outside the main building. There were problems that were associated with that. Those physical problems were resolved with the transfer here to Archives 2.

We were certainly able to do much more at the modern technical facilities at Archives 2 that we could perform in the old building. The most important of those I will mention in a second deals with oversized German maps and the downtown labs. One of the reasons for the long delay in the return of the original German records which began in 1950 and was not completed until the 1990's was due to these oversized German maps.

The maps were literally wall sized and used at German Headquarters in Berlin and Potsdam. The labs that we had downtown at the neoclassical building, we simply didn't have the facilities for making the adequate color reproductions of those maps for the use of researchers here in North America. We had to have these oversized maps copied and available before we could return the originals to Germany. Having the physical resources that we had at Archives 2 we were able to deal with that problem and get very good quality reproductions done of those maps which numbered over five thousand. We were able to reconstitute those maps along with the other records and keep the records in its proper hierarchical order.

We were also able to bring together all those units that I mentioned that were physically separated from the main building downtown by coming to College Park. So I think there is a tradeoff. I think that there is a certain specialness to being downtown and being concentrated in one place and having a focus. I think certain things were lost with transferring functions and people out here but many things remained which could only be done by having a facility that we have here at College Park. Change is a part of life, so that was a change for the history of the National Archives.

Patrice Brown: Very interesting. What was your initial work assignment? How have your assignments changed over time? How did you come to work with the Captured German Record materials?

Mulligan: I was always working with modern era records though I had various assignments. I started as many people did in the Records Declassification Unit. That was because there were even budget considerations back in 1972 that meant that the project units could not hire people directly to staff positions or expand their positions. The Declassification Unit had been newly established, I think in 1972.

It was funded in order to address this major problem of declassifying the great bulk of World War II records which were coming up for review for declassification under the basic thirty year guideline. In 1972 this office was funded to address that need. It was able to hire many people who would come in and serve an apprenticeship with the declassification unit then being within the agency they could then move to units within the agency without having to meet the budgetary problem of being outside the agency.

That's what happened to a great many of us that started in declass and moved onto other units.

I moved into Modern Military, initially as a technician doing project work then later reference work. I knew about the captured records, I always thought it would be a good idea to work there because I was always interested in those records. I was interested in American records as well. As I said it was because of my educational work, more or less focused me in the Captured Records area. It became more logical for me to move to Captured Records that occurred really in about 1980.

Actually the thing that happened was that the Modern Military section combined with the Captured German Records section. For a period of time they were combined into one, so for awhile I was able to do both Captured German Records and Modern Military Records in the same year. Later the two units were split apart again and I went with Captured Records. When I went there I think we had a permanent staff of about ten people doing both reference work and project work. That was the continued description of microfilmed records. The thing to keep in mind with captured records was this. Although it would become one record group here in the National Archives in effect the records represented the ruins of the entire German National Archives. It was if someone were to board up the National Archives building, sift through what was left and then combine that as one collection.

We had over thirty thousand rolls of microfilm of Captured German records that included records from the German Army, German Navy, the Nazi Party, and various German Government agencies. I began to work with those records and acquired a familiarity with the history of the period and how all of this fit into a whole. Once I decided that I was going to go into that area that was a major commitment.

It required a commitment to say ok this is what I am going to focus on. I'm not working with one body of records as some people in the archives thought I was. "He works with just one record group." Well that one record group represents the records of an entire government, its military and part of its entire society. So you had to have that understanding of the institutions, the history of the society as well as the language and how records were kept. I thought that was a challenge, I thought that's something I have got to commit to, fine I will do it. That optimally lead me to the decision, alright I am going to focus on this, and I'm going to get my doctoral dissertation in this. Of course things would change and eventually the Captured Records Section itself would be abolished.

That happened in 1994 but as it turned out the volume of work that was to be done lead to my continued work with those records over the past eleven years, from autumn of 1995 up to the present. Basically the last eleven years I have been trying to wrap up what remained of the German project work; the records that needed to be filmed and to be described for use by scholars and the public.

Patrice Brown: Let me just ask you a question about the language skills? Were you fluent in German before you started your work in this area or did you acquire that as you went along?

Mulligan: I would say that I refined my ability because I had not grown up in Germany. I had not lived at any time in Germany but I studied German starting in high school and then in college. I had taken classes in the field because I was always interested in it. Then the exposure to the records gave me the expanded ability and the refinement of my language skills. It is interesting to see how the language itself changed.

Working with the Second World War era you become used to a certain style of German and in fact the documents reflect a very legalistic kind of writing. The German Bureaucracy of World War II was very legalistic in its background. As I understand it most career German Bureaucrats would get a degree in law before they would apply for the German Civil Service and that is reflected in the writing of that period. We also have records at least the ones I have been working with most recently of the German Navy which date back to 1822 on film. In those records you can see the German language changing, especially from the mid nineteenth century into the twentieth century.

The use of terms, the spelling of words changes significantly. The use of foreign words can be seen and then being dropped. The highest German terms for security classified, for example, during World War II was *Guhina Gasafa* or *Sefsaca*. Those were the words that were most commonly associated with the equivalent of top secret materials. In World War I the term is *Dans Sacahim*, completely secret which means this is the top level of security classification. You go back to the nineteenth century; the term they are using is actually *sacret*, secret borrowed from the French because German especially the eighteenth and nineteenth century borrowed heavily from the French language for many of its terms. So you can see the German language itself changing and that was an education in itself that I am experiencing as an archivist working with the records.

Patrice Brown: You have touched on it but I would like to go into a little bit more detail about some of the challenges and issues that you faced in your career with the Archives as you were working with the records.

Mulligan: Well the issues that I had to deal with, they were familiar ones with many other people even though I was working in a more specialized area. We always had concerns about budget; we always had concerns about the availability of resources and materials. We always had to deal with the problem of reorganizations and restructuring.

I would say that up to 1994, I was always in a position to be able to affect some kind of change in my own situation. I had some control over what would happen. If things were not a certain way then if I wanted to, I could move onto another office or I could find a way to cope with the situation if it was within my office. After 1994, ironically with the move to Archives II, I found that I was much more subject to change rather than having

any control over it. The best example of that is the decision to move to Archives II and concurrent with that, in 1994 the Berlin document center closed down.

The Berlin Document Center was set up at the end of World War II as the repository for biographic documentation of people who served and worked in the Nazi party and its affiliated organizations. Those records have been in Berlin since 1945. Basically from 1949 on that facility had been run by the U.S. State Department. In 1994 with reunification of Germany and with a variety of other factors, the State Department decided it would close down the facility, transfer the originals to the custody of the German Brech Hierarchy and transfer microfilm copies to the National Archives to supplement the copies that we had here. That decision and that transfer of thirty-nine thousand rolls of microfilm of biographic material to supplement the thirty thousand rolls of microfilm we already have coincided sided with the decision by the Archives to flatten and simplify the organizational structure.

So that the captured records section which had existed as an independent unit in some form or another up through 1994 was abolished in October 1994 which also led to, along with the planned transfer to College Park, the retirement of a number of the experienced employees and staff members of the Captured Records Section. So you have this development that you are more than doubling your holdings responsibilities at the same time you are abolishing the unit and reducing the staff. That was a major challenge in dealing with the records.

Patrice Brown: Yes, I would say that.

Mulligan: Never the less there is always an ability to cope with these things and one of the great abilities is always the human resources of the National Archives that are there for assistance and cooperation. As I say the decision to transfer the functions to College Park at the same time we were doubling our holdings and abolishing the unit structure meant that in the end it meant that there would be a commitment to finish project work.

So perhaps there was unattended consequence which I think proved very beneficial because we had the situation that developed over a period of twenty years that large numbers of German records had never been transferred or restituted into this hierarchy. They had been omitted from the initial returns from the 50's into the early 70's because they had been security classified by the U.S. Army or other defense agencies and they were delayed for restitution for that reason, rather than the 1980's, 1990's and up through the work of the inter-agency working group finally those records were declassified almost completely. The last records that had not been filmed had to be filmed and the originals had to be returned. Again going back through the activities of the last eleven years the realization that we had to deal with this situation, we had to finish the project work; we had to return these records. We had to draw a close, draw an ending to the basic project function. That was the results of really coming to Archives II and of these earlier decisions that I mentioned and that was beneficial. The Bre hierarchy was very happy to get back their records that had been in limbo for all these years. Finally, we have adequate finding aids to these additional records which we had been describing in an

ongoing process for some time for which we had never been able to finish. I was able to more or less conclude that over these last eleven years. Does that answer your question?

Patrice Brown: Yes basically. Do you want to talk about the finding aids that you produced?

Mulligan: Over the years I have produced every type of finding aid you could imagine. I started with doing an inventory which was actually to be about a commission involving the Philippines and that was quite some time ago. Of course there were microfilm publications, individual microfilm publications ranging from one roll to one hundred rolls but above all the type of finding aid that I produced were guides.

This was a series that was started in 1956. We are going to have to go back a little bit to the history of the German records. The German records were brought over to the United States by the U.S. Army. They had begun to be described by them, had begun to be filmed by them but in the end the Army realized with their budgetary problems they couldn't finish it in a proper way. The American Historical Association (AHA) took a major interest in the materials. Essentially, the AHA funded the filming or refilming of the German records which would eventually become what we have here. The AHA also funded a committee of scholars to begin the description of these records.

Patrice Brown: Before they came?

Mulligan: Before they came to the National Archives custody they were physically located at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria Virginia which is still there and is currently used as an artists market. Up through the 1960's the Torpedo Factory was where those original German records were stored and were being filmed. It was from the Torpedo Factory that the first major restitution of these German records began. This team or committee of scholars was not directly associated with the National Archives but after a period of time the function was taken over on a permanent basis by the National Archives (NARA). The staff who had worked with the records came to NARA as staff employees. These people represented a combination of people who had been working with these records while they were in Army custody along with some of the scholars which had been funded by the AHA. Yes that was how the program got started. So the guide process, the descriptions that were prepared on a much more detailed basis than you would typically find, in the finding aids that NARA prepares. Inventories for example basically provide a series description from the material and we provide a certain amount of information about the nature of the arrangement and so forth. Basically you try to provide concise and succinct descriptions of each series.

For the German records it was always realized that we had to do more than that. This is how the AHA had begun their description. You needed to be able to pull up the nuggets that were in individual series or files and identify this information for researchers. Within this series which you would not know by the title you will find the following items. So these guides went to a greater depth of description than what you would typically find in National Archives produced finding aids. You got used to doing those

kinds of guides. The very first guide that I did in this program was guide number ninety two, I did that in the early 1980's and that was the records of Foreign Armies East, Fredhavhaust which was the German Army high command intelligence staff for the eastern front. That was the very first guide that I did and shortly after that one of our staff members which specialized in working with the German Navy suffered a accident and was out for six months and we had no one to fill in and we had reference work with the German Navy records because this was just after the film Das Boot that came out in 1982, I had just finished that guide and I wanted to learn something new. So I thought well I will volunteer, I will learn what I can about German Navy records and start working on some material there. That led to the guides for the beginning the guides to the German Navy records. I am continuing to work on those guides, the last guide up to the very end. I will be finishing the draft of German Navy guide number six in the next few weeks just before my retirement.

Patrice Brown: Very gratifying I am sure.

Mulligan: That is gratifying yes and there is an amazing amount of material in those records. That's the only body of official records for the First World War which is available on two continents. Consider that the anniversary of World War I is coming up. There will be a lot of historical interest, researcher interest in the First World War. In fact it has been picking up the last few years. This is an invaluable source. It's available in microfilm here in the United States at Archives Two. The originals are available in Freiberg in Germany. The finding aids that we are preparing are such that no one else, The German Beis hierarchy is not preparing the same kind of finding aids. They are doing the basic inventories as typical basic archival work. Our guides will provide more detail. So if the researchers use the records here or they use them in Germany; our guides are going to provide a more detailed finding aid for them than anything that will be provided anywhere else. That is gratifying. That will really be a combination.

Patrice Brown: I know we have been talking about what you have been doing for the last eleven years and perhaps if I was speaking about the work you have been doing we can maybe guess that you would find this to be the most important part of your career.

Mulligan: I would have to say yes. Working over the last eleven years, where I would have never anticipated that but I would have to say that the work that I have done at the end has wound up being the most important I think because we were able to finish the project and get records back to Germany where they can be used by researchers there and where the originals arguably belong. At the same time we have copies of the material here and we have better control over the holdings at the National Archives. So that in a way I now feel is the most important work that I did. I hate to denigrate or think otherwise of the reference work that I did because most of my time here I would have to say that I felt that it was the most important work. Dealing with the public, dealing with the reference questions, assisting researchers at many levels and overall I would have to say that I felt that was the most important work. Let's just say that the two are equal.

Patrice Brown: Well perhaps could we say that your reference work was your favorite part of the work.

Mulligan: Yes I would have to say that was my favorite work. There were some favorite moments. I would say that the most favorable assignment I had was a weeks worth of duty in Berlin in 1995 which was to over see the physical transfer of textile records which were unarranged and undescribed. They had been found beneath the garage of the former Berlin Documents Center. It was not so much fun working with those records after they came back here but the week in Berlin was certainly enjoyable.

Interviewer: Where did they find these records under the garagethirty years?

Mulligan: They were records that were originated by US Army authorities in occupied Germany in 1945 to 49. Then the facility ceased being an Army function and transferred to State Department. The Army decided we didn't want to take these records with us. The State Department said well they are not our records I don't know what else to do with them, let's just leave them there. They were only really identified at the time of the closing of the documents side. So then the records had to be physically packaged, I had to do some kind of preliminary work to get some idea of what was in these records.

There were no finding aids, they were unarranged, undescribed. In the end they wound up being allocated to several different record groups, because that was the actual province but it took at great deal of work to identify that material. The weeks worth of time in Berlin in overseeing that, that was very nice. To go back to the favorite activity yes the reference work was very satisfying. It could be frustrating at times and there were some researchers who would make life interesting. There was one researcher that would follow me out of the Archives at the end of work and follow me to the bus stop on Pennsylvania Ave and continue to talk with me about his topic and research. I kept trying to be polite and say "I'm going home now, I am not staying here." So you had some experiences like that however the most rewarding single moment that I would say I had was one particular researcher after the film, "Das Boot" came out, there was an increased reference use and interest in German Navy records especially relating to U-boats. One day I received a call from a woman living in Reston [Virginia] who had read an article in the Washington Post about our holdings. Again, I had been interviewed for the article about German U-boat records. (Cuts off, end of tape)

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Mulligan: After he had departed on his last patrol so he never got to see her and she never knew him except for photos and what her mother told her. She said what do you have about my father's U-boat and about what he did? So I checked and of course we did have a war diary for that U-boat which included on microfilm every day's entry for that particular patrol by the U-boat that the captain had to sign so we had a record of his patrol, the next to last patrol and then for the final patrol we had a reconstructed war diary. This what the German U-boat command would create when a U-boat would not return. They would take the most important radio messages that had been exchanged between headquarters and the U-boat and put that together as a summary of the last patrol

if there had been survivors who were reported as taken prisoner by the International Red Cross that would be added to the reconstructed war diary. In the case of this particular U-boat there were no survivors as was usually the case. So there was only this reconstruction based on the most important radio communication so I told her about that material and she asked for copies. We provided copies, I was happy to do that. She was very pleased with what we had, but I thought of another source subsequently. This is another example of how American records work in with German records. Among the holdings of the Records of the National Security Agency (NSA) Record Group 457, we had a number of intercepts of German U-boat communication which were arranged on a chronological basis. Now in this case we were intercepting, encrypting and translating the messages. So we could get the English language version, we don't have the German. I went through that period of time for that last U-boat patrol in which her father would have been the captain. The reconstructed war book diary had seven or eight messages taken and identified as the most important. However, I found at least fifty messages that had actually been exchanged between U-boat headquarters and that particular U-boat and one of those messages was the announcement to the captain that a baby girl had been born to his wife.

Patrice Brown: I bet that meant a lot to her.

Mulligan: It meant a lot to her because she now knew that her father knew that she had been born and she was very pleased with that and I was pleased to be able to find that among our holdings. The satisfaction I got from that particular reference request was unequaled and I still recall that very fondly.

Patrice Brown: I see all the information that you provided us, a lot of interest has been generated in what you have been doing over the years. I assume the Archives administration is very interested in what you were doing and what you had been accomplishing. Did you always find the level to be high from one archivist to the next archivist or did you find interest basically only from outside sources or resources.

Mulligan: I will hit the second part first; yes there was always an interest from the research community in what was going on. I always would take the opportunity whenever I could to let researchers know about what we had and what was coming. The guides that I was working on and what we planned to do and what would become available such as the German maps and such. There was always a major interest and support from the outside for that material. I have to say that my most purging and most pleasant experience working with the National Archives on the whole has been the cooperation I have received from all the staff members with whom I had to work on these questions. I was responsible for all of these functions about the Captured German records such as getting them filmed; preparing descriptions of them for publication, getting the records packaged adequately, conserve, and then returned to Germany. That meant I was dependent on a great number of people. Over whom I had no authority; I could not give orders to people. "I want you to do this by this date." I had to always ask, "What does your schedule look like? I have this work I need to have done, can you help me out?" I have to say that the experiences that I had were outstanding. People in the

conservation staff were able to do incredible things especially in repairing some damaged material, outstanding work. The people in the microfilm lab in getting the material properly filmed and back to me in good time. People in the editorial staff in helping me get the guides out and getting those published and edited in an economical way as possible. The people who packaged the records provided tremendous assistance in getting that done. The guys on the waiting dock were able to pick up the records from the stacks and get them on to the loading dock in time for the German trucks coming to pick up the records. I was always dependent on these people for assistance and I was never disappointed. So I have to say that's the most gratifying professional experience that I have had at the National Archives.

Patrice Brown: Listening to all your experiences you sound as if you are the model that we use to develop the subject area expert. Do you feel that way?

Mulligan: Well that is hard to say. I would say that for much of my career I was certainly a specialist in a specialized office. I would have to say that the nature of working in the National Archives tends to be rather specialized and that has always been true whether it was Archives One in the 70's or Archives Two in 2003. People tend to work in their own area and naturally focus on function that requires a lot of work. Yes, I suppose I was a specialist in a very specific way but I am glad that the work I did required a broad knowledge. It's specialized but I appreciate the fact that it required me to know about things going on in other areas of records and with a variety of other offices and people. I think that is the most important thing. We are all specialists whether we realize it or not. Some of us are more specialists perhaps than others. Even of us that are very specialized, realize that in the end we have to more general in our understanding.

Patrice Brown: All of this background we are talking about. You talk about administration, the records and the researchers. I want to touch upon your interaction with the media. What is your interaction with the news media, and the television media? I just want to throw in that I turned on my TV and saw you on the History Channel so let's hear a little about that.

Mulligan: I have achieved virtual immortality so as long the tapes don't run out. That was a mix of experiences because the media when they come to you they are interested in particular subjects and in some cases they were coming to me for my archivist knowledge and my ability to tell them about records.

In other cases they are coming to me more as a historian about German Navy about U-boats and so forth. I had to make a distinction in dealing with the media, what kinds of question are they really interested in and how do I therefore respond. For many of these cases we would conduct the interviews and the work would do outside of the Archives and I would normally specify. If you check the tapes on the History Channel it would say your both historian and German Navy Historian and I would specify that. I am not speaking here as an archivist or as an employee of the National Archives. Those experiences you always have to hope for the best with the media because you never know what is going to be on the cutting room floor. In some cases things that I thought most

important of what I had said or tried to pass along never made it on TV and something which I considered not that important rather extraneous it was the one clip they chose to use. You have no control over that. You just always have to be aware of that reality of dealing with the media and accept it. For those events and people who are coming out to the Archives and whom I have dealt with as an Archivist I would have to say those went pretty smoothly and I felt pretty good about the results especially when I saw what they would use. The message I tried to get across came through, so on a whole my experiences with the media were positive but maybe I was luckier than most.

Patrice Brown: Do you generate a lot of researcher attention more so than if you had not done that type of work.

Mulligan: That's hard to say. I think the media interest reflects the researcher interest. If a topic is hot and that's what people are interested in then the media is picking up on this researcher interest. They are reinforcing it. They reflect it and support it, further it in a particular area. There has always been interest in U-boats. We have U-boats off North Carolina shore; we have people who die off the U-boats. There was the recent discovery of the U-boat not too far off the coast of New Jersey which was not suppose to be there and which a couple of scuba divers discovered and had to consult the records. I have to say that when they came to us in the first instance we couldn't provide much assistance. All we could say is that according to our records there is no U-boat there. The U-boat that you think is supposedly lost off the coast of Casa Blanca is not documented in the records so there's really nothing more we can help you with. There is an example of the limits of what official research can provide. That was a good example, that particular program is a good example of how we are still learning from the past. We think we have got it under control. We think we have got it mastered and especially those of us working with records. We think well, we have got it all documented it's all on the books. There is nothing new there but these two gentlemen located a particular U-boat off New Jersey. They proved that there are still things to be discovered, that sometimes the records are wrong, in that case we don't go back and change the record as I explained to them but it is important to have staff members that understand that these things happen and the records often reflect inaccurate information.

Patrice Brown: Has researcher demand ever impacted your work? In other words has it ever determined guides or have guides always flowed out of the natural progress of your work as opposed to people coming in saying I want or I'm interested in this or that . Does that influence your work at all?

Mulligan: For the most part the guide work that was done, much of the guide work that I did, had already been set in place. We were not get any immediate pressures for guides from researcher interest but we were thinking in terms [as the former boss put it] of wholesale research rather than retail research. That was the whole function of the guides at the time. As is the purpose now of ARC that we put information that we know people are interested in that covers a broad range of topics. We don't respond to pressure at a particular moment per say with exceptions. On the whole we want to keep an overview in mind of what we need to describe, or records that we need to describe in detail verses

the records that do not require the same level of description. So for the most part the guide work proceeded on regular scheduled basis but there is always exceptions and I have to say in particular the interest that was generated consequence to the film, "Das Boot" in 1982 and the fact that this coincided with the revelation in 1970's of the ultra secret and the fact that the Allies had been reading German communication for most of the war and in particular and the most particular application of that intelligence information to use it against German U-boat operations during the war. That revelation of course affected a major scholarly community. So we had a broad level of interest generated by the film by personal interest as I mentioned with the mother and the scholarly community all coming together which lead to the specific publication of the U-Boat guides. Again, there was no schedule initially for German Navy guides that were being done by one specialist working in our unit. I was the one that proposed let's prepare a guide to U-boat records and get that out so it takes the pressure off of us. My bosses agreed yeah that makes sense and it is consistent with the other German records so that is an example of where we responded to the particular interest of the particular time in my experience.

Patrice Brown: We are so happy that you did. I note that you sent your entire career here at the Archives; I think you were saying even your first real job was here at the Archives. What has kept you here?

Mulligan: Well first I have to say that I never planned to spend 34 years at the National Archives. My original plan was it would be nice to come in to become familiar with primary sources, to know where things are, to know what's in the records and what isn't and then move on to the traditional historian's job. Teach at a University and writing. Well that never really panned out because historian's jobs were not really that good or available. Much less available in the 1980's than they had been in the 1960's. For a while I actually considered working for the Center for Military History which was the initial office I had contacted for a job after I had graduated from college. They were going to offer me a job but I would have had to essentially go back down the latter and start at the ground floor there.

Patrice Brown: Well it wouldn't seem appropriate.

Mulligan: No it didn't seem appropriate to me either that is why I essentially couldn't do it. Besides which civilian historian's jobs at the defense department proved to be rather fragile commodity. Now of course their work is contracted out rather than keeping employees as historians on staff. What kept me here was a variety of things. I love the contact with the work, not a lot of history. I was working with the raw material of history. I was seeing it; I was dealing with it everyday. I was performing a function that helped to make that available as historical research material to the research community. That was very rewarding and very special and that's what I held onto in times of reorganization, budget freezes and this and that. That was the primary motivation for that. I could tell a story. I was at a party in Washington back in the 80's. I was talking to somebody and of course we start talking about our jobs. I explained well I work with the Captured German records at the National Archives. Describing the records and

providing research assistance to people working with the records. The person I was talking to looked at me and said, "Well that certainly is a specialized skill, how did you come by that? And I explained, well in this case my background interests in the subject and my academic qualifications, I got my Master's then I got my PhD in this field, perfectly qualified me to do the job that I was doing. So he said to me congratulations you are the first person I have met who works for the Federal Government and who is exactly qualified for the job he is doing. I said, "Not so loud."

Patrice Brown: That's really interesting. Do you find that people come to their job after coming to an agency as opposed to already knowing what they want to do and finding that slot at an agency.

Mulligan: I think you would find every different combination applicable. Many people come to the Archives in the 70's who already have their Master's and who had begun to see that they expected to be historians and teachers. You are discovering that's not out there anymore. What had been true before in the sixties was not true by the late seventies and so they came to the government saying I want a job and if I get a job and I am going to move into an agency, I am going to look to get as far as I can. The background was just something you either make a good living or make the best possible living you could. So you come to the agency and make the most of it. You are an opportunist in the particular sense of looking for whatever is available that suits what you can do and making the most of it. I think there were other people who come because they were interested in a particular subject. Where they were at was where that subject was at and they were going to stay there no matter what. Unless something else came up that was directly related to that subject. Although some people who started out at the Archives and would have stayed at the Archives and would have been retiring with me on the same day but for the fact that an opportunity came up in a different field working with a private company doing historical research. I will continue to work with primary source material. One particular friend of mine was interested in the Civil War. He left to work with the Time Life series on the Civil War which ended up being two separate series. It allowed him to travel around the country to Civil War source materials located in private hands, in state archives and historical societies which supplemented of course what we had available here in the National Archives and the Library of Congress. So there was the case of someone who would have stayed but an opportunity arose that allowed them to do the same kind of work in a different venue. So I think you would find every different type of motivation, inspiration for working at the Archives here. I think you would find that anywhere else in the government.

Patrice Brown: Perhaps a final wrap up question. What memory or experience do you take away from the Archives when you leave, something good hopefully?

Mulligan: Yes, the best memory and experience I will have at the National Archives are the people I work with although I do have to say that I love the records, I cater for the records. I love the records and I love working with the records but the lasting memory will always be of the staff members with whom I worked, my colleges, all the people who assisted me and allowed me to do my job and to accomplish what I did accomplish

here. I think that the most important resource of the National Archives remains its staff, its human resources. One can always do more; one can always facilitate one's functions with technology, with electronics now of course. You can never compensate for the expertise, the cooperation, the inspiration you find in human beings and especially those whom I have encountered here at the National Archives, which I am very grateful.

Patrice Brown: Would you like to add anything that I haven't given you an opportunity to add about your career here at the Archives.

Mulligan: Off hand I think I am covered. Don't you think so? I would say that's it.

Patrice Brown: I've enjoyed talking with you Tim and have learned many things about the early part of the Archives that I didn't know before and I am glad we were able to add your institutional memory to our Legacy Collection. Thanks.

Mulligan: It's an honor and privilege for me to be able to pass along my experiences and observations. Thank you very much.

Gift of Historical Materials
of
Timothy P. Mulligan
to
The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Timothy P. Mulligan (hereinafter referred to as the Donor), hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America, for eventual deposit in the National Archives of the United States (hereinafter referred to as the National Archives), the following historical materials (hereinafter referred to as the Materials):

Video recordings (1 Beta Master and 1 DVD-R) of an oral history interview of Timothy P. Mulligan, conducted on November 17, 2006, by Patrice Brown on behalf of the National Archives Assembly Legacy Project.

Tape recording (1 cassette) and transcript of an oral history interview of Timothy P. Mulligan, conducted on November 17, 2006, by Patrice Brown on behalf of the National Archives Assembly Legacy Project.

Letter from the Co-Lead of the Legacy Project Committee Susan Abbott to Timothy P. Mulligan, October 19, 2006, inviting Mr. Mulligan to participate in an oral history interview for the Assembly's Legacy Project.

2. Because the Materials were generated in connection with the National Archives Assembly Legacy Project--an oral history project designed to capture the institutional memory of retiring NARA staff--the Donor stipulates that the Materials be accessioned into the National Archives and allocated to the donated historical materials collection of the National Archives Assembly. This collection is designated as NAA and is entitled, Records of the National Archives Assembly.

3. The Donor warrants that, immediately prior to the execution of the deed of gift, he possessed title to, and all rights and interests in, the Materials free and clear of all liens, claims, charges, and encumbrances.

4. The Donor hereby gives and assigns to the United States of America all copyright which he has in the Materials.

5. Title to the Materials shall pass to the United States of America upon their delivery to the Archivist of the United States or the Archivist's delegate (hereinafter referred to as the Archivist).

6. Following delivery, the Materials shall be maintained by NARA at a location to be determined by the Archivist in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and provided that at any time after delivery, the Donor shall be permitted freely to

examine any of the Materials during the regular working hours of the depository in which they are preserved.

7. It is the Donor's wish that the Materials in their entirety be made available for research as soon as possible following their deposit in the National Archives.

8. The Archivist may, subject only to restrictions placed upon him by law or regulation, provide for the preservation, arrangement, repair and rehabilitation, duplication and reproduction, description, exhibition, display, and servicing of the Materials as may be needed or appropriate.

9. The Archivist may enter into agreements for the temporary deposit of the Materials in any depository administered by NARA.

10. In the event that the Donor may from time to time hereafter give, donate, and convey to the United States of America additional historical materials, title to such additional historical materials shall pass to the United States of America upon their delivery to the Archivist, and all of the foregoing provisions of this instrument of gift shall be applicable to such additional historical materials. An appendix shall be prepared and attached hereto that references this deed of gift and that describes the additional historical materials being donated and delivered. Each such appendix shall be properly executed by being signed and dated by the Donor and the Archivist.

Signed: Timothy P. Mullega
Donor

Date: 1/12/07

Pursuant to the authority of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, the foregoing gift of historical materials is determined to be in the public interest and is accepted on behalf of the United States of America, subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

Signed: _____
Archivist of the United States

Date: _____

