

By Richard Jones

Staff Writer

HAMILTON —

The Fitton Center for Creative Arts kicked off its Celebrating Self series Wednesday with a talk by John E. Dolibois, a former vice president of Miami University.

Dolibois graduated from Miami University in 1942, and in 1981, was called by President Ronald Reagan to become U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. Most of his talk concerned his experience after World War II, when he served as an interrogator in preparation for the famed Nuremberg Trials.

Dolibois came to the United States at the age of 12 with his family and did not speak a word of English, he said.

Consequently, he was placed in a kindergarten. He joked that he was by far the biggest child and didn't have to worry about being beaten up as the new kid.

He progressed quickly, however, and advanced quickly, several grades at a time, and it was only a matter of months before he was with his own age group.

A friend of the family suggested Miami University to him when he was ready for college, so he came to Butler County and has made his home here ever since.

In 1942, however, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He said when they asked if he had any special skills, he told the inductors that he could speak French and German and would like to join Military Intelligence.

"Can you drive a truck?" they asked him, and he ended up in training as a tank driver.

It wasn't long before Dolibois began to shine — "a 90-day wonder," he said — and went to Officer Candidate School, where he was commissioned by Gen. George S. Patton himself.

"I finally got to Military Intelligence where I wanted to be in the first place," he said. "I learned how to interrogate prisoners of war."

He was so good at it that he became an instructor and an expert in such interrogations, so after the war he was assigned to question captured 60 high-ranking German officers and government officials, including Hermann Goering, who was personally tapped by Hitler to be his replacement, and Albert Speer, the "Nazi architect."

The interrogations took place in the Palace Hotel in Luxembourg, code named "Ashcan," a luxury hotel that had been converted to a prison. The Nazis were housed on the second and third floors and were given the freedom to move around the hotel and speak to each other.

This freedom, however, was calculated to take advantage of their jealousies and rivalries.

"They were quite willing to talk about each other and squeal on each other," Dolibois said. "All we had to do was collect gossip that we collected and put it in our reports to the War Crimes Commission."

"They were all interesting personalities," he said. "Some were real criminals," but some were just ministers of the government who felt they were just doing their jobs."

Goering, Dolibois said, was "a dope fiend," addicted to morphine as a result of an early injury.

"From the standpoint of personality, he was charming and had a terrific sense of humor," he said. "If he was in a good mood he would tell jokes about himself and Hitler, and we got a lot of information from him."

"As a result of our interrogation, 24 of these high-ranking Nazis were sent to Nuremberg to be tried in an international tribunal," Dolibois said. "Eleven of them were sentenced to death and died by hanging and three were acquitted."

Although Goering was found guilty and sentenced to death, he escaped hanging by taking potassium cyanide capsules three hours before the scheduled execution, Dolibois said.

He said that as a historian, he likes to share his experience, but that a lot of his work was classified top secret, and he had been advised to shred his reports he kept copies of even though the information is available in books and other documents.

"The only way you'll get to hear the whole story is by reading my book," he said.

The book is titled "Patterns of Circles: An Ambassador's Story," and is available at amazon.com.

Source: <http://www.journal-news.com/news/news/former-ambassador-shares-stories-of-nazi-war-crimi/nbKQh/>

May 02, 2014

Miami mourns the loss of John E. Dolibois

Honors and Awards

Among his many recognitions and honors:

- He was honored with the Silver Beaver Award, Scouting's highest award for service to boyhood, in 1957 and was named a Distinguished Eagle Scout in 1972.
- In recognition of his military service and his work in international education, including the establishment of Miami's European center, the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg March 31, 1971, decorated him as Officer in the Grand Ducal Order of the Crown of Oak.
- In 1976 he received Luxembourg's decoration of Commander in the Order of Merit, recognizing his work on behalf of international good will and his services to international education as a member of the 12-person Board of Foreign Scholarships, which administers the Fulbright Exchange program.
- In 1977 he was awarded Miami's Benjamin Harrison Medallion. Named for the 1852 Miami graduate who became U.S. president, the medallion is presented to faculty and staff who have made outstanding national contributions to education.
- He received an honorary degree from Miami in 1984.
- In 1987 the grand duke of Luxembourg awarded him the Cross of the Grand Ducal Order of the Crown of Oak, Luxembourg's highest decoration.
- He was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Nov. 6, 1997.
- In 2002 he was awarded the first Michael J. Colligan History Prize at Miami University Hamilton for making the appreciation and study of history accessible and enriching for the community and also that year, Miami University Hamilton inaugurated the John E. Dolibois History Prize.

John Dolibois lights up a crowd during a presentation.

John E. Dolibois, former U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg and last survivor of a team that interrogated top-ranking Nazis for the Nuremberg Trials, died Friday, May 2, at his home in Cincinnati. He was 95.

Miami University's vice president emeritus for university relations, Dolibois (pronounced DOLL-uh-boy) was born Dec. 4, 1918, in Luxembourg. In 1931 at the age of 12, he immigrated with his father to the United States on July 4, joining John's sister, Marie, who was living in Akron.

He graduated from Akron North High School as president and valedictorian of his senior class and earned a four-year scholarship to Miami University.

He became involved in Boy Scouts as soon as he arrived in America and credited the Scouts for helping him adjust to a "foreign" environment. An Eagle Scout, he organized Oxford's first official Boy Scout troop as an undergraduate in 1938.

He majored in psychology at Miami, graduating with honors in 1942. While at Miami, he was president of the alpha chapter of Beta Theta Pi and a member of several honoraries including Phi Beta Kappa. He became a U.S. citizen his junior year in 1941 and married Winifred "Winnie" Englehart (Miami '42) during their senior year at Miami.

He took a job at Procter & Gamble as an industrial engineer. When drafted later in 1942, he pointed out that he was fluent in German.

He was eventually commissioned a lieutenant in the cavalry and transferred to a military intelligence center in Camp Ritchie, Maryland.

In March 1945 Dolibois became a member of the five-member Army Intelligence team that interrogated the highest-ranking Nazi war criminals after the fall of the Third Reich, leading up to the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. This included Hermann Goering, credited as the architect of the Nazi industrial machine and second in command under Adolf Hitler.

After six months of interaction, he knew some of Hitler's most trusted and senior-deputies well. When the defendants went to Nuremberg, Dolibois followed, interpreting their responses to Rorschach inkblot tests given by an Army psychiatrist.

After the war, Dolibois, who left the Army as a captain, returned to his job at Procter & Gamble until May 1, 1947, when he became Miami University's first full-time alumni secretary. He later became the first director of alumni affairs and development and, in 1966, first vice president for development and alumni affairs. In July 1981 he was named vice president for university relations, overseeing the news and publication offices as well as public relations, development and alumni programs.

"John Dolibois was one of Miami's finest alumni," said Miami President David Hodge. "He is the classic immigrant success story who played who served his adopted country with distinction in a unique role in the Nuremberg trials and later as ambassador to Luxembourg. A man of deep humanity, he was a master story teller who had an incredible memory to draw from. He was passionate about Miami, serving the university in a formal role and for many years afterwards as one of our most ardent ambassadors. We are deeply saddened by his passing, yet filled with the joy of the friendship we enjoyed. Truly a remarkable human being."

Among many accomplishments at Miami, he helped establish a study abroad program in Luxembourg in 1968. The Luxembourg center was renamed the Miami University John E. Dolibois European Center in 1987.

He organized the university's first fundraising campaign, for \$14 million, from 1978-1981, which helped raise funds to build the university's art museum, Marcum conference center and Yager football stadium and to increase the number of scholarships.

After 34 years at his alma mater, he retired so that he could represent the United States as ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg 1981-1985. In June 1981 he told the Associated Press that his nomination was the capstone of his career.

During his ambassadorial tenure, the 999-square-mile country of 365,000 was visited by Vice President George Bush, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Schulz and Gen. Alexander Haig.

In October 2003, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution naming the American embassy residence in Luxembourg the Dolibois House.

He and wife Winnie returned to Oxford in 1985 to retire. Until his death, Dolibois was a frequent speaker to students and other groups about his experiences surrounding the Nuremberg Trials.

John was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Winifred "Winnie" Englehart Dolibois (Miami '42), in 2009 and by their son, Brian Charles Dolibois (Miami '80). Survivors include sons John Michael Dolibois (Miami '66), of Oconto Fall, Wis., and Robert Joseph Dolibois (Miami '69) of Arlington, Va., eight grandchildren and other family members.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Source: <http://miamioh.edu/news/top-stories/2014/05/dolibois.html>

Nomination of John E. Dolibois To Be United States Ambassador to Luxembourg

August 6, 1981

The President today announced his intention to nominate John E. Dolibois, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg. He will succeed James G. Lowenstein, who is resigning.

Mr. Dolibois served in the United States Army as captain from 1942 to 1946. He was with Procter and Gamble of Cincinnati, Ohio, as industrial engineer in 1942 and from 1946 to 1947. Since 1947 he has been vice president (development and alumni affairs) at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He served as a member of the Board of Foreign Scholarships in 1969-1977.

Mr. Dolibois graduated from Miami University (A.B., 1942). He is married, has three children, and resides in Oxford, Ohio. He was born December 4, 1918, in Luxembourg.

Citation: Ronald Reagan: "Nomination of John E. Dolibois To Be United States Ambassador to Luxembourg ," August 6, 1981. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44153>.

RIP

Ambassador John E. Dolibois +

4.12.1918 - 2.5.2014

Former United States Ambassador John Dolibois has died aged 95.

Dolibois was born in Luxembourg and emigrated to the United States in 1931. He graduated from Miami University in 1942 and was fundamental in creating the school's Luxembourg campus which was later named in his honor.

During World War II, Dolibois was drafted into the service and wound up in Military Intelligence. Since he was fluent in English, French, and German he worked as an interrogator in the Nazi war crimes trials. He was the last survivor of a team that interrogated top-ranking Nazis for the Nuremberg Trials.

In March 1945 Dolibois became a member of the five-member Army Intelligence team that interrogated the highest-ranking Nazi war criminals after the fall of the Third Reich, leading up to the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. This included Hermann Goering, credited as the architect of the Nazi industrial machine and second in command under Adolph Hitler.

After six months of interaction, he knew some of Hitler's most trusted and senior-deputies well. When the defendants went to Nuremberg, Dolibois followed, interpreting their responses to Rorschach inkblot tests given by an Army psychiatrist.

Prior to being drafted, he took a job at Procter & Gamble as an industrial engineer. He returned to P&G briefly after returning from the war. He then went on to become Miami's first full-time alumni secretary.

He later became the first director of alumni affairs and development and, in 1966, first vice president for development and alumni affairs. In July 1981 he was named vice president for university relations, overseeing the news and publication offices as well as public relations, development and alumni programs.

President Ronald Reagan chose Dolibois to serve as Ambassador to Luxembourg in 1981.

He returned to Oxford, OH in 1985.

In 2003, the U.S. Senate named the American embassy residence in Luxembourg the Dolibois House.

Source: <http://www.als.lu/>

Former U.S. Ambassador Speaks On Nuremberg

By Stephen W. Houghton II

One of the chief interrogators of Nazi leaders after World War II, John E. Dolibois, spoke to an audience of about 100 lawyers and others at the Robert H. Jackson Center on Wednesday. Dolibois, former United States Ambassador to Luxemburg, told of his experiences in 1945 when he was one of five American interrogators who worked to collect evidence from former Nazi leaders, which was used at their trial before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.

He told the audience how, when he arrived at the prisoner of war camp in Mondorf, Luxemburg, he had not been told of the camp's purpose and his new commander was not there to brief him. He said he was unpacking his things in the room he had been assigned when there was a knock at his door. Thinking it was his new commander, Dolibois said, "Come in." Dolibois received the surprise of his life when he turned around and saw an overweight man in a pearl grey uniform with gold braid. "Goering, Reichsmarchall," the man said with a click of his heels and a bob of his head. "My mouth fell open," Dolibois said. "For the first time, I realized that my assignment at Mondorf had to do with high-ranking Nazis."

Dolibois told the crowd about the methods interrogators used to gain information needed to try the leaders of the Third Reich. Interestingly, one of the subterfuges was suggested by a comment of Herman Goering's at his first meeting with Dolibois. Goering asked Dolibois if he was the welfare officer for the prisoners. The quick-thinking Dolibois said yes and received much gossip and more valuable information over the ensuing months from this ruse.

Another tactic used to gather information was playing the various prisoners off against one another. Dolibois said the prisoners were often willing to provide "dirt" on each other. The prisoners formed into three groups that barely spoke to one another. The first group was composed of senior generals and admirals of the German armed forces. The second was composed of professional bureaucrats, some of whom had worked under the German government before and during the reign of the Nazis. The third group was composed of the Nazi Party leaders.

By playing the members of the three groups against one another, much information was gained, Dolibois said. The information was sent to the prosecution team, which was lead by Justice Robert H. Jackson.

During months of interrogation, Dolibois said he came to know the Nazi leaders well. Asked what had caused the Nazi atrocities, Dolibois unhesitatingly said, "Power. If you take someone who does not have much character and is a bully at heart and give them a uniform and legal protection, they take advantage of it. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

When he was asked who was the most interesting of the many high-ranking Nazis he met, Dolibois said it depended on what one meant by interesting. "The most exciting to talk to was Goering," Dolibois said. "He was an air force ace during the first world war. (Goering succeeded the Red Baron in command of the Flying Circus.) He could be charming and witty when he wanted to be."

Goering, Dolibois said, tested as the third most intelligent of the prisoners, despite the fact that he was consuming 40 codeine tablets a day. It was because of the combination of his fame as a flyer, his intelligence and his apparent charm that Goering acted as the Nazi's "Front Man," Dolibois said.

Psychologically, the most interesting of the prisoners was Julius Streicher, Dolibois said. Streicher was the publisher of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stuermer* and one of Hitler's most fanatic followers. Streicher proudly described himself to Dolibois as "a Jew baiter." He tested as having the lowest intelligence of all the prisoners, Dolibois said. Even so, he said, Streicher had a fascinating knowledge of Jewish culture and literature. This, he said, was because of a huge library of works of Jewish thought and literature had been looted from across Europe and sent to Streicher, who twisted the knowledge he gained for use in his anti-Semitic propaganda. "The irony is that Streicher, who had given his life to wiping out Jewish culture, preserved that aspect of Jewish culture," Dolibois said, meaning the library survived.

Dolibois also gave his evaluation of the sentences of some of the Nazis. He said a number of them had gotten off too lightly, while others were punished more than was appropriate. Albert Speer, the German minister of armaments and Hitler's chief architect, got off too lightly, Dolibois said. "Speer was as guilty as they come," he said. "He should have been hung. He was close to Hitler and could have influenced him, but didn't. He admitted he knew what was going on."

On the other hand, Alfred Jodl, the German Army's Chief of Operations who was sentenced to death at Nuremberg, Dolibois said, should have been sentenced more lightly. "Jodl was at the wrong place at the wrong time," Dolibois said.

Welhelm Keitel, Commander in Chief of the German Army, was a genuine war criminal, according to Dolibois. "Keitel was hanged for issuing orders to deploy the death squads on the eastern front and the orders to kill hostages and prisoners of war," he said. "He deserved to be hanged."

Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz, Commander in Chief of the German Navy, Dolibois said, "would have been acquitted if not for the Russian's determination to find him guilty."

Contrary to the belief of many who say that Rudolf Hess was insane and unfit to stand trial at Nuremberg, Dolibois said, "Hess was interesting. He was perfectly sane. His amnesia was totally self-induced."

Dolibois concluded his talk by saying that the important lesson to learn from Nuremberg is that freedom must always be preserved so that the horrors of the Nazis cannot be repeated.

Transcribed by Charlene J. Peterson, 2003

Source: <http://preview.roberthjackson.org/events/PJ092701/>