

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD L. BAIER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Dr. Harold L. Baier on May 31, 1996, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Also in attendance is Dr. Baier's brother, Edward. Dr. Baier, thank you for coming all the way from Montana to speak with me today. I understand that you live on Sourdough Road.

Harold Baier: That's right.

SSH: Is that part of a development?

HB: No, no, it isn't. It's a road that runs along Sourdough Creek and it's been in existence for forty or fifty years, or longer.

SSH: Is this in Bozeman, Montana?

HB: Yes, that's right.

SSH: Is that on the west side?

HB: The eastern side of town, but, the town is growing tremendously.

SSH: How did you come to live in Montana?

HB: I married into it. [laughter] My wife's from Hamilton, Montana, and she came back East, to Frederick, Maryland, where I went to work when I finished my nine years at Rutgers, and I met her down there and was married down there.

SSH: Okay. You are originally from New Brunswick.

HB: That's right, that's right, yes.

SSH: You were born on March 16, 1920.

HB: Yes, that's right.

SSH: Were you born here, in New Brunswick?

HB: Yes.

SSH: What was your father's name?

HB: George F. Baier.

SSH: Was he originally from New Brunswick, also?

HB: That's right, he was.

SSH: What did he do for a living?

HB: He was a butcher. He owned his own meat market.

Edward Baier: He was a merchant, really.

SSH: You wrote on your survey that he had fought in the Spanish-American War.

HB: That's right.

SSH: What was his rank? Which branch of the service was he in? Where did he serve?

HB: ... Ted might know better than I.

EB: ... Yeah. After he enlisted, because the war was going on, he volunteered, ... he was sent to Athens, Georgia, for training and he was a corporal, as I understand it. ... Of course, it was precipitated by the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana Harbor and that precipitated the war, I guess. Teddy Roosevelt [William McKinley] was president then, and he immediately thought that they should do some retaliatory measures, and that's what they did, and the war ended, though, before my father went anywhere beyond Athens, Georgia.

SSH: Okay. I see that you are a very interesting combination, a Presbyterian and a Democrat. [laughter]

HB: That's right, yes.

EB: That's the way he was born.

HB: And that's the way I still am. [laughter] He's a little bit different.

SSH: We will catch him in the next interview. Did your father have any siblings who were involved in World War I?

HB: ... I don't think so.

EB: ... No. There were eleven ... children in the family, and they all survived to adulthood, except for one, who died as a very young infant, and two of the boys, two of his brothers, one graduated from Rutgers and one attended Rutgers, and I'm named after him. That was Edwin E. Baier. He attended Rutgers for, I think, about two years, I believe, but, Uncle Joe is a graduate, and then, there are many, many cousins, both at Douglass and at Rutgers, in our family.

SSH: Great. What was your mother's name? Can you tell me a little bit about her?

HB: Blanche Virginia Wood, and she was born over in Pennsylvania. ...

EB: Philadelphia.

HB: Some of the history of the family, Ted knows better than I.

SSH: Great. Then, we will let him tell us. [laughter] Do you know how your mother and father met?

EB: ... Yes, but, they met in New Brunswick. ... My father's parents came from Germany, and, for some reason, they went to Philadelphia, but, that's principally because there were aunts and uncles already in Philadelphia. So, they went there, rather than going in through New York. ... My grandmother, Eva (Bunn?), she was also born in Germany and her parents also went to Philadelphia. So, somehow, my grandfather and grandmother met in Philadelphia, and their oldest child was born in Philadelphia, but, then, after that, they moved to New Brunswick, and the other ten children were all born here.

SSH: Okay. Did your mother go to high school in Philadelphia?

EB: No. Now, we're talking grandparents?

SSH: Oh, I apologize. Your mother was born in New Brunswick.

EB: No, my mother was born in Philadelphia, but, so were the other grandparents. The Baier grandparents were also in Philadelphia. ... My mother was born in Philadelphia, and she went to school in Philadelphia, and, when they moved here, she finished school here, in New Brunswick.

SSH: Okay.

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Were your parents married in the Presbyterian Church?

EB: Yes, they were married in the Presbyterian Church and ... the way they got to going to the Presbyterian [Church] was because my grandparents, when they came from Germany, ... I don't know why, they joined the Presbyterian Church. I have been over to Germany, where my grandmother was born, and it's a very Catholic community, ... Shafenburg. I sometimes wonder whether they might have been Catholic over there. I don't know that for sure, but, of course, there were a lot of people trying to escape the extreme regulatory measures of the Catholic Church in Europe at the time. So, why they joined the Presbyterian [Church], I have no idea. [laughter]

SSH: All right. During the war, was your mother involved in any of the war aid efforts or any relief organizations?

HB: No, no.

EB: No, not that I know of. My father was on the draft board here, in New Brunswick.

SSH: Great. You have many siblings. Can you tell me a little bit about them?

HB: Well, most of them are dead. Ted and I are the only boys still alive and Marge is the only girl. She's having her sixtieth reunion at Douglass, ... today.

EB: ... Edith was the oldest. ... Well, we were all born here in New Brunswick and all at home, except for Harold. He's the only child that was born in Middlesex Hospital. The rest of us were all born at home, because, at that time, they used, generally, midwives, but, ... Dr. Arthur Smith was the attending physician for all of us, even for Harold, in Middlesex Hospital, and then, as I say, Edith was the oldest. She went to Wilson Business College in Newark. ... George was the next and he's now deceased. He's a graduate of Rutgers in the Class of 1927, and then, a graduate of Harvard Law School, and, when my dad died, George was appointed [to the] New Brunswick City Commission, and then, later, he became a freeholder, and, when he went in the service, he volunteered. Well, he went and got a commission in the Navy, as did Harold and I. ... He's now deceased. They sent him to ... Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for indoctrination, and then, they sent him to the Philippines, as a land acquisition officer, to build a big Navy base in the Philippines, after the Philippines had been captured from the Japanese. Then, next youngest is Blanche, who recently died. She's a graduate of Douglass College, and then, next came the twins, my brother Bill and I. I'm five minutes older than Bill. Bill's now deceased. He was a full commander in the Navy. I attained the rank of lieutenant. My brother George was a lieutenant and Harold here was a lieutenant commander, which I guess you have in his [survey]. ... After the twins came Marjorie, who was a graduate of Douglass. She taught in the New Brunswick public school system for many years and was the Director of Physical Education in the New Brunswick school system, and then, of course, the youngest, the baby of the family, is Harold, who you're now interviewing. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cut in on this.

SSH: No, please do. This may be a dual interview by the time we get through, because a lot of the information will be the same.

EB: Right.

SSH: Can you tell me a little bit about your education? Do you remember the schools you attended?

HB: ... Bayard School was the elementary, and then, junior high, all in New Brunswick, and then, New Brunswick Senior High, and I graduated in '39, and then, went to Rutgers. ... The war came along about junior year, and they speeded up the program at Rutgers, and I graduated in the first mid-year at Rutgers in '43, January of '43, and then, I went in the Navy, and, when the war was over, I came back and spent five more years getting my Ph.D.

SSH: Your major was biology at Rutgers.

HB: ... Yes.

SSH: Who were your favorite professors?

HB: Dr. Boyden was ... my favorite and I worked with him after the war, in graduate school. He is now deceased and the other one that I did a lot of work with was Ralph (DeFalco?). The two of them were mainly ... the ones that I worked with.

SSH: The war in Europe broke out shortly after you entered Rutgers. How aware were you and your classmates of the situation in Europe? As a student, did you feel that you were isolated from the news or did you feel that you had access to enough information? I know that you did not have CNN back then. [laughter]

HB: ... The information gradually increased and I can remember, across the Commons, standing around outside of [the] Chemistry [Building], ... towards when we got involved in the war, the discussions that were taking place. They were quite vivid, and exciting, and wondersome about what was going on.

SSH: Were there many isolationists or peaceniks on campus or did the student body lean towards intervention?

HB: No, it wasn't that sort of thing. ... Everyone was interested and some volunteered while they were still in college. Our graduating class, as I recall, was about eighty. We had the largest class to enter Rutgers. They all came along, and every class kept growing, and we had about 450, as I recall, that entered Rutgers, and then, we dropped ... from 450 down to eighty for the first mid-year, and the remainder, I would judge [that there were] about 200 afterwards.

SSH: Did you remain in the ROTC after your first year?

HB: Two years.

SSH: Two years?

HB: We all had two years [of ROTC] at Rutgers.

EB: ... You know, [because] Rutgers is a land-grant school, [it] had ROTC, and ROTC was really mandatory, except, you could get out of it by some special arrangements. I don't know what it was at the time, I don't even remember, but, almost ... everyone here on campus was in ROTC. So, they were quite aware of military matters, I thought.

SSH: What did you think of mandatory chapel?

HB: ... I don't know. There was discussion on mandatory chapel while we were going and there wasn't much ... dispute on the thing.

SSH: Who was your favorite speaker? What did you enjoy most about chapel?

HB: Sunday chapel, you had a choice. You could either go to your own church or the chapel at Rutgers. My favorite speaker was William Lyons Phelps and Norman, ... what was his first name?

EB: Norman Vincent Peale?

HB: No.

EB: Oh, you mean ... Norman Thomas?

HB: No. The last name was Norman.

EB: Oh, excuse me for butting in. [laughter]

SSH: We will look that up.

HB: Do they still have mandatory chapel?

SSH: No, because Rutgers is now a state university. I felt lucky to be able to go inside Kirkpatrick Chapel and look around during Reunion Weekend. You were a member of the Scarlet Rifles.

HB: Yeah, that's right.

SSH: What was the Scarlet Rifles team?

HB: A precision marching team. It was a squad. ...

EB: ... Wasn't it company sized?

HB: No. ... I was elected to it [in] my freshman year, and, since I only had two years of ...

EB: ROTC.

HB: ROTC, that finished the ...

SSH: Scarlet Rifles?

HB: Yeah.

SSH: Were you involved in any other activities on campus?

HB: I don't know. ... The campus was quite extensive in ... my years at Rutgers. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Did you work while you were a student here?

HB: Summers, but, the biological science curriculum was so extensive that, with all the labs, we spent a tremendous amount of time on campus, and, when I was home, I was delivering for my father and brothers, delivering from the store.

SSH: How did the Great Depression affect your family?

HB: Well, I was only thirteen when my father died, and it was at the height of the Depression, and he died, and that was it, and we lost everything, ... closed the store. ... Ted ran it for a while, and then, he entered Rutgers. So, we were both students at the same time.

SSH: One of your sisters was also at NJC at the same time.

HB: No, no.

EB: Yes, ... Marge was, and George was at Harvard Law.

HB: Well, yeah.

SSH: What did your mother do during this time? Did she work outside of the home?

EB: No, she didn't, and I don't know that she would have, but, with seven kids, she had her hands full just keeping house and cooking meals for a hungry bunch of kids, and lots of laundry. [laughter]

SSH: Why did you choose to enlist in the Navy?

EB: [laughter] Because two of his brothers preceded him, three of his brothers preceded him, into the Navy.

HB: And I didn't want to live in a fox-hole, eating Army chow, but, that's what I did.

SSH: All right. Can you tell me a little bit about your enlistment and where you went from there? Did you enlist in New Brunswick?

HB: I went into New York and was sworn in, in New York, and then, a few days, or about a month later, was reassigned to Harvard Communications School, which was six months [in length]. So, I spent the six months at Harvard as a commissioned officer and, from there, went to ... Camp Bradford at Norfolk, Virginia. ... I was assigned to the Tenth Beach Battalion at Norfolk, and, ... from there, we were supposed to go down to ... Ledo Beach, not Ledo in Florida, but, ... the beach battalions, they [were] pulling people out to go to the Pacific, and, eventually, I wound up in the Seventh Beach Battalion, which had already been down to Florida for their training, and so, they were getting ready to go over to England, and I was assigned to the Seventh Beach Battalion, and we went to New York, through New Brunswick, and had to pull down the shades in the train, even though it was midnight when we went through New Brunswick, ... to Ledo Beach, New York, and were there a few days while we got ready to go over to New York.

[Tape Paused]

... The rest of the battalion, which was 500 men and officers, went across on a transport and I was assigned, with another officer, [to] a super cargo [ship] taking all the cargo for the battalion to England. I was put on an LST which was in a ship convoy of sixty ships and we only had three destroyers and DE[s] for a convoy ... escort. The convoy, at times, we were supposed to do five knots an hour. The current was so strong, it seemed as though we were going backwards. We had all sorts of weather, icebergs. Two ships were sunk. We were back in the coffin's corner of the convoy and ... the ships that sunk, ... oh, I can remember it vividly, but, expressing myself is rather difficult. ... The convoy took about six weeks to cross ... the Atlantic and we finally made it. The icebergs were in rough seas after the convoy broke ... up. We went into Glasgow, Scotland, and then, unloaded most of the equipment, then, [went] down the Irish Sea to Plymouth, where I got off with the cargo that we were carrying for the battalion. I joined up with the battalion. ...

[Tape Paused]

[The] ships that were sunk were torpedoed and we kept steaming ahead. We didn't zigzag, because we were so slow. ... At five-and-a-half knots, you steam ahead, and the two ships that were sunk were cargo ships. We were in the last column, the outside column. ... The ship that was sunk was right astern of us and the other one was twelve miles across the convoy. There were ... twelve columns [of] five ships in the convoy. They were sunk, and we proceeded, and left the escort maneuvering for a day-and-a-half. They stayed back and the convoy proceeded to Scotland, to Glasgow.

SSH: After you got off with your cargo in Plymouth, where did you go from there? Were you ordered to join the land forces?

HB: The beach battalion. It was a Navy beach battalion that was to go into the beach early, and the battalion was made up of 500 men and officers, and we landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day, and it was staggered. ... Some of the battalion didn't come in for three days beyond that.

[Tape Paused]

[The] Seventh Beach Battalion landed, as I said, they were staggered. Some of them were [there] three days prior to the invasion. I landed on Omaha Beach forty minutes after H-Hour. Having crossed the Channel on an LCI, Landing Craft Infantry, we were packed in there. I crossed on the [LCI]-90. [LCI]-91 and [LCI]-92 were sunk. ... We had our ramps blown off. They had to transfer to a rubber raft and that's how I got on the beach. We were only supposed to be on the beach for three days, but, I was on for approximately four weeks, wearing the same clothes, so, it was kind of smelly. We ate Army food and did exactly what I didn't want to do when I got in the Navy. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: When your ship was hit and you had to get into the raft, what happened to your communications equipment?

HB: Well, the equipment was all waterproofed and we transferred that into the rubber raft and got it ashore that way. ... It took a while ... to get it all pieced together.

SSH: Did you have to carry your equipment?

HB: Yeah. ... It was all portable and we had radios that were battery operated and some of them were hand generated. ...

SSH: There were eight men in your raft. Did everyone make it to the beach?

HB: Yes, yes. There were approximately eight. I don't know, there may have been more. We had communications with both radio ... and signal light. We had eight-inch signal lamps. ...

SSH: Who were you signaling to?

HB: The ships at sea, telling them ... what to bring in and ... how to bring it in. ... See, we were in charge of the beach from the low water mark to the first dune line and, in the low water, we had 500 yards of beach that we were in charge of.

SSH: What were your duties there?

HB: I was in communications. I had both signal and radio in ... the company that we had.

SSH: Did the weather conditions affect your mission?

HB: Well, the 6th of June was not the original [date]. The original was the 4th of June, and some of the craft ... were starting to go across the Channel, and they had to bring them back, and this happened on the 5th, and then, finally, they said, "All right, the 6th."

SSH: Which English port did you set off from?

HB: Southampton. I think it was Southampton. It was funny. ... There was a fellow ... that I could see about ... three ships across the way, and ... his father taught at Rutgers, and ... I never got over to see him, and I don't know what happened to him. He was Army, of course, by the name of Johnson.

[Tape Paused]

SSH: I will try to look up Mr. Johnson for you. What were the conditions on the beach like?

HB: ... The beach is completely different now. [I] went over to the fifty year reunion on the beach and that's how I know. That's the first I was back. It's completely different. ...

SSH: How did the tides affect the operation?

HB: ... If you were out at low tide and the tide was coming in, you had to practically run to keep from getting swamped by the water. It was twenty-two feet in height ... when the tide changed, so that there was very little we could do with the tide. ... I have a tremendous number of pictures that I took while ... we were on the beach. I would like to have them developed and printed sometime. I originally did it when I got out of the service, or ... before I went out to the Pacific. ... I printed them up at that time.

[Tape Paused]

... The first day, it was such a nightmare that anything went. There was gunfire, and mortars, and everything else. We would be walking down the beach, and someone would start with machine guns, and you would drop, and you'd look, and you were right around ... in a group of German soldiers who were captured. ...

SSH: How did you treat the German POWs?

HB: Well, we laughed about it, afterwards, because we all had a wet landing coming ashore. An LCVP, coming in empty, could get all the way in. So, they could get on dry land. ... Naturally, when the Germans went out, we didn't bring the LCVP in all the way, but, made them get wet. ...

[Tape Paused]

I was the only officer and we all wore the same clothes. The four of us dug a foxhole big enough for four to sleep in. It was lined with a barrage balloon that was shot down, to ... keep the sand out, and then, on top of it were hatch covers. So, we had ... quite an elaborate thing for the beach at that time and that was approximately ... [where we spent] half of the time on the beach.

SSH: Did you have any time to sleep in those first few days?

HB: No. The first day-and-a-half, or two days, it was all ... one continuous episode. ... The thing is, for sleeping, we had double British summertime and ... we only had about three or four hours of absolute darkness. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Is there anything else you would like to say about D-Day?

HB: Well, there's a tremendous number of things that ... keep running through my mind, and I would like to get down for you to have a record of, but, I would be here all night. The best thing is that I will edit some of it when you send it to me, and then, I can finish the taping. So, let's proceed.

SSH: How were you evacuated from Normandy?

HB: Well, we were under joint control. The Army and the Navy had the releases, and the Navy released us, but, the Army would not. That's one of the bad things about this joint [command], being under [the] control of the Army. When they did release us, we crossed the Channel, ... going back to England. ...

SSH: Do you remember where you went when you returned to England? Were you assigned to another Navy facility?

HB: No, we were brought up to strength, ... in case they were going to have another end run and we had to go in again, but, they decided they had enough territory, so, we were sent back to the States. ... When the end run was discounted, we got back here, ... we saw, in the newspapers and what have you, where they were talking about another landing. We knew it was impossible, because there was no beach battalion. We were the last beach battalion to leave England, and, see, ... the Second Beach Battalion was on Utah and the Seventh and the Sixth [were on Omaha.] ...

-----END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE-----

HB: We got back to England, and the battalion was brought up to strength, and we waited around until the end of August, and then, they decided they had enough land. So, we came back to the States, and were decommissioned, and were sent out to the Pacific, after a thirty-day leave. ...

SSH: When were you sent to Frederick, Maryland?

HB: Oh, that came after ... my war experience and after I came back to Rutgers.

SSH: Okay. Where did you leave for the Pacific from?

HB: From New Brunswick. I came to my home, [which] was in New Brunswick at that time, and I stayed here for the time I was on leave, and then, after the Pacific, to Oceanside. ... The Atlantic was a shore-to-shore operation, whereas, [in] the Pacific, it was all ship-to-shore. So, we were all assigned to a ship in the Pacific and the one ship I was on was the *Mendocino*, APA-100. ... We went out to the ... islands and various places and, eventually, to Japan. We were all ready for the occupation of Japan before the war. We had the plans for the invasion of Japan and I did get in on the landing of ... the Allied troops going into Japan.

SSH: Do you remember where you were when you heard about the bomb being dropped?

HB: Well, yes and no. ... I think I was back in San Francisco when the war ended, and they declared martial law in San Francisco, and we went out, then, to the Pacific.

SSH: From San Francisco?

HB: Yeah.

SSH: Did you go to Hawaii first?

HB: Well, we were in Hawaii first, and then, we were [part of] sort of a shuttle system between Hawaii and the Pacific.

SSH: Were you still in communications?

HB: That's right, that's right. I was on the commodore's staff.

SSH: Who was the commodore that you worked under?

HB: Moyer was one of them. The original commodore was Edgar. I joined ... the commodore's staff, and ... he'd been in the Atlantic and came out to the Pacific, and I joined his staff in communications.

SSH: When you were stateside, were you able to meet up with any of your brothers?

HB: I don't know about Ted and Bill. I eventually saw Bill on the West Coast. He was on the *El Dorado*, and my brother, George, was in the Philippines, and I bumped into him at Leyte.

SSH: Were you able to spend any time with them?

HB: Just a day or so.

SSH: What did you do to occupy your time on these long voyages?

HB: Well, sleep. [laughter]

SSH: Did you stay onboard the ship for most of the time? Did you have any interaction with the islanders? Did you have any R&R time?

HB: I don't think so. It was all war time.

SSH: As you prepared for the invasion of Japan, what were your duties?

HB: In communications. By then, I'd moved up to the communications for the squadron of ships, since it was all Navy, ship-to-shore [operations].

SSH: How many ships were you in contact with?

HB: I'd have to look that up. I don't recall off hand.

SSH: Was Moyer a good commodore, in terms of handling his staff?

HB: ... He was all right.

SSH: What do you remember about the men who served under you and their abilities?

HB: In general, in the war?

SSH: Yes.

HB: Some of them were excellent and some were mediocre. You had the run of the mill. ... In the Pacific, it amounted to, mainly, breaking the code. ... The code was on the ECM, Electric Coding Machine. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Before you went out to the Pacific, what was the purpose of your training at Oceanside?

HB: To retrain us ... in how to dig foxholes. ... The sand must have been different in the Pacific than in the Atlantic. [laughter] ... I can still picture this old ... chief warrant officer. He was teaching us how to dig a foxhole. So, there wasn't much [training done there]. ...

SSH: Were they preparing you to become another beach battalion?

HB: Yeah, yeah.

SSH: When you were running the ship-to-shore and ship-to-ship communications, did you have to go ashore on the different islands or did you stay onboard ship?

HB: Well, we stayed on board. ...

SSH: Was your ship basically a communications ship?

HB: No. It was a squadron ship. They had different sized ships for the different purposes, but, we were ... still an APA. The commodore had at least nine ships under [him]. ...

[Tape Paused]

I probably have misspoken several times, but, an APA is an Auxiliary Personnel Attack Transport. There are two types of transports. One's for commercial dockside and that's an APA, ... [which] carries LCVPs and LCMs for dropping in the water, and going over the side, and (attacking the cargo from the stateside?).

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Since you served in both theaters, can you tell me about the differences between the Japanese and Germans as enemies?

HB: In Europe, the enemy, of course, was German, but, they had a tremendous number of ... Orientals that were wearing German uniforms. They were scavenging all around and getting [as] many of them [as] possible to fight. That's the indication of the [level of desperation]. ... In the Pacific, when we first had the plans for going into the Pacific, the front was all along the beach, a 1000 miles long, ... with no backup, nothing in reserve. It was a crazy plan, so, we were glad when the atomic bomb ended the war. There was that difference between the two. In Japan, we knew that the Japanese were fanatics, ... whereas the Germans were not.

SSH: Did you encounter any Japanese kamikaze planes?

HB: No. It was late when I got out there and it was winding down. The kamikazes were not present, ... not adaptable, at that time.

SSH: Did your beach battalion establish any beachheads in the Pacific, as it had done at Normandy?

HB: They had beach battalions. ... [However], the Seventh was completely wiped out, or decommissioned, and they didn't have battalions such as on ... the landing at Normandy. ... They were based ... upon the ship.

SSH: Okay. Do you remember when you went to Japan?

HB: ... No. I'd have to look it up.

SSH: Did you actually leave your ship and go ashore in Japan?

HB: We were granted leave, ... but, we were back and forth aboard ship.

SSH: How did you come back to the States? Did you come back onboard a ship?

HB: Yeah, that's right, [on] the same ship that I went over on. I was part of the ship's company, or part of the squadron.

EB: That was the *Mendocino*?

HB: Yeah.

SSH: Did you come back to the West Coast? How did you make your way back to New Brunswick?

HB: I came back to San Francisco and was on the commodore's staff in San Francisco. ... They had a reorganization after the war and, ... not being married, I didn't have [enough] points to get out. So, it took me a while to gain the points for me to get out, and then, I came across ... by train.

SSH: Were you decommissioned? Is that the right word to use?

HB: No. We had enough points ... to get out of the service. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: How did you become an inactive officer? I know that you joined the Reserves.

HB: Well, we were ... decommissioned, or discharged, or what have you, from the war, and then, we reapplied for the Reserve, because the commission ceremony, or the commissioning of the personnel, was on a ... volunteer basis, and we volunteered and got back on the Reserve, and I continued that all the time, until [I had] twenty-five years of service.

SSH: Were you a lieutenant commander when you were separated from the service?

HB: No. I was probably a JG, and then, promoted in the Reserve and made ...

EB: Lieutenant, and then, lieutenant commander.

HB: Yeah.

EB: See, you can stay in the Reserve as long as you ... keep up your grade. You can't stay in there as a JG for twenty-five years. You've got to move up or ... you'll be dropped out.

SSH: Being in the Reserves, did the Korean War affect you?

HB: No. By the time ... the Korean War came along, I was in Frederick, Maryland, in the Reserve unit down there. While I was at Rutgers, ... there was no Reserve here in town. So, I went over to Princeton and belonged to the Reserve over there.

SSH: Did you return to Rutgers immediately after the war?

HB: It was summertime and I started ... in the fall, in zoology and bacteriology.

SSH: Where did you live when you came back?

HB: Home.

SSH: Was the campus very different then?

HB: No, it wasn't.

SSH: Were there many GIs here at that time?

HB: ... The GIs were completely different. ... [After] five years [in the service], it was time to get out and see the difference. The GIs, when they first came back, were quite interested in

school, and then, afterwards, ... the age of the students dropped and the students were more like they are today.

SSH: Did you do any student teaching as part of your graduate program?

HB: Yeah, yeah. I started out as a teaching assistant, and then, moved up to instructor.

SSH: When you left Rutgers with your Ph.D., where did you go next?

HB: To Frederick, Maryland, Fort Detrick. Fort Detrick is the biological warfare center.

SSH: At Fort Dietrich, were you working as a civilian with a Reserve commission?

HB: I was working as a civilian, and, every week, we had Reserve meetings, but, my employment was strictly civilian.

SSH: You met Mrs. Baier in Frederick, Maryland.

EB: Yeah.

HB: That's right.

SSH: What is her name?

HB: Betty Jean Christensen. [laughter]

SSH: This is the lady from Montana. [laughter]

HB: Yeah, that's right.

SSH: Were you married in Frederick or Montana?

HB: Yeah, in Frederick.

SSH: Do you have any children?

HB: I have two children, one's natural, a boy. He's thirty-five or thirty-six.

EB: Tell her his name.

HB: Hans Christian.

EB: Hans Christian.

HB: Since he's Danish, part Danish, and so, ... Hans Christian is our natural son, and then, we adopted one, later on, I guess when Chris was five. We adopted a little Apache Indian girl and she's now ... thirty or thirty-two.

EB: She was three when they adopted her, I think.

HB: Yeah.

SSH: Do your children live in Montana?

HB: Libby, ... the daughter, lives in Albuquerque. She just had her third child. She's married to a Navaho Indian who works in Albuquerque.

SSH: Where does your son live?

EB: ... In West Yellowstone and Bozeman.

HB: In Bozeman and West Yellowstone.

SSH: To go back to Frederick, you were working in biological warfare. Where did that take you?

HB: That took me to retirement. [laughter] No, when they closed Detrick up, Nixon closed it up, we decided to move to Dugway, Utah, and I worked at Dugway for two years. It was a fiasco, because it was just shuffling papers, and I'm more of a lab, top research person. So, shuffling papers was not my story and I retired after two years there at Dugway, in Utah.

SSH: Did you continue to work in your field after Dugway?

HB: No. ... We bought seven ranch homes for rental purposes in West Yellowstone. They were rentals, year round. It wasn't like a motel or anything like that.

SSH: You were working at Fort Detrick as a civilian, but, you were working closely with the military. Did you notice any changes in the military over the years?

HB: There weren't any changes in the military that I could see. ... They were quite similar to what they are now.

SSH: Did you work on any of the projects that are now defunct?

HB: Well, when Nixon closed it up, ... he completely closed the program, and I was transferred to Dugway, Utah, where they had the sheep kill. ... Dugway is still going and, probably, they will never close it up. It's an Army post, but, it's larger than the State of Rhode Island, and the artillery uses it, because they can fire their guns and still be in the state.

SSH: Were you there for the sheep kill?

HB: No. We went out to Dugway after the sheep kill.

SSH: All right. Would you like to add anything before we end the interview?

HB: I don't think so. At this time, no. I'll add a lot to the tapes when the program is sent out to me.

SSH: This concludes an interview with Dr. Harold Baier. Thank you both for your time.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

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