RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE H. BEBBINGTON

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. George H. Bebbington on May 8, 1997, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and …

Nicole Porcaro: … Nicole Porcaro.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you about your parents. One of the things that intrigued me was that your father was an officer in the British Army. Could you tell me a bit about what motivated him to join the Army and what he said about the First World War?

George Bebbington: Well, my father did talk about a number of things, particularly if we asked. When war was declared, he and all his brothers marched down to the recruiting station the first day [laughter] and they went in and he was kicked out. He was too young. So, he went around the building, came back in, gave his brother's age and [he] was sworn in. He spent four years in the war. He went over, was in the trenches and, gradually, his unit got heavy casualties. The officers were eliminated and he got a battlefield promotion and became in charge of his unit there in the trenches. They sent him to Officer Training School, and then, they opened up the Royal Flying Corps and he applied to go to that and he went to school and became a pilot. He was one of those guys in the little kite planes, doing those dogfights and things like that. He did crash once and broke his nose, had a dislocated bone in there for the rest of his life. [laughter] After he got out of the hospital, he was on patrol, flying around the coast of England, stopping any planes from coming over, but the war ended and, as the song said, "How do you keep them down on the farm after Paris?" The family was on a farm. … He wasn't wanted; who needed pilots in England? He figured, "Well, the US should … have a need for them." So, he came over here. … It was in the '20s and he had been introduced to a visiting nurse in the district who traveled around the county on her bicycle and he said, "I'm going to the US. Will you marry me and go with me?" and that's what happened. [laughter] They came over here and it wasn't the place lined with gold as he thought. There was no work for him and he tried everything, door-to-door selling and a number of jobs. Finally, he got a job with the Gurney Elevator Company as a stock boy and he learned all the parts of the elevators and everything else and how they were constructed and became an engineer with them, and then, after a few years, … an insurance company in New York was looking for a safety engineer who knew elevators and he got that job, fortunately, in the Depression. … He traveled all over, inspecting ballparks and breweries and all kinds of things, riding on top of the elevators and looking at the cables. … That was my father.

KP: Your father was a farmer before World War I.

GB: That's correct.

KP: Did his family own a farm or were they tenants?

GB: They were tenant farmers. It was a royal farm and it's on the maps there in England. … There was eleven boys in the family and two girls. Various members of the family became specialists in different things, like mechanics for tractors and things, which were just coming in. So, they were working for other farms, too.

KP: Britain was a very class-based country.

GB: Oh, yes.

KP: Your father, from his background, becoming an officer, in World War I, was very unusual.

GB: Right, as they say here, "An officer and a gentleman."

KP: What did your father talk about? He started out as an enlisted man and probably would have aspired to maybe be an NCO. Not only did he become an officer, but he even became a pilot, which also has a certain prestige. Did he ever mention that?

GB: … The value system, I don't think, really ever came out in the conversation, but you knew it was there, that he wasn't being recognized, and he felt that he was better than the situation.

KP: What did he say about the trenches?

GB: Not a great deal. He did not dwell on the nasty parts of the war. I can figure what some of it was, having been through [it myself]. [laughter]

NP: Did he lose any brothers in the war?

GB: No. Very fortunately, there were no deaths due to the war in the family and the Queen Mother actually sent a letter to my grandmother, … giving her a commendation for having so many boys in the war. [laughter]

NP: Did any of them come to America as well?

GB: A younger brother did and a sister. Those are the only [ones] that I know of.

KP: Your mother also sounds like a very intriguing person. You mentioned she was a visiting nurse in England.

GB: Right. She went to nurses training school, but [she] came over here and she was not a graduate nurse. … She always felt diminished by it. … So, she would do home nursing jobs, had a few doctors that had her on the list. When somebody was convalescing at home, she would be doing that type of work, did a lot of nanny work with babies and things.

KP: How did your parents end up in East Orange? Had they come to East Orange originally?

GB: No. I was born in the East Orange hospital, but they were in Montclair. I'm sorry.

KP: Oh, no, that is fine.

GB: Montclair is an unusual town. It's on the slope of the first mountain and it's an economic hill, … big mansions at the top and low income at the bottom.

KP: Where did you stand in relation to the hill?

GB: We were down near the bottom, in an apartment over one of the stores there on Bloomfield Avenue, and then, they moved uptown.

KP: You gradually moved up.

GB: Yes, we moved out to Little Falls and things were getting tight, and they moved back to Montclair, and then, they moved into a new house, in 1940, that they bought in Cedar Grove.

KP: Did your parents ever go back to England?

GB: Yes, yes, they made several trips back.

KP: What did they think of the approach of World War II? They had very close ties to Britain and Europe. Your father had been in the Army.

GB: Oh, yes, well, they were concerned that we weren't getting involved with them and helping Britain out. … When we finally did declare war, he pulled all his military papers out and had them ready. He says, "They'll be needing experienced pilots." [laughter] He was waiting to be called.

KP: He was disappointed that the phone call did not come.

GB: Well, I think so, yes, but they did get involved on things in the home front. They were air raid wardens and all these other things. Of course, my mother, being a nurse, she was in the first aid squads and everything else.

NP: They were not exactly unenthusiastic about your joining up.

GB: Oh, no, no, they didn't oppose it. … As parents, they were always reluctant to see you go, but [they] figured it was the right thing.

NP: Right.

KP: You mentioned that your father had a rough going at getting established in the United States. His vision of becoming a pilot did not go as smoothly as he wanted. You alluded that the Depression was somewhat hard at first.

GB: … Yes.

KP: How tough were times during the Depression for your family?

GB: Well, he made these lucky contacts, as I say, and he had the job, finally, in the elevator company, and then, it was the insurance company. So, it was steady work.

KP: When did he get the jobs that you mentioned?

GB: … I couldn't give you the exact date. I was not conscious of them at that young age.

KP: Yes, but you knew, at times, the family situation was pretty tough.

GB: … Oh, yes, yes.

NP: What is your most distinct memory of growing up in the Depression? What stands out in your mind as something that was always an issue?

GB: Well, my parents didn't expose us to it. We were just always well treated and, "Don't give us children any worries." … They'd say, "Well, we can't afford it," or something like that, but they weren't moaning.

KP: Your parents were Methodists in England, I take it, or did they stay Methodists in the United States, because you also listed them as Congregational.

GB: … Yes, well, that's mostly on my mother's part.

KP: Your father was not much of a churchgoer.

GB: Well, yes, he was, but it was with her. … She had the initial drive for it, but, in all, he was a very dedicated worker in the church and … we founded a church in Cedar Grove. … He spent lots of time there, was on the church board, and the same thing down in Florida, when they retired down there.

NP: Which church, Methodist?

GB: It's UCC [United Church of Christ] today, but it was called Congregational then.

KP: Did the transition from Methodism to Congregationalism come when they came to the United States or was it earlier?

GB: No, it was earlier; well, it was later, I'm sorry. My mother used to go to the Methodist church in Montclair. She signed us up. We were in the Presbyterian church. That was the big, impressive church there. [laughter] I was in the Boy Scout troop in the Congregational church. … We didn't distinguish that much between the denominations.

NP: How long did your parents know each other before they decided to get married?

GB: I don't know the exact amount of time. I don't think it was too long, fairly short. …

NP: I gathered that, from what you said about his proposal.

GB: … He certainly shocked her with it. [laughter]

KP: You were born in Montclair, although, technically, you were born in East Orange. Then, you moved to Little Falls, and then, back to Montclair, and then, finally, to Cedar Grove. How did all those moves affect you? Did you lose touch with friends?

GB: … Not a great deal; well, yes and no. I maintained my Boy Scout troop membership in Montclair. In those days, there was a trolley car line running up Bloomfield Avenue and, for five cents, you got up to the top of the hill, but, if you just went over it, it was another nickel and we'd walk down Route 23 to Cedar Grove, or hitch a ride, and then, we got bicycles. … We would bike over. It was a good trip.

KP: What rank did you reach in the Boy Scouts?

GB: I only got as far as the Life membership, because, in those days, you had to get the athletic badge and they had some very strict jumps and things like that. I was just too short and, probably, too chubby, I don't know, to make them. So, I never completed the Eagle, although I had just about every badge for it.

KP: That is too bad.

GB: My brother did, though.

KP: Did you ever go to any National Jamborees?

GB: No real jamborees. We had more district campouts or whatever they wanted to call them. … The Montclair Eagle Rock Council had a Scout camp up in the Ramapos [Editor's Note: The Ramapo Mountains are a chain of mountains located in northeastern New Jersey and are part of the Appalachian Mountains] in Oakland and we were always going up there, in the middle of winter, in the snow. Our troop had a cabin up there and … [we] spent the weekend, or whatever time you're up there, chopping firewood.

KP: What other things did you do for fun growing up? It sounds like you were a very active Boy Scout.

GB: Oh, yes, a lot of years in that. Of course, with the war starting, they nationalized the National Guards, and then, that left the states without any military units, so, they formed the State

Guard and they would let you into that younger than they would into the national services. So, I was in the State Guard for one year. [laughter]

KP: How young could you be to join the State Guard?

GB: It must have been seventeen or, no, seventeen, you get in the national, I must have been sixteen.

KP: When did you join the State Guard?

GB: Well, the year before I went in the Marines.

NP: You were still in high school when you joined.

GB: Oh, yes.

NP: Was that unusually young? Were most other people joining at the same age?

GB: Well, I had at least one year seniority on most of my classmates, not most, but a good part of them. Back in that era, you did not promote children to keep them moving. If you didn't get it right, you stayed back, and so, I stayed back one year. … In my junior year, I became eighteen on my birthday in June, in high school. My brother stayed back in second grade and I stayed back in sixth grade. I couldn't stand the social studies teacher. [laughter] …

KP: How did you do in school overall? You said you were held back. Was school tough for you growing up?

GB: Not really, no. I don't recall there was any great problems, except in that sixth year. I was more inclined not to push on it, but the surprising thing was, when I came back from the service and went back to high school, what a difference. How can these kids be so stupid? [laughter] I learned, or educated myself, to such a degree in a short time.

KP: When you came back to finish your high school degree, how many other returning vets were with you?

GB: Well, … you could go to day school and they formed a special night school and I went [to] both, [laughter] but we had one big, hefty homeroom of nothing but veterans and the girls paraded up and down in front of the door all the time. [laughter] You'd go down to the cafeteria and there'd be boys' tables and girls' tables, but there was the vets' tables and it was a mixed thing, yes. [laughter]

KP: You said you saw these high school students and you were saying, "Why aren't you taking this more seriously?"

GB: Not seriously; I mean, "Why don't you understand it?" … I had to fill in hours with certain courses, so, I took business law and, to me, the answers to the questions were so obvious and they couldn't get them at all, and then, I very quickly realized that when he gives a test, it's right out of the workbook. So, before class, I did [the] workbook page, came in and could answer everything. … I was ahead of them in figuring out what's going on.

KP: I talked to a teacher who had a homeroom of GIs. He said that one of the reasons they had homerooms for GIs was so that they could smoke. Were you allowed to smoke?

GB: We didn't smoke in the school, necessarily, although I suppose there were some guys using the bathrooms. We went off campus. The candy store down the street was the big coffee shop hangout, during the school hours. [laughter] Actually, for one period of time there, I was going down to the unemployment office, getting my 52-20, and then, I'd go next door to the Elks Club, [laughter] and then, come back for my chemistry class.

KP: You were in high school when the bombing of Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941. How much did you know about world events before Pearl Harbor? How much did you know about the coming of the war?

GB: … I wouldn't say that it was a great deal, but I suppose I always did have some interest in what's going on. Going back to when I went back to high school, they gave one of these social studies intelligence tests, nationwide, and I was [in] the 103rd percentile. [laughter] I learned a little bit in … those two years.

KP: Before that …

GB: As I said, I didn't get along with the social studies teacher in sixth grade, but I think it was the individual. I think I always did have an interest in … historical fiction novels and things like that. … I always loved those. …

KP: Are there any of those that you remember that you truly liked?

GB: No.

KP: Did you watch movies? What types of movies did you like growing up?

GB: Well, depending on what age, we always had the Saturday matinees with the serials, week after week, and all the westerns, some of the glamorous stars. Hedy Lamar, … you had to go see her picture, not for the picture, but for [being a] young boy. [laughter]

KP: What about any war movies? Do you remember seeing any?

GB: Oh, yes, sure, but they were war movies of World War I and there were a number of these aviation dogfight movies. Oh, that was [great]. *Ceiling Zero*, I can remember that title. That was one. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever see *All Quiet on the Western Front* when you were growing up?

GB: No, I didn't and I made a point of trying to get to see it in my later years, when I finally got around to reading it. … That was quite a book.

KP: Your parents were Democrats. What did they think of Franklin Roosevelt?

GB: … Oh, he was marvelous, great. … It was something I was thinking about coming down here; when I lived in Montclair the second time, I went to school, and this was a rather affluent town, and … all the kids had these great, big [Alf] Landon and Knox sunflower buttons on and here's me, with a Roosevelt [button], the only Democrat in the whole place. [laughter] I was a bit ridiculed, but I had a good friend, Charlie, he was a black and my parents, being English, at least as I understand it, they didn't have the prejudices that were in this country, and so, he was my friend. … They had this YMCA learn to swim campaign, which was free, and you'd go down and get a week's worth of lessons or something like that, and so, we went down to sign up together and they said, "No, he can't sign up." I couldn't believe this, couldn't understand it. "He has to go to his own Y," and they had this old, wooden building down the bottom of the mountain in Montclair; that was the colored Y.

NP: It must have been interesting to grow up not having learned about differences.

GB: Right.

KP: Up until that point, you really had not thought that anything was really that different about Charlie, except for his skin color.

GB: … As a real small kid, one of our favorite characters [was] black, we lived near the trolley line turnaround in Montclair and this guy'd come out in these black clothes, with a grease bucket and a swab, and he was greasing the tracks and the switches and things and … I guess my father said, "That's Greasy Dick," and so, we were always at the fence, "Hi, Greasy Dick," and waving to him. He was a fascinating person to us.

KP: How long were you and Charlie friends for?

GB: I suppose it was just that one year, when I went back, … although I did know him, but we did sort of separate. I ran into his mother when I got a defense job, when I was in high school. … They converted a great, big auto sales [lot] and garage into a subcontract defense works and I got a job there, packing these things. … They made all kinds of wire products for mortar shells and things like that. I was in the packing/shipping department.

NP: When you were growing up, did you play any sports or anything like that?

GB: No. As I say, I couldn't make the athletic badge, no; lots of hiking and bicycling, but no organized sports to speak of at all.

NP: Was the hiking more of a Boy Scout kind of thing?

GB: Right, or purposeful, going someplace. [laughter]

KP: When you were going to high school, during World War II, did you think you were going to college or did you hope to go to college?

GB: … No, it was not really a direct goal; as I say, thank goodness for the GI Bill. … I actually got it under Public Law 16, … for disabled veterans, but it turned the whole country around.

KP: Your parents did not have any notion that you would go to college.

GB: Well, they would [have] liked to see it and my mother named me for a doctor that she had known in England and stuff. There was always this, "You ought to become a doctor" thing. …

KP: However, in practical terms, there was no pressure.

GB: No real pressure on it, no.

NP: When you joined the Marine Corps before finishing high school, you were not thinking, "Well, I am going to miss college because of this."

GB: Right, that was not a worry.

NP: It was not an issue.

GB: I was hoping to get training in the Marines and they were promising you everything at that time. Everybody was "in and over," [laughter] cannon fodder, as they used to say.

KP: Do you remember where you were when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

GB: Yes. … The family was visiting my uncle's family in Livingston and we were … driving on our way home and it came over the car radio. I was pretty young then.

KP: Did you think, when you first heard the news, that this would be "your" war? You were young when Pearl Harbor occurred.

GB: Right. No, I didn't. I was a little aghast at the shock of my parents, you know, "What is this? Where's, what's Pearl Harbor?" It meant nothing to me, [laughter] but they had attacked us, yes.

KP: There were many bond drives and scrap metal drives and other drives. Did you take part in any of those?

GB: Oh, yes, yes.

KP: Which ones do you remember taking part in?

GB: One that I really liked the most was the metal scrap drive and everybody produced, put stuff out on the road, and, as a Scout, we were working on the trucks, loading all the donations, all this wonderful stuff, silverware, guns and everything else. [laughter] … It was terrific stuff these people were throwing away, and then, we had the paper drives. … I hated it, because, at that time, for some reason, they wanted the papers, newspapers, folded, so [that] it was, what? eight-and-a-half-by-eleven, roughly. … We had to put them in a frame, stack them up and pack it down and tie it, so [that] you made a bundle. That was a lot of work. [laughter]

KP: What about bond drives?

GB: No. I got into buying the stamps, but I wasn't on any bond drives. That was a more adult thing.

KP: What about gym classes in high school? Did you notice a change in the emphasis in gym?

GB: No. I went to Bloomfield High and they had some unusual gym classes anyway. …

KP: In what way were they unusual?

GB: Well, particularly in the girls' sports, what a marvelous archery team, and they also went in for the girls' drill teams and they would do these great, big cartwheels, stuff that you see in-between the things at a football stadium, making the big pinwheel circles and all this kind of stuff. … They all had the uniforms, costumes, was not military. … As a matter-of-fact, Scouting, in some sense, started out as a copy of World War I military [life], but it quickly shifted away from that. We didn't have … that influence when I was in the Scouts, although the man who started my troop in Montclair went over to England and studied under [Robert] Baden-Powell before the US had a Scout movement going. … [He] came back and formed a troop. So, we predate the BSA.

KP: What was his name? Do you remember?

GB: Frank Gray, and our camp was Camp Glen Gray. [laughter]

KP: He must have gone over before 1910.

GB: Yes.

KP: He started this troop.

GB: In Montclair.

KP: It eventually affiliated with the Boy Scouts.

GB: Right, there were several types of Scout organizations started. … [Dan] Beard had the "Indians," and then, there was the Pioneers, which, I guess, the Communist Party took over. Eventually, all these different organizations merged, except, I guess, the Pioneers didn't. [laughter]

KP: What did your Scoutmaster say about Baden-Powell?

GB: Well, I got the full history treatment and our troop flag, had his name on it. He did come over and visit, in this country, and it gave the name to the troop. … I was continually fed the history.

KP: Plus, you had a family connection.

GB: Oh, yes.

KP: Not only did you have a Scoutmaster …

GB: It's English.

KP: … Who fed you lore about Baden-Powell, but you also had a grandfather who had been in the Boer War. What did you learn about your mother's family history?

GB: She did not talk about her family very much, but she was proud of him, as such, and … we had the pictures of him, all the medals and other pictures, with the sort of a pith helmet that they wore. …

KP: He had been a telegrapher.

GB: Tel-o-grapher, that's the way she would [say it].

NP: Did you ever meet any of your grandparents?

GB: I met my grandmother. She came over here. … Do you know who Maudie Frickett is? [laughter] No? This one guy that does comedy programs; which one is he? but he would make

[himself] up as this old lady and crack these jokes. My Grandmother looked just like Maudie Frickett and she, I guess, went through three husbands. She, … as I say, came over here and met a man going back on the boat. That was her second husband, and then, her third one was a brother of her first.

NP: Really?

GB: No other children by the other two.

KP: You mentioned that you joined the State Guard because you were too young to join the military. What prompted you to join the State Guard? Did you want to do your part?

GB: Yes. It's military, uniforms looked good, although they were crummy uniforms. They were World War I leftovers, [laughter] with the high button collar and this itchy, thick wool.

NP: Did being in the State Guard make you want to enlist?

GB: Yes, very much more [of a] military influence, right. The old-timers that had been in the other wars would be telling us all the stories and everything else, but there was a lot of war scares in this country. People can't believe it now. …

KP: What were some of the ones that you remember?

GB: … Oh, "We're going to get invaded," and they would call out the State Guard, go down and guard the bridges down towards the shore, and coastal patrols. … There were a few submarine landings of saboteurs or spies or whatever they were, but we were figuring then that there probably would be an invasion and, also, that the bombers were going to come and that was a big thing. … We had these observation towers … and you learned all these black silhouettes of the different types of planes, to identify them. They set up antiaircraft units all over, and searchlight batteries. We had almost as many troops … stationed here to protect us from this as there were overseas.

KP: At the time, did you think these were real threats, these scares?

GB: To some extent, yes. We were caught up in the belief that there was a danger there.

KP: You mentioned that your father tried to do his part. He was never recalled for aviation.

GB: No.

KP: Did he serve as a Civil Defense warden?

GB: Yes, both parents did.

KP: What about you? Did you serve as a Civil Defense warden?

GB: No, I was too young. [laughter] I was in the Scouts and involved in the scrap drives, and then, I got old enough to get in the State Guard.

KP: Where did you join the State Guard?

GB: In East Orange.

KP: What were the duties? How many hours a week would you be involved with the State Guard?

GB: It was only one night a week and, sometimes, we'd have weekend maneuvers. That was over [in] the South Mountain Reservation there, where we had various State Guard units on offensive and defensive teams. … We had a shortage of everything in World War II in this country, initially. We had no Army, no weapons, no nothing and here's the State Guard. What do you supply them with? Well, they supplied us with shotguns and Thompson submachine guns. Each platoon had one Thompson submachine gun, but the rest had shotguns. … The troops were for the governor and one of the things was for riot control and … that kind of thing, but they were also … used for defense purposes.

NP: Was it a very stringent operation?

GB: Oh, no, but they would try to get the military discipline across to you.

KP: The term we would use now is weekend warriors.

GB: Right, right, it's like the Reserves.

KP: What was the age range in the State Guard? You were very young.

GB: Oh, they were the young and the old.

KP: No middle?

GB: No middle, no, unless they had some physical defect. There was very liberal requirements on enlisting.

KP: How many men were in your unit?

GB: Well, they were called companies and we were in the armory in East Orange. These were all the armories that the National Guard had had. We just moved into them. It was company strength, which [was], I'm not sure now, … maybe a hundred.

KP: What type of training did you get? Was most of the training close-order drill?

GB: Mostly, yes.

KP: What about actual gunnery practice?

GB: In the short time I was in, we did not; I didn't get to a range, although, I mean, others did and, as I said, we had this maneuver in the South Mountain Reservation and they gave us blank cartridges for these shotguns and they had judges running around, [saying], "That guy's dead. This team is wiped out." … It was all noise.

KP: Did you make it through?

GB: Yes, we got to the top of the hill.

KP: You were on the offensive.

GB: Yes.

NP: It sounds like a war game.

GB: Right, that's what it was.

KP: Did you ever go on patrol with the State Guard?

GB: No, I was either … after or before those events. There was relatively no activity on my part in the time I was in it.

KP: Roughly how long were you in the State Guard?

GB: Less than a year.

KP: You joined in 1943.

GB: I guess that was it, yes. Then, I enlisted in the Marines …

KP: In April of 1944.

GB: Yes, and they didn't call me in [right away]. I mean, I still stayed in the State Guard until June, the day I was eighteen.

NP: How was your Marine Corps training?

GB: Rough. Marine boot camp is famous.

KP: Since you were on the home front for a while, was rationing tough to deal with?

GB: Well, we yearned for all these things that were rationed and we were aware of the black market, but it was continually in there, and then, even when I was in the Marines, we'd come home on leave, we could always manage to find a place … where we could get gasoline to keep the car going and stuff like that. … You had all kinds of dubious tricks to try and extend what you're getting. My wife talks about … [how] they were selling nylons, I guess, one per person, so, they got every little kid they could in line, … "for their older sisters." [laughter]

KP: Did your parents use the black market to get food?

GB: Not much at all, that I know of, and, of course, we bought a butter churn. So, we took the cream off the milk and made … additional butter.

NP: You cut corners.

GB: Right. There were a lot of these little things you could do to extend your stuff and margarine had come in, but the butter industry wouldn't let them color it. It was a white thing and you'd get a little cellophane package of coloring material that you'd knead into it, to make it [have] a yellow butter look.

KP: That is very interesting, that this memory of kneading the margarine is clear.

GB: That's right, and churning the butter churn, too. [laughter]

KP: Your parents had lived through World War I. Your father had been in the military, your mother on the home front.

GB: Right.

KP: How did they compare being in America during World War II versus what they remembered of England? Did they ever say, "Oh, in England, the rationing was far worse in World War I?"

GB: I can't remember any reflection like that. They didn't stress any complaints or anything like that.

NP: What about general home front feelings? Was the atmosphere there during the World War I more intense than the atmosphere here during World War II?

GB: I never got that kind of a comparison, but I did understand that there was a war effort on the home front back there, … [during] World War I. "We did this, we did that," rolled the bandages, things like that, nothing of any depth.

KP: Why the Marine Corps? You had been in the State Guard; why not the Army? Would your father have wanted you to be in the Air Corps?

GB: I guess he would have, but he never mentioned it. At that time, [with] the war going on, I was reading all the war news and reading what's going on. I knew a few fellows who had gone into the Marines and the Pacific operation was a big Marine show and, every few months, there'd be another island that they were taking. So, it was constantly in the news. I got a strong affection or interest in them.

NP: Were you generally interested in going to the war in the Pacific?

GB: Well, I don't know whether I was even quite aware that there was this split, that the Marines were only doing the Pacific. …

KP: What about the Marines intrigued you from all this war news?

GB: That they were fighting, they kept on fighting and they were winning. … Guadalcanal, of course, was the turning point. We hit them back and stayed and took them over and that stopped their whole Pacific movement. That started the publicity and that was another thing; the Marine Corps had the biggest publicity outfit of all the units and they would crank it out and they had Marine … artists, Marine photographers, right up in the front lines, [laughter] and correspondents, too.

KP: It seems they made quite an impression on you.

GB: Oh, yes.

NP: When you enlisted, did you enlist on your own or were there friends that enlisted along with you?

GB: No, I did it on my own. I think, by that time, the friends that I had were all older, they'd already gone. I was trailing the pack, but I went on my own. I guess I hit the office in Newark and they said, "You've got to go over to New York City, in the big induction center up there." It was nothing but guys and they [have you] strip down and they'd come along and examine everybody in line and everything else. …

KP: You mentioned that you had friends who had enlisted earlier. Where had your friends enlisted? Did you stay in touch with any of them? Did any of them write to you about their experiences or come back on leaves, telling you what it was really like?

GB: I saw a few on leave. No, we didn't have any great contact. One unusual feature that I tell people about and they don't believe, I was in eighth grade, in Cedar Grove, and the first draft came out and four or five of my classmates, in eighth grade, went and that's this effect of staying back.

KP: Because they had been held back so many times.

GB: Yes. They were old enough to be drafted, … and then, another large contingent went and all of us younger boys all marched down to Newark with them … to see them off. We took the day off from school. … One of my classmates was a paratrooper … that got wiped out in that jump over Holland.

KP: MARKET-GARDEN. Before enlisting, did you know any classmates who were killed in the war?

GB: Well, that was one.

KP: Prior to enlisting?

GB: Oh, yes, was that before or after? I'm not sure. I don't think I knew anybody close before enlisting.

KP: You were very in touch with Montclair, even when you were living in Cedar Grove. Did you know any slackers or shirkers in your neighborhood?

GB: … Not really, but the image of that was the zoot suiter and … propaganda/publicity was a continual grind and you'd have the guys with their zoot suits and the big hats and they were always down on the corners in Newark, not in our community.

KP: That was one of the centers for zoot suiters, Newark, as it was portrayed in the local newspapers.

GB: Well, right. Do you know what a zoot suit is?

NP: Yes, I do. [laughter]

KP: You remember your induction quite well. How did you get to Parris Island?

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

GB: By train. … The government trains, in general, they would route them over any railroad that the government had put money into. So, in crossing the country, both ways, the route that we took was all over the place, took us a week to go across the country. … We must have been on a passenger train going down there and we get into Ashville, South Carolina, and somebody mets us there and they march us down the street to a wooden barracks, in the center of town, because it was at night, and, in the morning, the bus would take you out to Parris Island. … They selected one member of the group that I was in to handle/carry the papers and he was in charge.

KP: Earlier, Nicole asked how hard Marine Corps training was.

NP: I have gathered that it is the most difficult of all the branches.

GB: Well, some of the specialized forces get the same kind of stuff.

KP: What was your initial impression of training, after the first day or two?

GB: Almost panic. [laughter]

KP: Did you think to yourself, "What did I get myself into?"

GB: Oh, yes, of course. We could never do anything right. [laughter]

KP: What were some of the things you did wrong?

GB: Scared all the time. Oh, I don't know; it didn't take much to be wrong. … Somebody sent you a letter, airmail, and he'd [the drill instructor] be handing out the mail, "Air mail," and throw it up on the roof. You didn't call a rifle a gun. You had to walk with that, "This is my rifle, this is my gun." … If you messed up different things, it was the duck walks and stuff. The poor kids that couldn't swim, they duck walked over to the pool and back and they had to keep working on it until they learned it. Also, there was another category in boot camp, those fellows that had not gone to school, couldn't read and write, and they sent them to a special school and they stayed in boot camp that whole time, suffering.

KP: If you could not read or write, you were put in a special group. You went to classes to learn how to read and write, but, then, you kept doing the boot camp training until you got out.

GB: Oh, yes, and then, when you finally graduated from that school, you'd go back into another training platoon and graduate from that.

KP: In your initial training unit, was there anyone you knew who could not read or write?

GB: I don't know. I can't remember any [recruits] being taken out, but [I remember] some being put in that had finished their schooling and, oh, they were sharp. They'd been there so long.

KP: In other words, you had people in your unit who had gone through this special school. What were their backgrounds? Did you ever get to talk to them?

GB: Mostly Southern hillbillies, right.

KP: Some interviewees have talked about hillbilly music. Did you hear any of that?

GB: Oh, yes, that was a shock to me. … I just wasn't used to it; so was the food. … I went to chow one day, they had this white stuff. [I said], "Oh, Farina," and [I was] putting milk and sugar on it. … It was grits. "What's everybody putting butter on that cereal for?" [laughter] and the hominy, I didn't like that either, but we couldn't get to the PX. That was not permitted.

NP: Were most of the men that you met at Parris Island from the North, the South or elsewhere?

GB: Well, no, we [the Marine Corps] had two training camps, one at Parris Island, South Carolina, the other was above San Diego, so [that] the country was split, but there was a good fifty percent, at least, [of] Southerners, even though they were less populated down there. … Population-wise, that was more [prevalent at Parris Island], because, [to] the Southern-Civil War-Rebel mentality, it was the place to go.

KP: Were you fighting the Civil War often in your barracks? Did Southerners want to remind you of the "War Between the States?"

GB: Well, we didn't fight it, but there [were] cat-calls all the time, back and forth.

NP: Were you called a Yankee?

GB: Oh, yes, "You dumb Yankees."

KP: You had been surprised at the YMCA in Montclair when your black friend was not allowed to go in the swim class. What did you think of the South and its very stark segregation? When did you notice it?

GB: Oh, well, once I got out of boot camp, I mean, I was in North Carolina, it was obvious all over. … It just grated on me. I couldn't accept it, but I knew it existed. We didn't have black troops in the Marines to speak of. The only blacks were the mess boys in the Navy. They only then just started bringing in, when I was in, women. … Truman made a big change there.

KP: What do you remember about your drill instructor? Do you remember his name? Do you remember what he was like?

GB: No, I don't remember the names. It was a routine assignment. … One or two of each graduating group would be selected to stay and learn to become drill instructors. They were the biggest and the toughest, in general. … The one in command, I think, was a Jewish lawyer from New York. He was the head DI [drill instructor] in my barracks. I don't know why he was an enlisted man. … [He was] a tall, skinny guy, a little Abraham Lincoln look to him.

KP: What time of year, which season, did you have your training? You enlisted in April and reported in …

GB: June. It was hot, yes. It was terrible and that really killed me for the South. … They'd line us up … to get shots and stuff and we had to be in formation and they were keeling over. … Finally, the general order came out, "Get the troops in the shade." [laughter]

KP: You would line up and men would just pass out because of the heat.

GB: Right, and you didn't get out of position. You just let them drop.

KP: What about the forced marches? You had hiked as a Boy Scout, but you were now hiking in a very hot climate. What was it like?

GB: Well, it's hiking with a load, full packs and rifles and stuff like that, but, as you say, I was sort of used to hiking. That was not a problem, but the routine drill, back and forth, back and forth, and around, but, once in a while, the punishments [were], "All right, take your rifle and run around the parade grounds fifteen [times]," or whatever the number was, you know.

KP: How much weight did you lose when you were in boot camp?

GB: I became a skinny boy, but, by the end of the boot camp, I had put back some of that on, but, my proportions differed, I was slim and hard.

KP: Marine Corps training is tough and lives up to its image. At a certain point, though, the Marines really take care of their own. I have gotten the sense, from the officers, that they really have this notion that they are supposed to take care of their men. Could you talk about your ideas about this notion? Despite rank, there is a certain equality among Marines.

GB: Yes, once you're out of boot camp.

KP: Yes. [laughter]

GB: You're now a Marine. You're on a pretty equal basis. That's a true statement. … As opposed to the Army training, [the] Marine [philosophy] basically is, "You keep going and, [if] somebody drops, you pick up from them and keep going." That's [why we] ran into difficulties where the Army and the Marines were fighting side-by-side. The Army would stop and [say], "Let's shell it some more," and the Marines are still going, and then, they're out there by themselves and your chain of command, if one gets it, the next one down picks [it] up and takes it over, and you do this continually, taking over. … [To] talk about protecting each other, though, I think the highest laurels go to the Navy medical corpsmen, because … they were running out and dragging guys out under heavy fire. They'd keep going after people. I have nothing but praise for them.

KP: Boot camp is such a memorable experience for most men. What was your worst experience? Do you remember any bad incidents where you said, "This is really awful?"

GB: Well, awful humor things, I mean, you got detailed to clean out the head, (the bathrooms), and they had these long cement troughs sitting seat high, with a single board with holes in it, and a saltwater line coming in at one end, sweeping down and out the drain at the other. So, you're assigned to clean the head. You made a big ball of toilet paper and put it into the water and light it and it sweeps down on everybody sitting there and they come flying off. [laughter]

KP: How well did boot camp prepare you for combat?

GB: Well, you learned to shoot, you learned to follow orders. We did, at that time, not have a lot of combat training in boot camp. Today, they do a lot more in there. Whereas I went for two months, it's now getting close to four months. We'd move to the next camp, Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, where we had more of the combat training and stuff.

NP: By the end of boot camp, did you feel as though you had that Marine camaraderie?

GB: Oh, yes, yes, we can beat the world.

KP: An Army officer once told me that he admired the Marines because every Marine is trained for infantry; they may have different specialties, but, ultimately, they are all infantry. He also noted that every Marine has on a snappy uniform when they go off base, a nice set of dress blues.

GB: … Well, we didn't get blues during the war, but [you got] your greens, which went through the tailor shop, yes.

KP: It is not like the Army, where if it fits, it fits, if it does not, you are out of luck.

GB: … Initially, you got things thrown at you, but you got them all tailored. Even while you're in boot camp, you got them all tailored. It came out of your pay. …

KP: There was a real effort.

GB: Oh, yes. The uniform has got to be perfect and you don't mess it up. … We had blouses that had great, big puff pockets on it. They never were puffed. There was never anything in those pockets. They were ironed flat. …

KP: Before going to Camp Lejeune, did you get any leave?

GB: Yes, we got a leave to come home, strutted around the town in uniform. [laughter] … All those long train rides were a new experience to me, too.

KP: Had you traveled much before the war?

GB: No.

KP: What was the furthest south, west, east and north you had gone?

GB: I'd never been down South. … With my parents, who were into camping vacations, we, as a family, camped, but we mostly went to Canada and Pennsylvania and New England, went north. It was always a summer trip and we went where it was cool. We didn't go where it was hot. I guess, … one time, we went to Washington. That's about as [far] south, yes, but these were all in the car with a camping trailer, not one of the balloon trailers. We'd set up tents and stuff, but very little railroad travel, no flying, either. [laughter]

KP: How long were you at Camp Lejeune?

GB: Another two months, I guess it was, and then, they packed us on a train and we went, a troop train, across the country and, as I was saying, we were all over the place.

KP: It was a long trip.

GB: … It was terrible and they weren't boxcars, they were troop cars and, if you'd go, I don't know whether you'd still see them, in some of the railroad yards, you'd see these things that have these strange doors and some big windows on them that railroad workers used to ride in. That's what they put us in and they didn't let us get off the train. When you pulled into a station, they'd have guards out on the platform. [laughter] … You see the movies of [the Nazis] sending the people to the concentration camps in Germany, well, we were almost the same thing. No air conditioning, of course; there were wide open windows and cinders flying in.

KP: At Camp Lejeune, you had more advanced infantry training.

GB: Yes.

KP: How good was that training? What sticks out in your memory about the training?

GB: Well, everything I got there, I could use, if I needed [it]. I qualified as a BAR man, Browning Automatic Rifleman. I got so skilled at that that you're instructed to fire in bursts of two or three, but, on automatic position, I could fire single shots, [laughter] my finger was so light. When I got overseas, our BAR training group went over as a group, and then, they were doling them off at the different islands that we stopped at going over there and, when I got to Guam, I got put into a machine gun platoon. … I had not had machine gun training. So, eventually, I was slow in using both hands on the equipment and the Lieutenant needed a runner. So, I was sent to runners' school on Guam. … One of the things you learned there was how to disengage mines, how to find them and make them safe, and that was what I was doing on Iwo. I was a runner, a gopher, carry messages, get supplies, whatever.

KP: The BAR men you trained with at Camp Lejeune left as a group to go west, knowing that you would be broken up.

GB: … Well, we didn't.

KP: Oh, you did not know that you were basically going over as replacements.

GB: Right. The Marine Corps, at the start of World War II, wasn't even a division in size. At the end of World War II, they were up to six divisions. They were constantly feeding and forming new divisions and it grew.

KP: Where did you embark from to go overseas?

GB: Well, we went across country and they dumped us at Camp Pendleton, California, and we spent a week or two there, mostly on chow duty.

KP: You had peeled your fair share of potatoes.

GB: … I did get one trip up to San Francisco, which was all new to me, but, then, they packed us on trucks and took us down to San Diego, which was the big base, and we got onboard ship there. Then, we sat in the harbor for a number of days. [laughter] I have a letter that I wrote home from sitting up on the booms of the boat, describing the harbor at night, with all the lights and stuff like that, but, then, we finally shoved off. … These were converted tramp steamers and this one happened to be a Dutch one, the *Bloemfontein*, and we had a native crew [from] Southeast Asia and the fumes from their cooking were radiating all through the ship. Actually, [they] used to carry freight and they'd take the cargo holds in the ship and put in bunks, like this, up the wall. You'd climb up these things to get in. Of course, you'd get some rough seas and somebody's sick at the top, it's down on everybody. … Then, up in the bow of the ship was the head nearest us and that was a sloping floor, and, you had these big, high … doors going in there that were round with a big, high step over. So, you got the rough seas and all that water was coming out, and then, you would have this little sea on the floor, rolling back and forth. … There would be guys laying in it that were sick. [Editor's Note: Mr. Bebbington imitates the sick Marines vomiting.] It was a sloppy mess.

NP: Did anyone ever get thrown out of the high bunks?

GB: Sometimes, you might fall out. Coming back on the hospital ship, they hit some rough seas and the bunks ripped right out of the wall and the guy overhead of me had a body cast on. … [He had] one free leg and, luckily, he managed to come down on that one leg. …

KP: In terms of non-combat incidents, storms sound pretty awful, particularly aboard these transport ships. Was it really bad?

GB: … I got seasick, finally, because the chow lines would be stretched out through the ship, up and down, like this, and going over the engine room, the diesel fumes, oh, that was so terrible and I finally ran up the ladder and over the rail, but I also got sick in the landing boats that landed at Camp Lejeune and the landing boat bobbing around going into Iwo. [laughter]

KP: You got sick again.

GB: Yes.

NP: How long did it take to get to Guam?

GB: About two weeks.

KP: Did you stop at Hawaii?

GB: Yes, we had a stop in Hawaii, for about a day.

KP: Did you get off the ship?

GB: They marched us off, up this hill, to this fenced in picnic grove, gave us a beer and marched us back down and put us back on the boat. That was my Hawaii trip. … Coming back, I was in the hospital in Hawaii and I was on my back in bed, but they had earphones with a radio. … All of a sudden, here comes this music and this program, *Matinee at Meadowbrook*. That means nothing to you, but that's [in] Cedar Grove, Frank Daily's Meadowbrook. … As a kid in Cedar Grove, they used to have all the Big Bands there and we could go up on Saturdays, when they would record the broadcast, and get in and … hear the band. We could get the pictures and get them autographed and stuff like that.

KP: Frank Sinatra used to perform at the Meadowbrook.

GB: Sure, all the big singers, all the Big Bands, and then, things got tight in World War II and Frank Daily opened up another place in Newark, where you could use public transportation to get to [it], on the Newark-Irvington Line there.

KP: You said that BAR men were getting dropped off on different islands. Do you remember which islands they were being dropped off at?

GB: Oh, yes, we were in the Marshalls [the Marianas] and it was Tinian, Saipan and Guam.

KP: Your BAR unit was slowly being portioned out.

GB: Right, right.

KP: How many out of your original group made it to Guam? Do you remember how many were portioned out?

GB: Well, when we hit Guam we were scattered to all the units there. No, I don't remember a number.

KP: Then, you broke with these people you had trained with.

GB: Yes, spread them all over the place.

KP: The unit you joined had not seen combat.

GB: Oh, yes, yes, it was full of veterans. A guy just one year older than you was an old-timer. He'd been through all this war. You looked up to him. I had one fellow, he was a few years older than I, (Spees?) was his name, he'd gotten some shrapnel in his head and we were getting ready to board ship to go to Iwo and some of it started popping out. He could … have gone to the hospital and stayed there, but he chose to go and this is a common occurrence, at least in the Marines, anyway, that you didn't want to leave the boys. You wanted to go and help them.

KP: It is hard to say if his shrapnel wound was a "million-dollar wound," because it sounds like a pretty serious wound, but he had a wound that could have probably kept him out of combat and sent him home.

GB: Yes. Well, it was more skin-deep, I guess.

KP: Clearly, he could have at least avoided going then.

GB: Yes, and he got his head blown off on Iwo, … for his trouble, but we have the Medal of Honor-winner here, [John] Basilone, in Raritan, and he got that at Guadalcanal, and then, they had him back here for bond drives and stuff and he couldn't take it. He wanted to go back and that's what he did.

KP: Did you ever meet Basilone when you were still here in New Jersey?

GB: No.

KP: You never saw him speak.

GB: No.

KP: You looked up to these veterans on Guam. Did you feel that there was a real gap between the old-timers and people like you, who were new to the unit, or were you made to feel like part of the unit? How did that transition go?

GB: Well, you're made to feel part [of the unit], but they did not develop friendships with you … too much. My friends were the other new replacements.

KP: Within the unit, what was the rough percentage between replacements and old-timers? Was it fifty-fifty?

GB: No, no, maybe two-thirds were veterans.

KP: One-third were replacements.

GB: Yes.

NP: You were the minority.

KP: How much training did you do with this unit on Guam?

GB: Well, we did great, big field maneuvers, and climb the mountain, trying to get all the units working together and stuff like that. It was continuous. Although it was … a pleasant tropical set-up, it had only just been secured, there were still Japanese hiding there. The island was taken only a few months before I got there. It was still a danger zone.

NP: Did you see any action on Guam itself?

GB: No, no, I didn't see any, just training on Guam. Iwo was my first action. They had a number of sweeps in Guam, … but you still missed people. There were a few Japanese that popped up years later that still were [hiding].

KP: I remember from when I was older, Japanese soldiers would come out of hiding and decide the war was really over.

GB: They would believe it, finally.

KP: How many weeks did you stay at Guam? Do you remember, roughly?

GB: I must have gotten there at the … tail end of November, beginning of December, because I think I had Thanksgiving aboard ship. We had Christmas on Guam, and then, we packed up and went to Iwo, which was hit in February. So, only a few months, but that's the way the war was going, [an invasion] every few months. We hit Iwo in February and they finally declared it secured at the end of March. April 1st, they hit Okinawa, the other half of the Marine divisions did that.

NP: When you were over there, did you feel that things were moving rather quickly?

GB: Well, at that point, yes, I was surprised it had gone so soon, but, if I had done any thinking back on it, they'd only just secured Guam and Saipan and Tinian before … I got there. [laughter]

KP: You wrote down aerial gunner on your pre-interview survey. Did you receive any training as an aerial gunner?

GB: No. That's why I said they made all kinds of promises to you when you enlisted.

KP: You were promised that you would get into aerial gunnery and that never occurred.

GB: [laughter] No. I got through the basic training and, "All right, here you are, FMF [Fleet Marine Force]." [laughter] …

KP: Did you say anything to anyone?

GB: Nobody's going there, no.

KP: You did inquire.

GB: Yes.

KP: What did the veterans tell you about combat or their experiences with the Japanese?

GB: You mean the ones I'd met over there?

KP: In Guam, or anywhere.

GB: It depended on the individual. I mean, sometimes you'd get stories. You'd hear about some guy sticking skulls on his tent poles and another one would be a gold tooth collector and things like that.

NP: Where they out to put you at ease or to scare you? Where they out to scare the new guy?

GB: No, no, you didn't do that, because you'd have to be fighting with them. No, they were helpful. They looked a little down on you. You don't know, yet, but, no, they'd give you good information. I'm talking about the *stories* they would tell.

KP: You trained with the old-timers, even though they were old-timers by a year.

GB: Right.

KP: Did they start telling you things that they could not teach you at boot camp or advanced training, in terms of what actual combat is like? While training tries to duplicate combat, there are things in combat you can not learn in training.

GB: Well, they were constantly feeding you these things, "In combat, you wouldn't do that," all the way through all my training. They would try to have the veterans back [for] training. … They weren't all that way, but the stories would be passed on.

KP: Did the old-timers impress upon you certain things that were very important to do?

GB: Where necessary, yes.

KP: Was there anything that they specifically emphasized?

GB: No. As I say, I was training, initially, in the machine gun platoon and they were trying to teach me how to work with that. … The next thing I knew, I was in the runners' school and, again, these were veterans teaching in that, … how you take apart a mine, for instance, and use the different equipment and stuff like that.

KP: What else, besides disabling a mine, did you learn in runners' school on Guam?

GB: Signaling, wigwags. You're supposed to be versatile, be able to do anything. I can't even remember all the stuff I had. It was only a few months.

KP: Which types of signaling did you learn?

GB: The flags, the wigwags.

KP: Semaphore?

GB: Yes. You never know what might be needed or used, that was the whole point of the thing.

KP: You had had semaphore signaling in the Boy Scouts.

GB: Yes, I had it there. … Of course, we had phones and radios and everything. They were invented by then. [laughter]

KP: Did you carry a phone with you?

GB: No.

KP: You were not the radio operator.

GB: No.

NP: Did the veteran officers teach you the tricks of the trade, like, to change your socks often, things that you would not learn in boot camp?

GB: Well, there were a few things. One of the things [was], you tried to be an old salt, was the phrase they used then, and you'd want to look like you'd been in the Corps for a long time, so, worn out equipment was a prized possession. [laughter] … Guys used to scrub, with this saltwater soap, their web gear, their canteen covers and belts and things like that. … Of course,

you were losing all that khaki coloring out of it. It's becoming white and they were saying, "Stop doing that. It's too visible," [laughter] but you had to make it look old and worn.

KP: As a runner, did you have any special equipment, besides the semaphore flags?

GB: No. Being in the machine gun platoon, we were already issued carbines, which were the short rifles. …

KP: You had a carbine.

GB: Yes, and, as a matter-of-fact, the day I got hit, I … put it down. I didn't use it. I had my arms full of stuff [that] I was carrying up to the front observation post.

KP: What did you think of the Japanese before joining the Marine Corps, then, while going through training, and then, while actually fighting against them?

GB: Well, I don't want to use the word hatred, but … we knew that they were rotten and they were murderers. They killed and wiped out people. One of the things I tell people about is that, growing up, you know the baseball cards, all the chewing gum, bubblegum cards? We had "The Atrocities of War" cards, and so, we had all these things, the old World War II "baby on a bayonet on the rifle" things, the Rape of Nanking in China, all that China War that Japan had run before World War II. … As kids, we had a full introduction to this, so [that] we knew they were just no good. … It sort of works on the Yellow Peril-type philosophy, but we knew that these people didn't want to surrender. The military ethic over there, I would say, today, it was wacko. [laughter] You don't surrender, … even though things are lost, all right. Then, a lot of them would drink and get drunk, but they'd make these massive charges, which went out two centuries before. … If you saw it coming, you could just mow them down, a ridiculous type of fighting, but even on Iwo, … they didn't do any *banzai* charges until the very end, one last maneuver, there were these incidents, like, they'd be in a cave and they'd come out and sit down in a circle and, one after another, would stand up so [that] they could get shot and they'd go right around the circle, stuff like that.

NP: *Kamikaze* warfare.

GB: Yes, … but it was a winner. Our Navy was really up-the-creek and they were going to wipe us out if we hadn't dropped those atom bombs. The *kamikazes* were slaughtering the Navy.

KP: It sounds like it was hard to get leave in the Marine Corps.

GB: … Right. I had more leave when I was in the hospital. [laughter] …

KP: What did you do to pass the time, particularly when you were on the ship going overseas? Was there any gambling going on?

GB: Yes. I wasn't a gambler. I didn't get into that. I always tried my darndest to be up on deck in the fresh air and we had the sound system continually playing the same music, over and over again. [laughter]

KP: What did they play?

GB: All the music from *Annie Get Your Gun,* and was *South Pacific* music in that? I'm not sure, but it got a little tiring after a while, but I would manage to try and stay on deck as much as I could. I was even laying down, as they say, on the booms, and then, when they were making everybody go below, I would crawl in under some equipment up on the bow there. … I did that one time and I didn't know what I was underneath, but, all of a sudden, this machine turns on and, the next thing, I'm in smoke. It was a smoke generator. [laughter] … I was out in the fresh air, I thought.

KP: Did they ever show any movies of the war, on Guam or aboard ship?

GB: Oh, yes, on Guam, on land. I don't think we had any on ship. We just weren't equipped for it, the space for an auditorium and a screen.

KP: What kind of religious services were available to you?

GB: Yes, there was usually some sort of chapel around. There was always chaplains around and I wasn't a great participant in it. One time, I was working with one fellow who was a Born-Again and he was dragging me in there, but … I managed to get away from it.

KP: When did you know that you would be landing on Iwo? Was it when you left Guam?

GB: Yes, I think we were told before we left. I have a map that was given to us, which has all brown corners on it. That was my blood [laughter] and it shows the three airfields and stuff on it, but I think I got that before I got aboard ship.

KP: What did they tell you about the assault, in terms of the difficulty?

GB: Well, as a lot of the write-ups say, they thought it was going to be a rather simple thing and they were even saying three days. Well, they had bombed and shelled that place for six months and they were still there. They were all underground. After the third day, I was in the Third Division and the Fourth and Fifth were what made the initial landing. … The Third was a floating reserve and, after things were secured, we were supposed to go up the chain and take a smaller island, all by ourselves, but after the third day, they called the Third Division in and we moved into the middle of the line and continued on up there. … It went on for, what? five, six weeks, instead of three days. [laughter]

KP: When did they tell you that the plans had changed, that you would not be taking the smaller islands?

GB: Well, no, but we were a floating reserve off … the shore and they said, "All right, you're going in. Down into the landing boats." [laughter] That's about it.

KP: Did you have any sense, aboard the ship, of how badly it was going at first?

GB: Well, we could see quite a bit of it. I saw the flag go up on Mount Suribachi, which was a success. That was great. We saw our own planes get hit and come down. Sometimes, they were hit by our own guns, I think, but I could see the smoke and everything else and it did not greatly move me. … I guess I was not that close that I could see how much damage was on the beach. …

NP: What was going through your mind as you sat offshore watching the battle unfold? Were you thinking, "This is what I am heading for?"

GB: I don't think I really thought about it. I was just more interested in seeing what's going on. [laughter] I wasn't thinking that far ahead.

KP: You went over the side and took an amphibious craft to the beach. You got pretty seasick.

GB: … Yes. Well, the boats go around in big circles, so, half the time, you're with the waves, the other half of the time, you're the other way around. … You keep the circle going until all the boats are loaded, and then, you'll form into the line and go in. So, we were out there quite a while. …

KP: By the time you landed on Iwo, had the beaches been secured? Did you receive any fire coming ashore?

GB: No, not that I was aware of, but the beaches … could be fired on. … You had the mountain at the one end, which they had secured, but what doesn't show in a lot of the pictures was that as you went up the island, it was, somewhat, a series of ridges, higher and higher, and all guns had been centered on the beaches. There were only two little beaches, and so, they knew you're going to be either on this side or that and they had the range. …

NP: They could see you coming.

GB: Oh, sure, right. [laughter]

KP: When was the first person in your unit either wounded or killed? Do you remember?

GB: No, I really don't have a first person thought in my head. You were keeping your head down whenever you could. There may have been something as we approached the first airfield. It was just not something that sank in. Later, I was running by some holes and one of the guys said, "Hey, your friend got it," … or something like that. I didn't see it happen, but, I mean, that

was a blow. As I say, I had all the replacements as friends and they dropped off. … I marveled at my platoon sergeant, standing up there, on the peak there, directing fire and stuff like that. He probably got it, but I know he didn't make it out of there.

KP: There were individuals who, at great risk to their life, stood up and directed fire. On the one hand, veterans say these guys were crazy, but, on the other hand, they have said that it was very reassuring to see a guy coolly directing fire.

GB: … He was one of the veterans. I mean, he'd been through Bougainville. …

KP: He was just standing there, directing fire.

GB: Yes.

KP: What is your most vivid memory of your experiences on Iwo?

GB: There's so many. [laughter]

KP: What is your first vivid memory?

GB: I think, probably, the most vivid, … [the] thing that bothered me [most] …

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. George H. Bebbington on May 8, 1997, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and …

NP: Nicole Porcaro.

KP: You were saying that you had jumped into this …

GB: Big hole, and there were a number of fellows that had dug foxholes around the perimeter of this thing and I guess the Japanese had been aware of it and saw there was a lot of activity there, so, they tried to drop a shell into it. … I'm down in that hole and here comes this, "Boom," and closer, "Boom," and closer, "Boom," and the whole ground is shaking and you knew it was coming at you. "The next one's going to drop on me," and the next one's [on] the other side of the hole. It went away [for] a couple of minutes and starts back again and you're just laying there, waiting for it. …

KP: There is not a lot you can do when you are being shelled.

GB: [laughter] No, and these were big ones. I was in another hole one time, which I'd dug, and was laying flat; maybe it was a foot deep, like that. … Here comes a shell and I hear, [Editor's

Note: Mr. Bebbington imitates the sound of an incoming shell] … burned my fingers, a big piece of shrapnel, in the side of the hole, and I started digging much quicker, went down.

KP: You were told in training that foxholes were important. When did you really realize how important foxholes were?

GB: … Oh, right from the beginning, [laughter] but the famous black ash on Iwo, it was very difficult to maintain a hole. I mean, as soon as you'd dig it, it was caving in, running in. … I also tell people that ask me, "How many Japs did you kill?" I say, "I don't know, but," … I like to tell this to the Japanese, "I used their bodies as sandbags around my hole, to hold it up." There'd be some bodies there and I'd dig down there. [laughter]

KP: As a civilian, that seems very odd.

GB: I tell it for shock value. [laughter]

KP: How often would you do that when you were on Iwo?

GB: Very frequently, oh, yes, often. There were bodies all over the place.

NP: It becomes second nature.

GB: Yes, you ignore them. Running back and forth, there was a great, big (kettle?) mine, which has huge horns, like this, and I used to go around that all the time. I wasn't aware it was there. I also went around a Nambu machine gun. … Boy, that'd be a great souvenir, but you just keep on going.

KP: As a runner, you were often delivering messages. What kind of distances would you have to travel? How far would you run?

GB: At the most, a half-mile. Another tale I tell, I went back further, I guess, one time, to the first airstrip and there was a unit there. … I don't know what their purpose was or anything, but they had K-in-one rations and these were cardboard boxes of canned goods; … ten-in-one, I should say. … They were food for one man for ten days or one day for ten men and here was a can of peas sitting there and I said, "Could I have that?" [laughter] … I sat down with my knife and I opened it up and I ate this can of cold peas. That was the best meal I had the whole time I was on there. I don't recall actually eating much the whole time I was there, but all we had were C rations and the D bars, which were like baker's chocolate now. It was a lot of nutritious stuff in it. [laughter]

KP: You never had a hot meal on Iwo.

GB: No. I think, once or twice, I'd gotten back behind the lines and I got some hot coffee, but that's it.

KP: How filthy did everything become, your uniform and your body?

GB: Well, these were our fatigues, as they say in the Army. It wasn't the uniform.

KP: I know, I should have been more specific, but your combat gear.

GB: Oh, the combat gear? Well, you'd keep that clean, yes, particularly the rifle.

KP: Yes, but what about your body and fatigues?

GB: Well, I never had a shower, never had a bath.

KP: You never changed your fatigues.

GB: Never changed, no. [laughter] I may have changed some socks, I'm not sure. One other peculiar condition there on Iwo, you dug a hole in some areas and you'd get down in there and this was February and it was cold at night. … You'd have a poncho over you and the bottom of the hole is hot. It's the volcanic ash and steam is coming up and, after a while, it got burning hot, so, you'd turn over. Now, you've got your wet side to the cold air; [laughter] that was hot and cold, chilly.

KP: Iwo Jima was very costly for Marines.

GB: Oh, yes, it was the worst of all the Marine Corps battles.

KP: What were the casualties like in your unit? How badly was your unit hit?

GB: I don't know the final number. …

KP: While you were there.

GB: It was pretty bad, but I couldn't give a number, but my particular unit was part of this [action where] they'd been stuck for several days and they called for the only night attack that was held in the Pacific. They moved out in the dark and, come the daylight, they're behind the Japanese lines and trapped in this bowl. Some people call it Cushman's Bowl [after General Robert E. Cushman, Jr.] and they couldn't get out of there. There was constant fire. Somebody did get back with a message and they sent the tanks out, finally, and the guys would come up out of their holes into the trapdoor in the bottom of the tank. That's the only way they got out of there. So, we lost a lot of people in that particular area and most of that was after I got hit.

KP: You were not a part of that.

GB: I was there on the initial [push]. We were stalled for several days.

KP: However, you were not part of the night attack.

GB: No, no, that was the next day.

KP: That was after you got wounded.

GB: Right.

KP: When did you first learn about this attack that decimated your unit? Were you back in Hawaii?

GB: I don't know. Probably, I was back in Guam. I was flown from Iwo to Guam, to the hospital there. All the tales travel with us. I mean, … you keep up with what's going on.

KP: Even though you were in the hospital, you knew what was happening through the grapevine, so-to-speak?

GB: Oh, yes. Everybody coming after you would have more stories.

KP: Your unit was so decimated that you ran into men from your unit, or Marines who had been on Iwo and knew what was happening.

GB: Yes.

KP: Before leaving your unit, had it lost half its strength, or perhaps a quarter of its strength?

GB: Probably half, but … did I lead any replacements up there? I don't remember now. I may have brought some replacements up from the rear, but I was not really working with them. I was moving all around the place.

NP: What happened the day you were wounded?

GB: They were trapped in this bowl, not trapped; they had not made the night attack [yet], but this one area, they were stalled [there] for several days, couldn't move. That's why they made the night attack. [It was] an attempt to break through and I had a good position over here, by the mortars, but I would get assignments to go get this or run up something, … [things] like that. I was on a hill. Those hills are all gone now. The SeaBees [CBs or Construction Battalions] bulldozed them all down and made the airport. [laughter] I couldn't find where I was hit.

KP: How often did you shoot your weapon? Did you ever have an occasion to fire it?

GB: No.

KP: Did you have any close calls with the Japanese while you were running?

GB: No. A lot of them went over my head. … I could hear them, "Zing, zing, zing," firing at me, but, no.

KP: As a runner, how often were you exposed to fire? Did you have any close calls?

GB: … Yes, that's what I said. [laughter] I knew what was going on. This lady [Dickey Chapelle] that wrote the book there, *What's a Woman Doing Here?*, she sneaked onto the island and got an officer to drive her up and, as I envision it, … he dropped her off at the base of the airport embankment and she says, "Well, where's the fighting?" He says, "Up there." She climbs up this thing and comes back down and says, "There's an awful lot of bees up there." It's the bullets flying. [laughter]

KP: Could you tell us a little bit about the leadership in your unit, both the NCOs and the officers?

GB: I have nothing to say against them. …

KP: Do you remember who they were, their backgrounds?

GB: Well, my platoon lieutenant was, I lost the name at the moment, but an Italian name, from … Brooklyn, and his family had a fruit and vegetable business over there. … I did go see him after the war. I've since been to a few reunions and the company commander is still alive, that's (O'Bannon?). That's the only two officers that I know anything about.

KP: What was O'Bannon's background?

GB: Background? I don't know.

KP: You do not know where he came from.

GB: I think [the] Midwest, but I'm not sure. Of course, … he was a college graduate and all.

KP: I assume the lieutenant was a college graduate, too.

GB: I assume so, yes. I want to say (Lombardozi?), but that's not it.

KP: What about your sergeant?

GB: (Blondell?), that's his name.

KP: He was the one that stood up.

GB: Yes, and he was not an old person; he was an old-timer, in experience. [laughter]

KP: He was not a pre-war Marine.

GB: No.

KP: Were there any pre-war Marines in your unit? Were they all World War II Marines?

GB: I think they were all World War II. I can't remember that there was any [pre-war Marines]. I had one fellow that had been through … Raider training and he had a carbine with a folding stock and he kept hanging on to that. He didn't want to give up his traditions there, but that was formed at the beginning of the war.

KP: Were there any superstitions that you noticed that men had in combat?

GB: No.

KP: No lucky rabbits' feet.

GB: Well, everybody had their lucky knife or gun or whatever, something like that, but no outstanding … superstitions or anything.

KP: You mentioned that there was an affection for old things, because it meant you were a vet, an old-timer.

GB: Old salt was the word.

KP: Were there any other reasons why you wanted to be an old salt?

GB: Trying to look like old Corps, yes, and the equipment they used to get was always better. [laughter]

KP: The old equipment was better because it was old.

GB: Right, just like the rifle, the '03 rifle, [Springfield Model 1903 bolt-action rifle] which was from World War I, but they were still giving them to the sharpshooters. That was better than the Garand rifle, which was a semiautomatic. [laughter]

KP: You are smiling as you say this. For some Marines, it was more in their head than reality.

GB: Oh, yes, right.

NP: They were thinking that they would be treated with more respect.

GB: Well, like, one of the things [was], the canteen cover that I got was just a single layer of canvas, but the earlier ones had a wool layer underneath the canvas, which was an insulating thing, and I managed to acquire a pair of those on Iwo, from looting the body supplies and stuff. It's kind of the thing you do. [laughter]

KP: How quickly were the bodies of Americans killed-in-action removed?

GB: Well, initially, they weren't, but, with a little passage of time and a little quietness, then, they could pick them up, but I know some fellows … remarked that they had such a job [of] trying to clear the beach, so [that] equipment could get through it, and it just killed them if they had to run over a body or bulldoze a body, something like that, but it happened.

KP: When you got to the beach, were there any bodies on the beach?

GB: Oh, yes.

KP: The beach had not been cleared when you landed.

GB: Well, [it had been], but there's always more coming. … I passed bodies very early as I got there.

KP: How shocking was it to see the bodies of American soldiers?

GB: … You very quickly got numb to it.

KP: You said that you have many vivid memories. What other memories do you have?

GB: Well, there's the can of peas, there's the big hole, the second hole; oh, sitting on the rise to the second airfield there, watching the traffic on the first airfield, and there was a jeep, … an ambulance jeep, hauling a trailer and they had stacked stretchers on the trailer and, also, on the jeep. He was buzzing down the airstrip and a shell landed right on the whole thing and [Editor's Note: Mr. Bebbington imitates an artillery explosion]. … When I got hit, I was in an ambulance jeep and I was hollering, "Take it easy, take it [easy]," but he was swerving all over, so [that] he couldn't get hit. I understood [why]. [laughter]

KP: You mentioned that you were told a buddy of yours had been killed. How bad was that, to lose a friend of yours?

GB: Well, the one in particular was quite close. I remember, we were in the same tent and all and that was a shock.

KP: What was his background? Do you remember his name?

GB: It'll have to come to me. He was from Georgia and he'd gone to one of those military high schools down there, which they'd formed … so [that] they didn't have to integrate the schools. … Coming back, on my back on the hospital train, he'd said his father worked in the railroad station in Atlanta and I asked somebody on the platform there when we came through, I said, "Do you know him?" and he didn't, but he sent out the word. … By the time they made contact, there's more than one railroad station in Atlanta and he was at the other one, the train had moved on, but, … through the military contacts, word got to me, at Portsmouth, Virginia, Military Hospital, that he was looking for me. …

KP: Your friend was hit, but he was not killed.

GB: Oh, no, no, my friend was killed. No, I was getting word to his father. …

KP: Did you ever meet his father?

GB: I did go down, one time, and visited, yes.

KP: That must have been very difficult.

GB: Yes, but I had heard all about his home and living conditions and everything there. It was a memory.

KP: What were his living conditions like back home?

GB: Not bad, but he was out in the country, on a farm, this type of thing, but he'd spent his life in this military high school.

KP: You have a lot of praise for Navy corpsmen, which seems natural, since you were wounded. When did you realize how good the corpsmen were? When you were in combat, were you assured that, if you were wounded, there was a good chance you would be taken care of?

GB: Well, that was constantly drummed into you, all through the training, "You take care of those guys; they're going to be taking care of you."

KP: You knew to take care of them.

GB: … Right, and there was some good respect, too, about the SeaBees, because they would be right in there with you, building things. [laughter] I have a neighbor who was on the beach at Iwo as a SeaBee and he had a camera, which [he] was not supposed to have, but he had pictures. So, these are pictures that have never been published. … They were clearing the beach and putting in tracks and things, so [that] vehicles could get ashore, and then, he stayed there. He was there almost a year and he built this big airfield there. [laughter]

KP: You often saw Navy corpsmen taking great risks. What was the bravest thing you saw a corpsman do?

GB: Well, just constantly running out and going after somebody and dragging them back, this type of thing. As it was when I got hit, I was out in a field, near the main observation hole. I was in the middle of it, unfortunately, and … I had this load of stuff and I brought down. I was in the hedgerow and they were waving at me and I waved back and they were really saying, "Stay back, don't come out there," because they were under fire. I started out there and got halfway there and got hit and I don't know whether they were actually corpsmen or other fellows from my outfit that came out and dragged me off. I couldn't use my legs.

NP: How long was it between when you got hit and when you got dragged out? Was it long?

GB: No, no, just a matter of minutes. I was trying to move, but I couldn't. … They came out and got me, dragged me off.

KP: Where were you hit?

GB: Through the thighs.

KP: How painful was it? Did you begin to feel pain immediately?

GB: Not a lot, but I felt pain, yes, and it's just complete puzzlement that I couldn't use my legs.

NP: It was probably frustrating.

GB: Right, and that was more, I think, bothering me than the … pain, yes.

KP: What happened when you were put in the ambulance?

GB: Well, first, they got me off of the field, into the hedgerow, and then, stretcher bearers took me back to the small, little medical unit there and they bandaged me up and gave me a huge sulfa tablet. There wasn't any penicillin then, and so, I started chewing it. I said, "Give me some water." [They replied], "Yes, we'll get to it." … I never got it and … they load me onto this ambulance jeep and off we go, all the way down to the first airstrip, where the big hospital tents were, and that's … the picture in the book there and that's my head in that one under the tent. … Right here, that's me up here. …

KP: What were your thoughts as you were being carried off the battlefield? Did you think, "I am leaving my comrades," or, "Thank God, I am getting off the battlefield?"

GB: I started getting that when I was in the hospital tent, that, "Yes, I want to get back there with them."

KP: It sounds like you were glad to get off the battlefield at first.

GB: Well, just to get out of that field, yes, or just to move. [laughter]

KP: Looking at the picture, you do not look like you are in great pain.

GB: … It was never a great pain, … puncture wounds.

NP: You look pretty relaxed.

GB: Well, it looks like I'm smoking a cigarette; I'm not. I didn't smoke then. That's a plastic tubing to a canteen cup, because, [as] I said, I didn't get any water with that sulfa pill, and so, the ladies got it for me, they couldn't find any water, they got me some grapefruit juice, a can of grapefruit juice that was in one of these ten-in-one rations and that's what I'm drinking. Then, they gave me some candies and things that are on my chest there, [laughter] but I was sitting there after a while, not sitting, laying there, I said, "Hey, there's a big puddle on this stretcher. I can feel it." … So, she called the medics and they looked and, yes, I was still bleeding. … There was a puddle underneath me, and then, they put a great, big bandage under me. [laughter] … It was soaked through and that's why I say, the map I have here was in my wallet. …

KP: Were you nervous at all about not being in a foxhole at the field hospital?

GB: Well, you can see depressions there. I was down.

KP: You were down low enough.

GB: Yes, right, and it was getting quiet down that end of the island.

KP: Was the hospital shelled while you were there?

GB: No.

KP: You were relatively safe.

GB: … Well, as I say, they flew me off. They were using planes on the airstrip.

KP: How long were you in the field hospital?

GB: This one, a few hours, I guess.

KP: You were not there for a full twenty-four hours.

GB: No.

KP: Had you ever been on a plane before being evacuated from the field hospital? Was that your first plane ride?

GB: That may be true. [laughter] I'm really trying to think; was there ever another one?

KP: Did your father ever take you up in a crop-duster?

GB: No, but we used to go up to Curtiss-Wright Field in Caldwell on Sundays and watch the planes. [laughter]

KP: You were not operated on at Iwo.

GB: No. That whole medical deal was a mess. No, I just kept getting bandages, because, I mean, they were just bullet holes. … I didn't get operated on. … I was flown to Guam, stayed there a week, was flown to Hawaii, stayed there a week. I was on a hospital ship to San Francisco, stayed there a week or so in the naval hospital there, and then, board a hospital train across the country to Portsmouth, Virginia, Naval Hospital, stayed there, and this doctor'd come in once a week, with his big bulldog on a leash, and we'd all have to stand at attention, if we could. "How you doing? How you doing?" "Fine." It didn't matter what answer you gave, "That's good, that's good," and, one time, he did examine me and he said, "Well, the nerve has just been shocked or damaged and it'll come back." So, I sat there for months, and then, the war ended and you were able to transfer to a hospital near your home. … I got up to St. Albans on Long Island, which was the neurological center, and they examined me when I arrived and they said, "That nerve's severed completely; operation immediately." …

KP: You were not operated on for months. You were just bandaged up. It sounds like you were not too thrilled.

GB: No. [laughter]

KP: At the time, did you suspect that something was amiss?

GB: Well, I figured, "Well, [there is] more knowledge there than I. It's [the nerve] going to come back." [laughter]

NP: What were the overseas hospitals like?

GB: … I was on my back on Iwo, on Guam, on Hawaii, and in Frisco. It was only when I got to Portsmouth, Virginia, that I was able to get up and start getting around. … I did not see, I mean, "casualties," stuff hanging out or anything like that, but, actually, it was more shocking over at St. Albans, because I was in the neurological center and there were the head cases and the loss of limb cases. …

KP: Were you worried that you might not be able to walk? You said that you feared the loss of the use of your legs when you were first hit.

GB: That thought, I don't think they really came to me in that way, no. It's just that I was puzzled when I got hit, "Why can't I use them?" … One leg was just a flesh wound. I must have started getting use [back] fairly quick.

KP: It was more puzzle than alarm.

GB: Right.

KP: You were on your back for the first three hospitals. Which hospital in the States were you sent to? You mentioned the bulldog.

GB: That was Portsmouth, Virginia.

KP: You did not like your first cross-country train ride. How was the hospital train?

GB: It was no shorter, but … I don't know whether I was being doped up or whether I was just sleeping, I was doing a lot of that, but it wasn't as bad. I didn't know it, I wasn't aware of it [laughter] and I guess, being on a hospital train, … maybe it was air conditioned, I don't know, not the open boxcars.

KP: What about the nurses and attendants that took care of you? Do you have any memories of them, in terms of the quality of care?

GB: No, no criticism of the nurses. The worst doctor was that one in Portsmouth, Virginia. No, I would not be critical of most of them. When I did get the operation in St. Albans, I had some, I guess, for want of a better word, intern who gave me a blood transfusion and I'm conscious during this operation and I said, "That isn't going in there right. That's not right." … He kept telling me, "Shut up, you don't know what you're talking about," but I was right. He'd stuck the needle into the muscle, not into the vein, and I had this black-and-blue arm from all that blood in there, and then, I'd sleep in the bed and the blood would shift. So, I had black-and-blue top and bottom. … You'd get corpsmen, in boot camp and so forth, giving you the shots. I mean, they could give you a shot by throwing it in your arm. They were that good. Throw it and, "Huh? [laughter] Where is it? It's gone; don't stay in there or you'll get a second one."

KP: How long did you stay at the hospital on Long Island?

GB: A little over a year, with one break in the middle. They took over the Half Moon Hotel in Coney Island and made it into a convalescent hospital. With [the] neurological operations and things, they wanted to see, have proof, that the nerve had re-grown. So, most of what I was doing was just sitting around, waiting for signs to show. So, every other month, I'd have a thirty-day convalescent leave. I'd come home and stuff like that.

KP: Being in the hospital for an extended period of time must have been rough for you. What did you do to pass the time?

GB: Well, we planned our liberties.

NP: How did you pass the time at the hospital?

GB: They tried to have everybody on work details. … Our little group tried to sew up the morning breakfast, because that was the least attended and easiest to clean up. … Once we're through with the breakfast, we could sack out until four, liberty time, and go out again, come back in and probably go to breakfast, and then, sack out again. [laughter] So, that was our dogged life we lived.

KP: What did you do on liberty?

GB: Well, this was out on Long Island, of course, so, I had New York City to go to, or I passed right through it and came home. We were able to get theater tickets, freebees, so, I attended quite a few shows, managed to get around the subways on crutches, going up and down the subway stairs.

KP: Did you date at all while you had all these liberties?

GB: Not much, no. I didn't have any real girlfriends or anything at that time. Sometimes, I'd be friends with my friends' dates and things like that. I managed to get back to my dancing, which I was doing before I went into the service. We became bugs on square dancing and we had a place to square dance every … night of the week. We'd make these rounds and I found I could dance. I couldn't roller-skate anymore. You had to maintain your balance and I didn't have a good balance.

KP: Did you think you would stay in the Marine Corps?

GB: Yes. I was looking forward to going … into Japan and occupying it.

KP: You would have liked to have been part of the occupation forces.

GB: Oh, yes.

KP: They told you that you could not be part of the occupation forces in Japan.

GB: Well, I was in the hospital … and all I was doing in the hospital was waiting for something to show on the nerve repair, and then, they would give me a medical discharge.

KP: There was no opportunity for you to stay in because of your medical condition.

GB: Right, … possibly if I'd had a complete recovery. … I didn't have it. You have a nerve that forks into two in your leg and one re-grew, the other didn't. So, I have what's called a drop foot gait. Instead of a four-way flexion, I have just a diagonal.

NP: After your discharge, what was your next move?

GB: Go to school. Actually, … even while I was in the hospital, I was trying to get into some high school classes, but we kept moving around.

KP: After experiencing the war and other parts of the world, did you think it would be hard to settle down and go to school?

GB: … No, I was looking forward to it.

KP: When did you think that you might go to college? When did you learn about the GI Bill?

GB: Well, I was aware of it as soon as I got out. I mean, that was part of the reason for trying to finish the high school, so [that] I'd have all of my requirements for college.

NP: How long did it take you to earn your diploma?

GB: It was only one year, but I was taking courses all over the place.

KP: You mentioned that girls were interested in the returning veterans. Did you and the other vets go to the regular high school activities? Did you go to the dances?

GB: Yes, there weren't that many activities, but, yes, we went to football games and stuff like that.

KP: Did any of the vets play on the football team?

GB: I don't recall that any of them were playing. I'm not sure whether there was an age restriction or not.

KP: I know they did in college.

GB: … Oh, yes, in my earlier years at the high school, there was no restrictions. … Of course, there was no work and stuff, but these guys would go through four years of high school, and then, flunk a course, and then, get a scholarship to go down to St. Benedict's in Newark and play on their team. So, they didn't have a law that you couldn't play five years.

KP: You went to Upsala College first. Where did you want to go to college? Had you tried Rutgers back in 1946?

GB: No, I don't think I had really thought about Rutgers. I was trying to get into Union College, up in Schenectady, because my chemistry teacher was the "great, white father" from there, but … I wasn't accepted and I looked around and, "Oh, here's Upsala, which is convenient and nearby," and I was living at home, so, I went there.

KP: Upsala no longer exists. What do you remember of the campus and the teachers and the students?

GB: Well, I also have a memory of [the] colleges' situation in general. … With the GI Bill and the returning veterans, they were going wild and they were all trying to grab as many as they could and building and fixing up old houses and anything, to make classrooms, and that was the case with Upsala. They had a few old houses there, and then, they start expanding in every direction. Seton Hall was only a little, tiny school, mostly for preparing priests. It's this big university today. Fairleigh-Dickinson was a couple of junior colleges that had been formed just to handle this crowd and Rutgers was only a small school, too, plus, it was separate schools then. …

KP: Did you go to Upsala as a day student or at night?

GB: No, I was a day student.

KP: How many civilian students were there and how many GI students?

GB: … I was going to say maybe half.

NP: You commuted from home.

GB: Yes, right

KP: What did you major in at Upsala?

GB: I was going back to my mother's old dream and I was going to be a doctor. I was going to go after the pre-med, but, see, I had a fault. Because I was disabled, I was getting disability compensation. I was under the Public Law 16, not the GI Bill, which paid for everything, and I was entitled to get an automobile. I got a car out of the government. So, here's this rich guy with a brand-new car, so, I was a playboy. … That's why I never finished, got dropped out.

KP: You said you were a playboy. It sounds like you were dating quite a bit.

GB: Running around all over, yes.

KP: It sounds like you had a good time.

GB: That was it.

KP: However, your academics suffered.

GB: Right, I didn't put enough time in on that, put too much time in the bars.

NP: Where did you finally meet your wife? It was after Upsala.

GB: Yes, it was a little later. One of my friends got married and one of the bridesmaids was starting to date a friend of mine and he didn't have a car. I was driving them around, so, she got me a date, a friend. … It was a blind date.

KP: After leaving college, where did you get your first job?

GB: … It was right in Cedar Grove. There was an industrial village there, working with the plastic films, embossing the grains on them. One of their contracts was the simulated leather patches you have on dungarees, … embossing a grain into it, to make it look like leather.

KP: What was your job like?

GB: Pure labor. Half the time, I was stuck on a machine, keep pulling that film off; it wanted to walk off the rolls. I also was a bartender, but I did finally get a job at Celanese Research. I tried to get a job at Bell Labs, but they didn't hire me. … I was working at Celanese and I was on a rotating shift. But I wanted to go to school and I arranged with a couple of the other guys so that I'd have a steady shift. I didn't care whether it was a midnight one or what. … The bosses wouldn't accept [it]. It would cause too much confusion. So, I got another job down in another chemical company in Newark, Rubberset. They made paint brushes and bristle brushes and stuff like that. We were in the labs, trying to make a synthetic fiber by extracting the proteins from chicken feathers, because … the best bristles came from China and we weren't talking to China, we weren't buying anything from them. So, English brushes were hog bristle, but ours were not and the only other substitute was nylon. They were trying to get it back to more of a protein bristle fiber and that study went on in the labs there. We were promised [that] we would become foremen when they went into production, after we developed this new fiber. They brought in a new head over the research, from Maryland, and he said, "We're going to move it to Maryland." "Move it in what way? We go as is?" We said, "No way," and they laid us all off. So, then, I went over and tried the Bell Labs. I didn't get hired, so, I went to school as a sophomore at Union College. Then, in the fall, I went up to Bell Labs again and I got hired.

KP: You were determined to work for Bell Labs.

GB: [laughter] Well, that was "*the* lab."

KP: You had not done well at school, but it sounds like you liked lab work.

GB: Yes, research, right.

KP: What did you do at Bell Labs?

GB: … I was in the rubber and plastics chemical department. I brought in … [the] background that I had already worked at. That, finally, was what got me the job. We worked on wire coatings and plastic compositions, molding and all that type of stuff.

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

KP: I remember when touchtone phones were a novelty.

GB: Oh, yes, and colored phones. … They all used to be black.

KP: I take it that you had something to do with the change of color.

GB: Well, I got in on the tail end, when the colors came along, with the newer models, and then, I also got into recycling. … Our recycled stuff wasn't pure enough for them, for Western Electric. Yet, I could make a plastic out of it that was superior in strength and everything, but there might be a speck in there somewhere or something. So, they didn't want it. They were real Puritans. …

KP: What were some of your more successful projects? You mentioned recycling. That sounds like one of your less successful projects, in terms of how it was received by your production company.

GB: … They were just obstinate people at the Western [Electric] and they had their standards, but, at the same time, we were able to take the recycled plastic and beef it up and make it superior to anything they were buying. We could make gray boxes, black boxes that would take anything. So, we did get some uses out of it, but they were reluctant to use it anyway, but outside companies … would snap it up.

KP: You did find a market for it.

GB: Oh, yes, yes, but they would have gotten the molded plastic for half the cost of the virgin stuff.

KP: What other projects did you work on?

GB: I got involved in [the] Pioneers, a service organization. I used to run the noon hour speakers program, shows. I also got into research on degradation, ozone cracking and that type of stuff, and found materials that would stop or prevent ozone cracking. … Natural rubber, still had ozone cracks, but we were able to stop the synthetic rubbers from doing it.

KP: When did you leave Bell Labs?

GB: In one of their big layoffs. … I was there when they split off the Bell companies and we changed to the globe with the stripes in it, … but I was laid off before they split into Lucent and AT&T.

KP: You have an association with Warren, New Jersey. Was that after you were married?

GB: … I was already married, and we had our kids there.

KP: What led you to Warren?

GB: Well, at the time, it was pretty much like Cedar Grove. I didn't want [a home] down here on the flatland, with all the houses. I liked it somewhat rural and I liked the mountainous areas and the trees and that kind of thing. So, we looked around and we almost brought one in Chatham, but that fell through, because they never put the roads. And we were riding around in Warren and saw this "For Sale" sign on a lot with all these huge trees on it and it had a brook. "Wow." So, we bought that. It was over an acre-and-a-half, 1.8, for three thousand dollars.

KP: You bought the land, and then, built the house.

GB: We built it ourselves, and then, after it became livable, I started getting involved in activities in the community. … We organized a historical society. I'm a historian.

KP: You have served on the Board of Education.

GB: Yes, and on the Board of Health.

KP: How long did you serve on the Board of Education?

GB: One three-year term. I didn't get re-elected.

KP: How long did you serve on the Board of Health?

GB: One three-year appointment, but I was the president there for two of those years.

KP: You mentioned that, even though you have lived there since 1954, you still feel like a new resident.

GB: [I meant] when you start dealing in the history. … "What was here before?" I don't know.

KP: You also joined a number of veteran organizations.

GB: Right.

KP: When did you join? For example, when did you join the VFW?

GB: Well, … we organized our post in Cedar Grove. I was still single then and that post still exists. They've got a great, big building up there next to the Meadowbrook. … When I got married and moved away, I no longer continued my VFW thing. Then, when I got into Warren, what was the first one? I don't remember. I started getting involved in other organizations, my Marine Corps League, my division organization, the Purple Heart Association, the DAV organization.

KP: When did you go to your first reunion?

GB: Reunion of what? I'm sorry.

KP: Marine Corps reunion, of your unit.

GB: Most of my veterans' activities have been since, almost all since, I retired. …

NP: What was it like to return to Iwo Jima for the fiftieth anniversary?

GB: … I went back to the island, right. What is your question?

NP: What was it like?

GB: Well, I went by myself; my wife didn't go with me. It cost a few bucks to do it, but I just felt I had to go. I wanted to see it and wipe it out, maybe, or whatever and it was a shock … that it changed so much from what I remembered. There were a lot of people with me that sort of felt the same way.

KP: Did you have bad memories of Iwo Jima? Did you ever have nightmares? Was there a time when you could not really talk about it?

GB: Well, I think it would … depend on the audience, who I'm talking to. I mean, I could talk to other veterans, no problem. … I'm not one of these people raving and blabbing and talking about their experiences, usually. [laughter]

KP: Yes, we egg you on to do this, but some veterans really do not want to talk about it. They still find it very painful to think about.

GB: … Some are that way. It never got that bad for me. It was just more a matter of the audience and, occasionally, I would, as I say, throw things out, … just for shock value, like using the bodies as sandbags and that type of thing, to see what reaction I get. [laughter]

KP: Were there any Japanese veterans from Iwo Jima present during your visit to the island?

GB: Oh, yes, yes. …

KP: What was it like to see your enemy?

GB: They weren't the enemy anymore.

KP: You did not feel a sense of animosity towards them.

GB: No. Only; there's a few officials that try to say Japan didn't [do] anything wrong, and then, when we were on the island, they wanted to have their own ceremony, their own program, and somebody condescended to let this contingent go up on top of the Mount Suribachi and close it. Nobody else could go up while they were there and this kind of thing. … The general that planned the fortification was not found, but his wife and son were at the ceremony and I sort of sympathized with her. I didn't understand a word she said, but she was game enough … to come back there, and the son, of course, too.

KP: You are not the first veteran to say that you were glad that the bomb was used on Hiroshima. When did you first learn of the bomb? You were obviously in the hospital.

GB: Yes.

KP: How did you hear the news?

GB: … I guess the word was used, "atomic bomb," but I did not know of the radiation effects or anything like that. It was just that, "We've got a super bomb that's ending the war and … one plane, one bomb, does what hundreds do." At that stage in the war, annihilation of cities and everything was standard practice, the fire bombings in Germany, and then, they started in Japan. It was no sense of feeling bad about it, it was just a more efficient and better way and nobody's getting hurt. … It's saving us. At that point, I almost thought I might be going back to it and I won't have to go for that invasion in Japan. That's the main thing.

KP: Did you think, when you were in the hospital, that you would be going back?

GB: I sort of had a secondary feeling that, "Maybe I'm going to pull out of this and go back," and I was not looking forward to invading Japan, [laughter] [only] the occupation.

KP: You have been to reunions and you went back to Iwo. How did the men from your unit make out after the war?

GB: I think most people did all right. There were exceptions, like the gates of the guys that raised the flag on Mount Suribachi; it's a sad history. … Some didn't make it, most people did. Some people are still living the war. …

KP: Do you find that with veterans, that some really have not been able to live with the war?

GB: Not in the post where I am active. I mean, I'll find some of them up in the hospital, but, no, I don't find much of that.

KP: None of your children served in the military. You were very proud of your career. Do you wish that any of your children had served in the military?

GB: Well, both of my kids are adopted and my son has educational learning problems. I've suggested, from time-to-time, maybe it might be good for him, but he didn't choose it. He has only one kidney, though. … They'd spot it and wouldn't let him in, but he's been on the fire department and been a security guard, all kinds of things like that. So, he's had some military-type training and stuff. He's a wonderful kid and he never drank, never smoked.

KP: He sounds like he has led a pretty good life.

NP: Getting involved in the fire department, community involvement, like yourself.

GB: Right. … That's his doing, not me.

KP: As a World War II veteran who fought in the Pacific, what did you think of the Korean and Vietnam Wars?

GB: I was wondering whether I was going to mention that. The Korean War came along and I said, "Here we go again and, now, this time, I want to get into something proper," and I went down and enlisted in the Air Corps and I passed the physical. The doctor never examined my leg or anything, and so, I was signed up, … didn't take the oath, but I was all set to go, but I had to give up my disability compensation. [laughter] … I was just *gung-ho*, I guess, but I wanted to get in the right spot this time. After a year of them not calling me, I said, "The heck with it, send me back my papers." What they were doing was, they were after the younger kids and taking them first. …

KP: You were willing to serve again.

GB: Yes.

KP: You volunteered. It was not like you had joined the Reserves and they called you up.

GB: Right, but I wanted the right kind of service, with some good training. [laughter]

KP: In the Marine Corps, while you got a lot of training in how to fire weapons and such, infantry training does not have a lot of applicability in civilian life.

GB: If I had thought that maybe I could have gotten in the Marine Air Corps or something like that, I might have tried to go back there, but I didn't think I could. [laughter]

KP: I have not yet asked you anything about your University College experience. Which University College did you attend?

GB: University College.

KP: What campus?

GB: Oh, right here.

KP: New Brunswick?

GB: Yes.

KP: How many classes would you take a semester?

GB: At least two. I didn't want to string it out, like, one at a time, two, three, take them in the summer, too. …

NP: Were you involved in any campus organizations or activities?

GB: Well, they were trying to have a University College Association. Mostly, it was sitting around, having a beer up in the tavern here. No, I didn't get too involved down here, because of the driving.

KP: Are there any teachers that stick out in your memory as very good or very bad?

GB: Well, I've forgotten all the bad ones, if there were. There are just a few characters, here and there, that stick out. The sports announcer on the radio, I had him and I got involved with the School of Education here, and then, University College used people that were working in industry. … J&J used to push a lot of their executives to come in and teach business administration, all that kind of stuff. So, I sort of marvel at some of that.

KP: You listed your majors as psychology, education and history. Were you looking to teach?

GB: Yes, I thought of that. At one time there, if you were a veteran, you did not have to take the practice teaching courses. You got credit for it and I was looking for that, but, then, it changed and you had to take those and, to take those, you have to not only pay for it, but you have to be free in the day to do it but I was working. So, I just never could get them.

NP: Which subjects would you have taught?

GB: Probably science and history. They were the two things I was interested the most in doing.

KP: You had a real interest in the Board of Education.

GB: Oh, yes.

KP: You were, in some sense, a frustrated teacher.

GB: That's right, and then, when my wife started taking adult night school art courses, I said, "Stop going down there and go to a college and take the same course for credit," and so, she started doing that and it was one and two, and then, more and more. Then, she was stretching out and she finally went to full-time days and finished up, got her degree and got the job.

KP: She became an art teacher in the schools in Warren Township.

GB: Right, right, by default. They weren't going to hire her, and then, the prize one they had hired walked out on them. [laughter] So, she was first in the door. Then, we went through the same thing with my daughter. She wasn't going to go in for teaching. She … finally went out to California and went to the California College of Arts and Crafts and, with pushing from my brother, who lived out there, finally got the degree, and then, she was all around in the art area. Finally, I said, "Look, go get your teaching credits." So, she went over to Kean College and got her Masters, with honors, but she wasn't able to get a job until [she] got a summer school job this year. Art teacher jobs are real political. You've got to be in with somebody to get them and every princess is going to be a champion art teacher. [laughter]

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask you?

GB: Well, "What's the souvenirs I brought?" [laughter]

KP: Yes, maybe we should go through those.

GB: A lot of guys, when they were on Iwo, were looking around for war souvenirs. One guy found a piece of a machine gun barrel. It's fifty years old, but it's still there. I saw some stuff in the caves, but I didn't go after that. I was combing the beach. There was all kinds of junk, jetsam, on the beach. These are floats from Japanese fishing nets. I brought those home. The airline gave us a test tube in a box, with a cork, and you could bring back some of the black sand off the beach.

NP: Wow, the airline gave that to you.

GB: Yes, the Continental/Malaysia Airlines. So, there's the Iwo sand.

KP: It is very black.

GB: … Large particle size.

NP: I would not even think it was sand.

GB: Well, we call it that, anyway; it's volcanic ash, really. My next-door neighbor in Cedar Grove took all the papers and things I had and made a scrapbook and presented that to me when I got home. So, here's all these Iwo articles and things like that and personal letters. … This is the map that I had on Iwo. This is my blood on it.

KP: You were a runner. How much did you know in terms of the entire battle?

GB: Not the whole battle.

KP: When you read this, how often did you say, "I knew this was happening," and how often did you say, "I did not know about this?"

GB: Well, I've had an education since then, reading books and everything else. … Then, I had these newspaper articles, when I was in the service, writing home, and then, the high school graduation [article] talked about this one member coming in with ribbons and a Purple Heart and carrying the flag in the graduation ceremony. [laughter] [Here are] pictures my mother sent into the newspaper, and then, of course, we got all kinds of publications when we went back over there and souvenir maps. This is the island now, with all the fortifications. Every one of those dots is some sort of gun emplacement or something else like that, but the main thing [to point out is the] … three airstrips on there and, when we went back, it was a whole different image. This is the island, one huge airstrip, and all these hills and things that were up here, that's part of the fill that made that airstrip, and then, I don't know whether they dumped any of this over here or whether this is a build-up from the ocean. … That piece wasn't there then.

KP: Iwo is not a big island.

GB: No, no.

KP: I knew that, but it is even starker looking in that picture.

GB: Very small.

NP: Especially when you see the airstrip that is almost the size of the whole island.

GB: Well, that's a big airstrip, but, as I say, there were three, but they were for smaller planes. … Even then, the first B-29 came down on one of these short strips and there were several thousand that were saved by landing there. Lots of people were saved, and then, Joe Rosenthal did the flag raising picture. … He had made up these booklets of pictures he took there and we all got those. Of course, you found the book. How did you find it?

NP: In the library.

GB: … The newspapers have the pictures of all of us on this tour and all the visible things. I have a picture of myself down here on the beach. … I'm in one of these crowd shots. … Then, we had a big ceremony on the beach there, with the Japanese. This is me, walking on the grass there. That was a good trip, though. I won't kick it. … This is an issue of *The Leathernecks*, Pacific Edition, in '45, and this is the kind of the way we were living, in the coconut palm grove, in these tents, and … it doesn't show it, but, around the tents, we had slit trenches and, if there was an air raid or something, you'd roll out of the bed, into the slit trench. … These palm fronds break off, drop and, "Boom," it hit that canvas and, "Ahhh," everybody's [jumping]. [laughter]

KP: You were taught to respect the Navy corpsmen and the SeaBees from the beginning, but what did the Marines think of the Navy?

GB: Well, just no high regard. You go back to the first island campaign, Guadalcanal, the Navy took them there and dropped them off, and then, took off. They were stuck there, no supplies. They had to live off the land, steal the Japanese stuff.

KP: You were very conscious of that.

GB: Oh, yes, and, of course, the silly thing that they did at Pearl Harbor, just have all the ships ready and waiting there for the target. The whole defense set-up at Pearl Harbor was a joke. I was looking for a picture of me on the beach. This is a rock, up [on] the north end, that the SeaBees had carved the picture on. Here's the crowds and the ceremony, taken from Mount Suribachi. It's green now, a green island. …

KP: When you saw it, there were no trees.

GB: Well, there was a few trees and things, but they went and got plants from the South Pacific and Australia and seeded the island. So, it's green. [laughter] This is one of the caves up [at] the north end. … You get down in there, the heat and the smoke and everything else [is intense]. This is the monument up on top of Suribachi for the Fifth Division, which took the mountain; another shot looking down from the mountain. These are the beaches where all the action occurred and this one guy went over there in his dress blues. … The Third Marine Division was stationed on Okinawa. They brought in a good part of them, with all these trucks to drive us around, and they … couldn't do enough for us and, when we were in the hangar, eating, … there were all these young Marines, any piece of paper or whatever they could find, [they were saying], "Sign this, sign this." They were looking for autographs from everybody. [laughter] "Sign my map." … Here I am on the beach. There's Suribachi, in the background. …

KP: Did you feel any animosity towards the Japanese after the war?

GB: No, no, just, the Jap officials that try to rewrite the history and other things, those, I'm disgusted with. When I gave a lecture here, one of the students asked me, "Would you buy something Japanese?" I said, "Sure. I've got a Honda car." [laughter]

KP: That has never been a problem.

GB: No.

KP: You mentioned earlier that men would take trophies, gold teeth, even body parts. Did you witness any of that on Iwo?

GB: … I didn't witness it, no, no.

KP: You never saw anyone collecting teeth.

GB: No, but I had heard about different guys in the outfit. No, I did not witness that. One guy that was on that film, *Red Blood and Black Sand*, was reporting about one that was doing it, yes.

KP: Of the movies that have been done on Iwo Jima, specifically, but also on the Marines in World War II, are there any that you think are accurate or reflect what you experienced?

GB: You mean the Hollywood versions?

KP: Yes.

GB: Well, as a friend of mine who was also in the Marines [noted], the movie *Full Metal Jacket* is a very true-to-life training/boot camp set-up.

KP: You think that film captures a lot of what boot camp was really like.

GB: Oh, yes, the whole set-up, yes. That's probably the closest.

KP: What about combat? Do any of them come close to reflecting what you experienced?

GB: Well, I haven't seen too many combat movies. Most of them have been more Vietnam-type ones and I wasn't in that. …

KP: What about the most famous one, in terms of Iwo Jima, John Wayne's *The Sands of Iwo Jima*? What did you think of that movie? Did you see it when it first came out?

GB: … Not much. I mean, he's the big Hollywood star. … We used to joke about [how] MacArthur was always [hungry for celebrity]. … We were against him and they show some of the stuff, the getting into the boats to leave the Philippines, and all you heard all over the theater was, "Where's his furniture? Where's his dog? Where's all this stuff that he took with him?"

KP: This is when you were being shown newsreels in camp.

GB: Yes, right. We always had a song that we'd sing, "With the grace of God and a few Marines, MacArthur took the Philippines." Well, they were short on artillery and they brought some Marine artillery units in there. [laughter]

KP: There was a real rivalry.

GB: Oh, yes, yes, but he won all the glory, all the show, and, finally, Truman kicked him out. …

KP: You were not dismayed by that.

GB: No. [laughter] Well, he was just completely ignoring the Commander-in-Chief's orders. … He was God. Of course, I was a little bit against him pre-war, when he led the troops kicking out the guys, veterans, camping in Washington.

KP: You remembered that.

GB: I don't know when I first knew about that. …

KP: It sounds like you heard people being critical of him growing up.

GB: Oh, yes, yes. I was aware of it.

KP: Is there anything else?

[TAPE PAUSED]

GB: … I'm not sorry I was a Marine.

KP: I see you are wearing the Marine Corps tie tack.

GB: Wear it proudly. [laughter]

KP: What is that that you are wearing on your jacket?

GB: Purple Heart.

KP: Thank you very much.

GB: It's the lowest, but it is a medal of honor. …

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

Reviewed by David Bendel 11/15/05
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/7/05
Reviewed by George Bebbington 4/19/12