RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WALTER H. BERGER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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G. Kurt Piehler: ... This begins an interview with Mr. Walter H. Berger on September 13, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick New Jersey. I would like to begin by asking just a few questions about your parents and growing up in Newark. You were born in Pittsburgh?

Walter H. Berger: Yes. My father was an engineer with Westinghouse and I was born in Allegheny General Hospital out there. [I] still root for the Pirates, even though they're having a bad year. ... The only reason I ended up in New Jersey, he was transferred to the Meter Division, and he became sales manager of the Meter Division in Newark, New Jersey, and, of course, I came along. We commuted by train. There were no airplanes then.

KP: When was your father transferred to Newark?

WB: In, I think, around 1923. I might be off a year, but, in the early '20s. But, I was born and brought up as a child in Pittsburgh. I was born ... August 16, 1916.

KP: So, your father used to commute?

WB: Well, there were trains, and he was the sales manager of the Meter Division, which was headquartered in Newark, so, ... when he'd go on two or three week sales tours, it was just my mother and myself. I have no brothers or sisters.

KP: So, in other words, you were used to your father going off for weeks at a time, and then, coming home?

WB: Well, I was only a child then. [I] went to grammar school in Newark. ...

KP: It sounds like you have some fond memories of Pittsburgh.

WB: Oh, yes, we went back a number of times. I had friends there, and we'd go back, and my wife played golf with some people from Westinghouse. There were big hills to go sleigh riding on, I remember that.

KP: You grew up in Newark as well.

WB: Basically. I don't remember. I was seven or eight-years-old. I went to Bergen Street Grammar School in Newark. Dr. John Bateman, who coached a Rutgers undefeated football team, lived near there and eventually became a good friend of mine and an honorary members of the Class of 1938. It was a different town then. ... Eventually, I went to Madison Junior High School, when I got out of Bergen Street School. I lived in the South Side High area. West Side High had just recently opened on South Orange Avenue. Harold Schein, National Boys Indoor Champion, was a student there and on the team. They came after me, "Would I see if I could transfer over to West Side?" So, I ended up at West Side High School in Newark and we won eighteen straight tennis matches. [laughter]

KP: When did you take up tennis? How old were you?

WB: About three. ... I have a picture of a little kid holding a racket. ... We were visiting down the shore.

KP: Who introduced you to the game? Did your parents play?

WB: My father played, a member of the Newark Tennis Club, and I used to come up there as a little kid. ... I got to play on their team when I was still in high school, the Newark Tennis Club. It was in a league, and so, I've played ever since. I'm supposed to play tomorrow morning. Rutgers is having a fund-raiser at Forrestgate County Club, Jamesburg, New Jersey, but, I told them I'd be playing tennis. [laughter] I'll be eighty on my next birthday, if you figure it from 1916.

KP: Yeah. What other sports did you play in high school?

WB: ... I kicked the soccer ball around, but, basically, I was a tennis player. ... When I started here with Professor Dalmas as tennis coach, I went out for the team. I only weighed about 115. He said, "He's too small." [laughter] Size isn't very important in tennis. It's skill, really. I didn't think I was going to talk about all my babyhood. [laughter]

KP: How well did the Newark School System prepare you for Rutgers?

WB: Newark, at that time, was a very different city. Its big changes came, I guess, in the last thirty years. You could walk along Broad Street at midnight, have fun, ride, ... they had outdoor trolley cars. There was nothing to worry about then. That's really in the last twenty years, I guess. Then, I moved to Plainfield, when I got married. My wife was from Plainfield, New Jersey. ...

KP: The neighborhood you grew up in, was it mainly populated by professionals?

WB: It was Clinton Hill, near Blessed Sacrament. I had great friends. One of the reasons I ended up at Rutgers, Marius Scoppettone was the president of the Deke House fraternity. His younger brother, Orlando, and I were good friends on Van Nest Place. Orly, ... did very well later on, ... interested in music and played the guitar. He didn't want to go to college, and his father was the first, I think, Italian, well-known lawyer in Newark. Casmere Scoppettone, I still remember his name. Orlando lived on the next block, and he went to West Side, because he became topnotch in athletics, in track. So, the both of us were very close, and he didn't want to go to college. Hs brother got a hold of me from the Deke House, and said, "Look, Orly," Orlando was his name, ... "Orly doesn't want to go to college, but, he said if you would room with him in the freshman year, he'd consider it," and that's how I ended [up here]. [laughter] I was interviewed at Pennsylvania. But we came here sort of on the idea that Orly and I would be good friends, and we'd go to Rutgers. ... I remember being interviewed. You had to have an interview to get in here. It was tough, two hundred and some people, and I remember, [the] Dean said, "Look to your right, look to your left. One of them won't be here at Christmas. They'll flunk out." That's how tough it was. Even then, during the Depression, those were tough times.

KP: So, in fact, you saw a lot of your classmates drop out at Rutgers?

WB: Some of them, financially. Some of them were on the football team and they only had small stipends. A couple of them I still heard from had to leave because they couldn't afford it. ... Of course, I took two years, ROTC. ... We were a land-grant college, you had to have two years of training. That was required, and Orly and I lived in Wessels over here, I still remember the name of the dorm, for a year. ... He finished the four, but, he never went to graduation. They had to send him his diploma. [laughter] ...

KP: But, he did finish at Rutgers?

WB: Yeah, he got his diploma, but, he didn't go to graduation, and they sent him his diploma. I got out during 1938, ... amidst very tough times. The world was in turmoil, Depression here. ... One of the guys who graduated from here was a roommate of Arthur Sills, who became the New Jersey Attorney General, ... 1938 classmate of mine, ... died a few years ago. He and David Wilentz, of the Lindbergh case fame, were partners. John George, he was a great Rutgers College professor. I don't know whether you knew him. ...

KP: You are not the first person who has mentioned him.

WB: I used to play bridge with Professor George, two-man bridge, and he said, "Well, if I were you, and you don't have any law firm that you can go to, I wouldn't go to law school." 'Cause, a lot of lawyers were digging ditches. This was a different world, and the world was pretty much messed up, and I would have taken more ROTC, but, I did get a job with Westinghouse, summers, so, I could earn some money. So, I had two years, or a little more, of Army training here, but, I didn't get a commission. ... When I graduated, I was working in Newark, and you remember, they had a draft. I guess other guys have told you. ...

KP: The 1940 Draft.

WB: ... I couldn't find my number. Some guys were in already. I had the next to the last number, and, you know, the newspapers printed them. I couldn't find it until about a week later, and, of course, the war started on December 7, 1941, when we got bombed. ... I kept watching. My number was never even approached, but, I knew that having service and I felt obligated to get in. ... I went over to the draft board in the Spring of '42 and asked ... if they would release me, I'd like to enlist. ... My father, at that time, was out in Ohio getting instruments for the Signal Corps and for the Air Force, it was the Air Corps then, for their planes, and for the Signal Corps radios, and other kind of equipment. I don't know, it still may be secret, and I said, "Well, I'd like to get into the Signal Corps." I got a release from the draft board, and ... I guess it was, the spring of 1942, I enlisted at Fort Monmouth, a very interesting experience. I took the physical ... [at] the Armory in Newark that morning, I think it was a Friday morning, and passed it. There was a great big guy in front of me not accepted. He looked like he could take the house down. I had passed and they gave me a railroad ticket to Little Silver, New Jersey. I was in civilian clothes. I got in there, it was dark, I was scared to death. I got off the train, I had a little satchel with me, and walked in. They didn't expect any enlistees late on a Friday, and there was a sergeant on duty, I remember, and I said to him that I had orders to enlist, you know. ... "We don't have anybody coming in like that

anymore." I remember, he put me in a jeep with some private and sent me up to Camp Edison. That's where they were training new people, recruits, and I remember, that night, I slept on a cot in civilian clothes. Nobody knew what to do with me. By Monday morning, when some sergeant saw that I had enlisted, and he was a regular, he saw that I got good uniforms. ... I took basic training, ... I think it was six weeks of basic training. Then, I thought I'd be smart. When I completed it, you could march from Camp Edison down to, ... Fort Monmouth, now, being broken up, ... it was the Signal Corps training camp, the main camp, in Red Bank, and everybody was laughing. About twenty of us marched all the way. We thought we were going to get a week pass. Everybody had eaten, they were laughing at us, ... and I was there, and Captain Little, who was actually a professor from somewhere who had been called back. He was ... not a regular Army officer, and I reported to him, and they made me a company clerk, and I went to clerk school for a few weeks. ... They had set up a signal company at Fort Monmouth to be attached to an infantry division at Fort Bragg. I can't give you the exact date, but, a few weeks later, and I couldn't type, I don't know what I was doing in an orderly room, ... I can't read my own writing sometimes. ... They posted all these names, "You're shipping out." My name wasn't on the board. ... "What the heck did I do wrong now?" I went into Captain Little's office and the sergeant was there. He said, "Berger, get back in the barracks." I said, "Am I not shipping out with the Signal Company?" "No." And everybody else that I knew was going. My wife had come down to pick up the ... typewriter. I was trying to learn how to type. He said, "Get back in the barracks and clean the place up." I figured, "I'm going to the brig," and I didn't know why. After all these guys shipped out, at about nine o'clock, he called me back in the orderly room. Captain Little was there. He says, "You know, we're in trouble," meaning him, and I said, "Well, I don't know what I did wrong." He said, "You know, everybody that goes in the Army takes intelligence tests," you know, IQ. Well, [when] I enlisted, they sent me up to the other place. Nobody ever gave me the test that's required, and they sent that to the Pentagon, to the signal headquarters, and they had twixed back, ... "What was this guy's record? He had some training in college." They knew that. [I] said, "Nobody gave it to me and I never took it." He said, "Well, you're taking it today. We're in trouble. Everybody has these tests." ... Boy, by that time, I was nervous as heck, you know. I can still remember. They sent me down to Fort Monmouth Headquarters and I took these intelligence tests. I figured, "In the condition I'm in, I'm going to end up collecting garbage for sure," and they did it, even then, by machine. ... I came back a little after noon, I still remember. Captain Little was a professor at some college, really. He called me in, he said, "You know, you got a 130. Now, we're in real trouble, because people with 130 and two years of some training, they're looking for officers. You're going down before the officer's board this afternoon," and, you can imagine, I had been up since about six o'clock. Part of this is in here, but, I went down after lunch, and I don't remember eating much. I go into this board, saluted, "I'm reporting as directed." I remember, the head of the board was a full colonel, the secretary was a first lieutenant. There were about six officers there. First question I can remember was, "Why didn't you apply for OCS?" I said, "Well, I just took basic training. I didn't think I was anywhere eligible." "Well, we're looking for officers. You had a good IQ," and I said, "Well, I'm not ready to go to Officer's School, [I have only been] … about eight weeks in the Army." There was an OCS Prep Officer's Candidate School back at Camp Edison and that's where they sent me for six weeks. I guess this was about summertime when I was up there. All this is going on at Fort Monmouth. Officer's Prep School was tougher than OCS. Boy, if you got through that, OCS wasn't that tough, and, … I think I wrote this down, [shuffles through his papers] I was in the class that graduated January 17, 1943, and that's a three month thing. It was not only training,

physical, but, you took a lot of class, and a lot of work for the Signal Corps, but, in general, and you kept your rank. I was still a private first class and some of these guys were sergeants. The sad thing I remember, the night before graduation, they allowed us to go out. There was a restaurant nearby, and all of us felt that we're going to graduate, [that it was] the night before our commissioning. One guy got back to his sack and there was a note on the bed. ... Poor kid came from a poor family ... and they kicked him out the night before graduation. I could never forget that. He was crying, ... poor guy. I got my commission in January, and then, you got orders. Guys were ordered all over the country. I got orders to Fort Monmouth, where I was.

KP: But, other people had been assigned to other places.

WB: Some were assigned to Signal Headquarters supply, … down south somewhere. There was like a pier in Asbury Park. I was assigned to officer's supply school. [The only thing] worse than being a company clerk was being in a dry thing as supply for the war, but, besides that, they were commissioning a lot of telephone people, direct. ... They were coming in, in civilian clothes, captains, one guy was a major, they didn't know a thing about the Army. They didn't even go to any training, but, they were technicians. One of my jobs, this was in the winter of '43, was to take these unknown guys, who were really very well trained for communications, ... show them how to salute, how to put on their clothes, army clothes, and take them out in a jeep and weapons carriers. This was after morning classes at supply school. I had them out in the weapons carrier. I remember, I turned around once, they had a bottle of booze, and here, a second lieutenant, I said, "I really should turn the whole bunch of you in, even though you're just here." One of them was a captain, I remember. I said, "You don't drink on duty. You're on duty! You're already in the Army." I figured they're going to throw me out when I get [back]. ... They said, "How do we report to the adjutant?" ... They were scared, you know, no training. I met a couple of them later. They were, you know, very well geared for running a comp room, or even a code room, which I'm gonna mention, and I think I was there about six weeks, and then, I got orders to the Pentagon. [I thought], "What?" ... Arlington Hall, that was a girl's school in Washington, at that time, but, that became headquarters. Later on, I found out the reason I was hanging around there. They were clearing me, because, to go to the code room in the Pentagon, they sent out like the FBI, or somebody. They had been around where I grew up in Pittsburgh. ...

KP: So, a lot of people were coming around your old neighborhoods asking questions about you?

WB: That's right. Has anybody else ever told you about things like that?

KP: Yeah. What did your parents think of this? Were they worried when the FBI agents started snooping around?

WB: My father was still working out in Ohio for Instruments. And they were just holding me there to see if I could get cleared, and … myself and two other second lieutenants were assigned to the Code Room, and I had, … I call it the night watch, from midnight until eight. I guess we were there 'til early spring. Very interesting. … If I can look at some of these?

KP: Oh, please do.

WB: Let's see where I am with it. [Looks at his notes.] I got past the OCS class. Here's where everybody got ordered all over, and they were holding me there, to see if I would get cleared. ... Here it is. About a month or six weeks after I got my commission, … I got orders to Arlington Hall, Virginia. … In peace time, it was a woman's school. And Shirley went with me, and she was about four or five months pregnant at that time. I went with my records and orders to the Code Room in the Pentagon. I didn't know anything about codes, that I knew of. Then, I had, I call it the mid-watch. The Army didn't call it that. I'd been in the Navy so long, everything became Navy talk. [laughter] I had the watch from eleven-thirty to seven-thirty in the Code Room, and, believe me, it was very interesting. … It was hot, because messages came in decoded and encoded from all over, from England, from all over the United States, and we were very busy [with] all the officer's messages, and we got so busy because, just like at any other place, [at] about eight o'clock at night, they drop all these things to be encoded. … These officers are going home from duty all over the Pentagon, and we had to encode them, and get them out. The radio operation was not part of the Code Room. They didn't have to be cleared. They were in another part on the same floor in the Pentagon. ... I just wanted to tell you something right now. The British had a machine called telex. I don't think it's, sixty years later, any top secret. General Marshall had come up during the night, he was the brains of the American operations, and, on this telex, talked to Winston Churchill, and three of us were allowed [to operate it]. You know, he didn't work the machinery. It was garbled, encoded, and decoded in England, and it was one of the most interesting [experiences]. ... He was a wonderful man. He didn't go to West Point either, VMI, or someplace, I think he went. ... But, you had to be dressed, and he didn't care, but, the CO said, "You're going to be here with a jacket and tie." ... Marshall would come up, and he'd say, "Just relax." Of course, I was hearing what was going on. They were preparing the operation to invade Sicily, actually, I can remember. ...

KP: So, unlike a lot of people, you really knew what was going on in the Code Room? Most guys I have interviewed had a very narrow vision which sometimes did not extend beyond the hill in front of them, whereas you knew the entire layout of the war.

WB: I was sworn to secrecy. ... I was cleared for top secret. Only three of us could be with Marshall, and we knew … [what] they were planning. ... North Africa had started from Oran and, … let's say, the operation was to be out of Bizerte, … and the British were very active, at that time, in North Africa with the Africa Corps, and if I can go a little slower, and read this. ...

KP: Yes.

WB: Winston Churchill and they would talk. And one of the very funny things, in the middle of the night, Roosevelt had a little message center in the White House, and, some of these real hot messages, … they'd send me during the night, or at dawn, with some of these hot things with two sergeants in a jeep. They had guns and I'd drop it off. You'd think they'd send me in a weapons carrier, or something, you know, and ... another thing that always bothered me, with all reverence to women, they had all these girls typing a lot of stuff in the Code Room. They were reading it, but, of course, they had all been carefully screened. But, it always made me wonder. Keep all these other people out and these girls would be typing these things after they were decoded. They would say, "Top Secret," and there was an officer waiting, probably a captain or major, running the place, not

me, and he'd say, "Take that over to the White House," and we'd have a couple of guys gun-running with me. Of course, they did not break these messages, that I knew, in the White House. They didn't have the equipment there. That British machine was the only one that I knew of.

KP: It seems like you took a lot of trips to the White House?

WB: Of course. I knew what was in it, so, they'd send me over there, and I'd just drop it off. I didn't stay there.

KP: Yeah.

WB: It was late spring, I remember, ... cause I was still ... working at night. They were looking for me, and I was out somewhere in Washington, and the Lieutenant Fitzpatrick, who was [an] employee in Westinghouse prior to WWII, was working in the Pentagon. He was a much older man, and they were looking for me, but, he knew my phone number, where we were living, in Arlington, Virginia, [to call me] to come over to the headquarters in a hurry. … This was a crazy experience that you won't hear from anyone else. I was ordered to Hampton Roads, Virginia to set up a provisional, so-called, Third Signal Battalion, it was not a Battalion, with two other lieutenants, Lieutenant Donovan, who was a great soldier, and Lieutenant Frank Sayre. Donovan is dead. Sayre, I knew for years. I don't know what happened to him, eventually, but, I graduated from OCS one class ahead of them. So, I became the CO of a unit, and they were much better soldiers, and I was assigned twelve Vint Hill trained enlisted code operators. Have you ever heard of that?

KP: Yes.

WB: How did you know about that?

KP: Someone else told me.

WB: Vint Hill was a code school. They sent me twelve code operators, twelve radio operators. One of them was working in the Pentagon, Sergeant Shanks, good soldier, regular, and one repairman, in case the equipment went bad. We were hid out there, Hampton Roads, Virginia. I knew, then, that something was up, and we were not to go on any [excursions]. ... They just hid us there, and, just like the stupid Army, at that time, about two weeks later, the unit was ordered up to Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, and I figured we were getting shipped out. … I knew why, and so did the lieutenants. The other guys didn't. We get up there on a Friday, and a stupid officer, a first lieutenant, I couldn't tell him where we were going and why, he says, "Well, … there's no ship going out of here until the beginning of the week." He tells all these kids that they're free until Monday and I'm trying to tell him, "Don't let them out, you don't know." … I'm still a second lieutenant. Fortunately, as far as I knew, nobody [talked]. These kids were pretty smart. I just said, "I can't keep you here, but, keep your mouths shut, especially the code kids," one of whom became a legal advisor to the Sears Roebuck East. A brilliant guy, he was a sergeant, eventually, Bob Maxwell. I still talk to him, and John Heins, he came from AT&T, also a coder. They were both coders. So, they told all the guys, "We don't know where we're going, or why, but, if you go out,

don't drink." ... The radio operators, I don't think they were quite as high IQ, but, I don't [think] they knew anything about [the codes]. ... They just knew they were being shipped out. …

KP: You had had some interaction with George Marshall and it sounds like you respected him quite a bit.

WB: Greatest guy I ever met. There are two other people, Eisenhower, and Rear Admiral Richard Connolly. … He was Eighth Amphibious Commander and I was on his flagship. They called him "Close-Up Connolly." He wanted to win the war and I was on his flagship. Yes, I knew Marshall, only, "Yes, Sir." I mean, I didn't say, "Let's go for a drink." I mean, I knew him professionally. He was the brains of the war.

KP: Because you heard his discussions with Churchill?

WB: ... At this stage, I don't think there's any secrets. ...

KP: No, all the messages have been decoded.

WB: Because, we swore we didn't remember anything when we got out.

KP: It sounds like you had a lot of confidence in Marshall.

WB: Eisenhower ran the, how many flotillas, how many LSTs, how many LCIs, but, Marshall planned everything in Washington. He was the brains of the war. Later on, he put Europe back on its feet … [with] the Marshall Plan. Okay. Yes, I think, …without him, I don't know where we'd go, because we were not a professional military nation. He was a very brilliant man.

KP: What did your wife know about what you were doing? What did you tell her? Did she ask?

WB: Nothing. She knew that I was in the Pentagon. She knew that I was doing secretive stuff, but, I never discussed it with her. She's a very sick woman now. We're not going to talk. She just had a pituitary benign tumor two years ago, operated right here at St. Peter's. She's in a wheelchair, can't talk, but, she wanted to stay with me. She gave birth the day that we landed in Bizerte. Our daughter was born July 5, 1943. That was the beginning of the invasion of Sicily. I didn't see her until she was over two-years-old. We've always been very close. I also have a son who went here. She was about twenty-five months old when I first saw her. ... The doctor at Fort Monmouth said, "You'd better go home and stay with your parents, instead of trailing around with [your husband]." ... She got nauseous a couple of times, like all women when they're pregnant, but, she didn't go home and went ... down to Hampton Roads. Then, she went home.

KP: After you did leave for Europe, where did she end up living?

WB: Living with her parents and our baby in Plainfield, New Jersey. They just stayed there, and my father-in-law, he spoiled my daughter. … He said, "She has no father here, and whatever she wants to do, don't stop her," and she got spoiled. [laughter] Well, that's not much about the war.

Anyway, we shipped out of Fort Hamilton, and, of course, the dates were all messed up, like the rest of the Army. We were supposed to get on this flagship, I think, in Mers El-Kebir. I don't know whether you know where that is. That's Oran. Fortunately, there was a well-known Rutgers University fraternity brother of mine on the ship, he was already a major, David Morse. He became … the assistant Secretary of Labor in the Truman administration. Dave Morse graduated from here about 1930, or somewhere [around then], and, of course, I wasn't saying anything to anybody on the ship. The code operators had a pretty good idea that something was up and we landed in Oran. It was a little place called Mers El-Kebir. That was a port, and, what we were supposed to do [was to] be transported as fast as possible to Bizerte. Bizerte had just been taken, where they were waiting for it to become our port for the Eighth Amphibious Force. Another stupid colonel running Oran, I couldn't tell him what we were there for, and he thinks we're all replacements, you know, and he got up, and made a speech. … If it wasn't for Dave Morse, RC '29, his name was really David Moskowitz, if I remember [correctly]. His brother went here, Erwin Moskowitz. David Morse got up in front of this colonel, and he said, "Look, there's a lot of important units here, and they're not replacements, and I'm only a major, but, you better think what you're saying and what you're doing." He was scaring the [men]. ... He was saying, "Half of you are going to get killed," … I can still remember. … I'm trying to get this unit, so, finally, I told Dave, … I had to talk to somebody, [and tell them] what we were up to. … I think David really arranged [it so] we were put on a train to go to Algiers. That's Algiers, Algeria, and that train must have gone eight miles an hour. Have you ever been in Constantine, Africa?

KP: No.

WB: It has the most beautiful wild flowers. ... I said, "Can't we move the train?" ... 'cause I knew we were late for where we were supposed to be, ... and we got to Algiers, and we decided, if we could get Army vehicles, we could move faster than any train. … They put us on a couple of trucks, and ... one night, we had a bivouac, and I had to set up a perimeter, you know. I didn't know what was going on. It's still a war zone. We got to Bizerte. ... If I hadn't have met Dave Morse, I don't know if we'd have ever gotten there. I probably would have been executed, and I said how beautiful Constantine [was]. ... Everybody said, "Man, you saw the world for nothing!" I said, "Not the way I wanted to." We were to meet the *Biscayne*, that was the flagship of Admiral Connolly, and the *Monrovia*, that was a converted ship that used to go to South America, I think, during peacetime with sightseers. Well, anyway, the *Biscayne* had sailed out already. We were late. I have some things I'm going to leave with you, and you may want to Xerox them, but, I would like 'em back, just for my family history.

KP: I will probably just Xerox them right away and just give them back to you.

WB: Some of them are not short. There's a book on the *Biscayne*. Now that I think of it, this is the history of this. I don't know whether you want to do all of this today.

KP: I can go pretty quickly.

WB: I'll go on with what I'm saying, but, that's the history. This little ship, the *Biscayne*, was one of the greatest that ever set sail. It was supposed to be a seaplane tender. Because the

Mediterranean's so small, they found out that the big ships were being bombed. So, … the seaplane tender was a good fake. ... All I can say [is] that about everybody that slept on that ship, as you got out, somebody else got in the sack, because … it was not made for that purpose. But, the Admiral, [it] was his flagship, and it was great, and we became part of the crew, I mean, this Army unit. I'm a member of the crew of the *Biscayne* and so are all these enlisted men.

KP: What were you formally assigned to?

WB: Assigned, but, provisional. They wanted to see how it would work. There had been no invasion before, but, another stupid thing, if they had a joint code and a joint communication, the Army and the Navy, the Navy could've done it, but, we had separate codes, so, they needed the Army. As the Army went ashore, we would communicate with General Clark, Mark Clark, and then, we would decode it, and then, we would give it to the Navy, telling them what supply. They couldn't think that the Navy could have learned those same codes. I enjoyed it, but, there was a lot of overlap. It was a seaplane tender, you'll see that on there, and it was made AGC. That's a flagship for the Eighth Amphibious Force, and Admiral Connolly, he was the commander of the Eighth Amphibious Force, at that time, another great guy. I was lucky to have great COs, not always afterwards. This was 1943. ... On the 10th of July 1943, the flagship invaded Sicily. We were put out by Commander Gleim, who was a communications officer at Bizerte. On a separate ship, the *Biscayne*, and we were put aboard after they had left, with twelve operators, twelve code men and one repairman. There wasn't any place. We were sleeping on the deck and everywhere else, if I can remember. Now, I'm going to say some things, and [I hope] I'm not going to hurt anybody's feelings, but, the Germans, … they had been bombing us every night at Bizerte, I remember. The Italians didn't want to fight the Americans. They all had uncles over here. They hated the Germans. They were starving in Sicily, … but, there was some resistance. We landed at Licata and Gela, that was southern Sicily, and the biggest competition during Sicily was between Patton and the English general. They wanted to see who could get to Palermo first. I don't think they fought the enemy as hard as they fought each other, but, … let me tell you, we were off Sicily until the 22nd of July 1943. The invasion took place around the 10th of July. There was minor opposition. A lot of Italian troops ran down to the shore. They had banjos, not guns. "Take us," they didn't want to fight the Americans. I think Mussolini would have been a great man if he hadn't … gotten tangled up with Hitler. I mean, I learned later, because I was in Tripoli, ... he did a lot of good, but, he picked the wrong side, and the Italians, maybe they would have fought like devils if they were on our side, but, they didn't really want to fight. … We took gangs of them on other ships back to North Africa. They became barbers, waiters, played music for dances. … Anyway, after the Sicilian invasion, and we secured Sicily, the only bad thing was, … we had a paratroop division that was gonna jump in Sicily to help us. Well, we didn't have a fox channel that could get to everybody that was in the invasion. Do you know what I mean by that? We didn't have enough sense then, or, was it I wouldn't have known either? They heard some planes overhead. They were paratroopers, American, and some guy started to shoot. Well, we did more damage to other ships. Some of the stuff landed on other craft. Some of it dispersed the paratroopers. Some of them hid out for thirty days. We found them all over Sicily. They never really jumped where they were going to. It was caused by kids that had never been in an invasion. They heard planes, they just started anti-aircraft. ...

KP: How much was known on the ship about how much of a fiasco the airborne assault was?

WB: I knew, 'cause I was with the headquarters ship, and we tried to stop ...

KP: Stop your ships from firing?

WB: But, you couldn't, because it went down through channels, and, by the time it got [to the ships], ...it was too late. ... We tried everything, and some of these kids, they shot at an angle, and it landed on other ships. ... It was a mess, but, like everything else, we got by, and we took Sicily. Of course, I was wondering what [was] happening at home. I didn't know whether I had a daughter, or a widow, or if I was going to get killed, but, I heard nothing, and here it was, we were back, ... they dropped us off in Bizerte again, after that.

KP: Did the mail ever reach you from home at this point?

WB: Later on, but, it was sent APO, and I had a Navy address, so, they couldn't find me. In fact, Senator Case, who was a Rutgers graduate, they got to him. He was quite a great guy and a well-known Rutgers alumnus, but, they got to him, and they said, "We can't find Mr. Berger," or whoever they called me, … "Here's his APO," and he couldn't locate me, because I was already with the Navy, but, he just said, "He's not hurt or dead, or ... you'd hear." But, Larry Donovan, I'll never forget, when we got back to Bizerte, he knew I was worried, without asking me, and I was his CO, even though we were still second lieutenants, he flew down to Algiers. That was Red Cross headquarters. He came back with the news that I had a daughter. That's how I found out that Shirley had a child.

KP: It was through a friend who had heard?

WB: Oh, I was frantic to know. I didn't know what happened. On the 9th of September through the 11th of October, this was still '43, the *Biscayne* took part in the invasion of Salerno. You wouldn't believe what happened to me then. I got orders by the Navy to take three code operators, three radio operators, to the HMS *Hillary*, and I was to command a small separate unit to coordinate communications with the southern [region]. ... The British were actually in charge of the invasion of Salerno, originally. ... Connolly was still there with the *Biscayne*. The history of Salerno, I'll leave with you. It was bloody. We never saw anything like that. I was on the HMS *Hillary*. We were hiding out, actually, when I said I was in Tripoli, and we went to Tripoli before this, with these three code operators. I think it was John Heins, and Bob Maxwell, and I think MacCaully was the other one, I forget the radio operators, and myself. [Bob Maxwell and John Heins visited Berger in August 1999. Maxwell's records indicated Sgt. Fornier, Sgt. Larkin and Sgt. MacCaully were the three code operators who I took to the *Hillary*, not the ones I reported in my interview.] … We were to set up code and radio communications on the *Hillary*, and my commanding officer was a commodore, the American Navy did not have commodores. Commodore Oliver was my boss for the invasion on the beaches. Well, the American Navy had given the orders, and I didn't want to go, because I figured, "Listen, I'm assigned to the American Navy and here they're ordering me to the British ship." But, Connolly said, "We have to have someone over there we can talk to, encoded." So, I went. ... The *Hillary* was the British ship. One

good thing, as tough as it was, they had no ice, but, you could get gin and juice in the afternoon, and tea at three o'clock. [Just a note: I now realize why the Navy ordered me to the British ship *Hillary* I used their machine in the Pentagon from Marshall to Churchill.]

KP: You had seen both the American Navy and, now, the British Navy work, which is very rare for an Army officer.

WB: Figure this out, will you. I told you it's going to be an interesting story.

KP: What differences did you notice between the way the British and American Navies worked?

WB: The British figured this is going to be a long war. They were relaxed. You didn't do it today, you'd do tomorrow. You might get killed, this was going to be our way of life. The Americans wanted to win the war and go home. That's the big difference. The British had been in it with Churchill for a long time already. This was a way of life. They didn't think it was going to end in a hurry. The Germans were still very much in it, all over Europe. We hadn't even landed in France. Italy was the only place we were landing. The Americans were still in England. Nobody had been on the Continent, although, I could tell you, Patton and Eisenhower, … after Sicily, were transferred to England. I knew that, but, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know anything about Overlord.

KP: I have just one more follow-up question on that.

WB: You can always interrupt me, but, I'm just going so fast. This is fifty-some years ago. ...

KP: Yeah, but, your memory is pretty good.

WB: Because, ... we keep together. The same guys often meet.

KP: Yeah. You mentioned that the British Navy served gin and tonic.

WB: No ice though, that was the only trouble.

KP: How was the rest of the food on the British ship?

WB: Terrible, terrible. … [When] American ships, food ships, I forget what they called them for the moment, come along, … we ate like [kings]. ... My wife sent me Spam one time. I sent it back. I said, "It's for civilians." [laughter] … On Thanksgiving, we had a choice of steak and turkey, and, if you didn't want that, you could have lobsters. That was [rare], but, we always ate good. We ate in the ward room. There [were] all blacks ... in charge of [the table waiting]. ... We were served. You didn't go like you were ashore with the GIs. We ate good, as I said, better than the civilians, but, we worked … at sea. We were always at sea during operations. Between operations, we'd be ashore, sometimes, and we worked with the Navy, in the Navy Com Office in Bizerte. Like, they said to me, "You can either take the guys aside and drill 'em or you can integrate." … The Navy officers, any of them were allowed in the code room. You could be a doctor, an MD. I was

astounded. Our code undergraduates, I called them, not commissioned, they were twice as good as any [of the Navy people], … because they sent anybody in. They could be doctors, they could be supply officers, but, if they needed them, they could go in the code room. … Of course, our kids, here's a sergeant and there's a captain. In the Navy, it was a doctor. ... Talk about the machines and it was wrong. Here's these kids getting sergeant's pay, and these guys are getting big money, and our guys were doing most of the work ashore. Of course, I had to keep them busy. There was time between each [landing], ... and we didn't want to live on the ship. That would be tough, but, it's all right to be there during an operation. We ... lived in the BQs in Bizerte. It was much better. Who would want to live on a ship if nothing was going on? … They had duty, and we kept them busy, until Admiral Lawry came along and his guy, Captain Opie. He was miserable. He'd make 'em work, and then, me, "take 'em out and drill 'em," and he was a Navy exec. for the next admiral. Connolly was such a fighter, they sent him to the Pacific. They called him, "Close-Up Connolly." He wanted to win the war. All I can say, ... some of this, I'm pretty sure, must have been published somewhere, but, we were about to take the people off at Salerno. There was fifty percent casualties in the British division, … and some of them, they put guns behind these British soldiers to make them go ashore. They saw all these guys coming out bleeding and dead, and we had then communicated back and forth with the *Biscayne,* making some provisions to evacuate the place, because we didn't know whether we could hold it. You figure fifty percent casualties in the British Division, but, we did hold it, and we thought it was going to be a piece of cake, because we had dropped a guy named Murphy in Rome. Do you know anything about that?

KP: No, I do not.

WB: … He had made a deal with the Italians that they would stand on their Salerno area, and, when we were ready to land, they'd quit, because they were ready to surrender. Germans got word of it ... and they were ready. They had taken over all the coast there at Salerno and we thought we were just going to move in. It was bloody.

KP: On the flagship, did you know that the operation was not going the way it was supposed to?

WB: When you see fifty percent casualties coming back dead and wounded for the British, and I was radioing the *Biscayne,* [and] they knew. The Americans had plenty of trouble, too, not quite as bad as [the British]. ... The British were the senior [partners there]. ... It was their operation, but, it got so bad that Connolly and Commodore Oliver, who, I guess, were equal by then, ... by our teeth, we held Salerno. It was the worst of all the invasions I took part in. Do you know anything about drone planes?

KP: I know a little bit.

WB: They [had] … nobody in them. They were gliders, and they were coming in, ... there was nobody in them, a mother plane on a frequency, and these things were loaded with bombs, and they could bring them over a ship. … They had hit the *Savannah*, that was a big American ship, was hit there. The British sent in the *War Spike*, a battleship, and they … didn't realize that the little *Biscayne* was a sea plane-tender, thank God! They didn't hit that. They hit these big ships. Casualties on the *Savannah*, a lot of these kids didn't have a scratch on them. The concussion

stopped their heart. The *War Spike* got hit pretty bad, I remember. It was the worst invasion I can remember.

KP: You were in the code room. How much could you see of the battle?

WB: You saw plenty. ... The concussions were so great, bombs were landing all over the place. How they happened to not hit the *Hillary*, I still don't know. Sure, you knew what was going on. After all, we're not maybe a mile offshore. We moved a little bit, just to [be safe], ... but, these things, drone planes, could be aimed like a gun. I guess it's not a secret now. We notified the Pentagon that we were under glider-bomber [attack]. The Pentagon signal people found out what the frequency was, so we jammed it, and that's how we stopped it, but, before that, there was an awful lot of mess. The *Savannah*, a big ship, the *War Spike*, a battleship, ... the mother plane would stay off in the distance, and, having that frequency, they'd glide that thing down and right into the ship. Of course, this was fifty-some years ago. I'm reliving it, and I think I told you, we were there a long time, from the 9th of September to the 11th of October, Salerno. … The food was so bad, a couple of my guys lost about twenty-five pounds. Thank God some of them were pretty heavy. The food was terrible, and, if you were good, they got a toddy a day, I think that's what they called, ... a drink of rum. Had you heard about this?

KP: Yes, I have heard about that.

WB: They couldn't eat. ...

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

WB: Well, I said this extemporaneously, okay.

KP: Yeah.

WB: Commodore Oliver, which he was not, ... had an equal. Americans had, either you were an admiral, ... commodores had disappeared as a [rank]. ... Yeah, I said, the British had fifty percent casualties, and I mean casualties. They were dead or bleeding. The glider bombers were so accurate, and we jammed the frequency, and that stopped it, but, not before they did a lot of damage.

KP: How many days passed before you were able to jam the frequency?

WB: I would say ten days or more. ... You couldn't get at the mother plane that was off in the distance.

KP: So, in other words, you were under constant bombardment.

WB: Well, these bombings, fortunately, they didn't hit the *Biscayne*. They saw a sea plane tender. I have a picture of the ship here. ... It's a little ship made to take care of other ships, but, just

because the Mediterranean is small, they decided to make it an AGC flagship, because a big ship would be hit. Not because of glider bombers, they just decided it was unhealthy. ... Admiral Lawry relieved Admiral Connolly. ... We called him, "Close-Up Connolly." He took the ship in, and used it as part of the bombardment, and he got in trouble with Admiral Hewitt for that. Admiral Hewitt was his boss, came aboard our ship a couple of times, and Connally was sent to the Pacific. He had more ocean and became a great renowned amphibious admiral. ... I will say now, after the war, when he became a civilian again, retired, he became president of Long Island University, and was killed in an airplane crash in New York while he was president. He was very nice to us. He sent us a national commodation after the Salerno [action]. ... I have that here. I hope I'm not taking too much time.

KP: Oh, no, take your time.

WB: After Salerno, headquarters became Naples, and we were moved up there, and, next thing, they were thinking about how to get Monte Cassino. Have you ever heard of [that]? I guess you've read a lot.

KP: Yes, but, I am interested in your perspectives.

WB: Monte Cassino had a church on top, … no way of moving. The Germans were up there, ... and they had booby-trapped the whole hill up to the Cassino. Of course, I was not involved in that. That's land. I was still on the Navy command, all the time. We got Gurkhas. Did you ever hear of Gurkhas, from North Africa? … They brought their wives with them. They didn't want any guns. They took their wives up that hill with them, trying to knock them off, and we paid the Gurkhas off by the number of German ears they brought back off the hill. … Without being able to bomb the church on top of the hill, … you know, in war, everything goes, but, Americans still had respect, and we couldn't take it. … They decided to go around and land in Anzio. That would bypass the Cassino hill, and, of course, that was just south of Rome. That's like Asbury Park is to [New York], ... but, it was a lot prettier than Asbury Park.

KP: So, you also witnessed the Anzio invasion?

WB: I made two more, ... but, we landed in Naples, you know. I was always with the Navy, 'cause that was our job. I had the same guys with me. The day we landed at Naples, that morning, we hadn't gone ashore yet, 'cause Naples belonged to American [forces]. ... That harbor looks like an ocean. That's the biggest harbor. Makes New York Harbor look like a bay. … You're out in the ocean. The Germans had left there that morning, the big, Italian post office blew up. They killed a lot of people. They had left time bombs, the Germans, in the post office. If we had gone ashore, I wouldn't be here. Everybody, ... for several blocks around, they were either dead or [seriously injured]. ... We just got there, luckily, a day late. The Germans were great at booby trapping stuff. You were afraid to go anywhere where they left. Admiral Lawry had taken over. He was on the *Biscayne*. A different kind of guy all together, and his Captain Opie, his exec., was a pain in the neck. If she wasn't here, I'd tell you more. ... He hated the Army people. I mean, we got along so well with ... Richard Connolly, and this guy, he wondered why the heck you had to put Army

people around there, and we didn't get along too good. … He made our lives not as happy as they had been, but, still, he knew we were … under orders. ...

KP: How did he make your lives unhappy?

WB: Drill, or he asked us to do things that really were unnecessary. I don't think Lawry was so much at fault as this Captain Opie ... terrible.

KP: He outranked you, Captain Opie?

WB: Next to being an admiral, … that was it. A captain in the Navy is equal to full colonel in the army. At this time, I think I was a first lieutenant. I got one promotion, and the other two guys were still second lieutenants. You know, we were lost in the Navy. I don't know. We were sending morning reports to San Diego. You know, that's where the amphibious reports. I was being paid by the Navy, … and I'd give them a payroll. Sometimes, if we were anywhere near an Army headquarters, we would go to the Army, ... I forget now what they call it, and draw money. Sergeant Fornier, who was next to Sergeant Shanks, a very bright guy, ... these code people, they were a heck of a lot smarter than I was. I just happened to be lucky to be a lieutenant, and they were from Vint Hill, and they would make up the payroll, and, sometimes, I was nowhere near an Army pay master. So, I guess it got under this guy that they had to pay the Army. … Opie was terrible. He was tough, even on people in the Navy under him, but, that's the way it was. It was so nice until then, and they were so spoiled. ... If they didn't have fresh food, Opie was complaining, you know, all out of the Academy. I hope you didn't get out of the Academy.

KP: No. [laughter] So, Opie was an Academy man?

WB: Oh, all of the admirals, and all the high ranking [officers], but, ... my equal, the communications officer, even on the *Biscayne*, he was drunk every night we were ashore, and they'd always give us the worst ... equipment, and they kept the best for them. I felt free enough when Connolly was there, and ... I would say, "Admiral, you know, this guy is outranking me, so, … I can't get a decent piece of equipment to work with." He says, "I'll see to that," and he did. … This guy, the Academy take care of their own. ... I'd have fired the guy. He was an alcoholic, and he was a lieutenant commander, you know. That's one above a captain in the Army. He was drunk all the time.

KP: I have interviewed a lot of people who went into the Navy for the duration, and they said that the Academy people ...

WB: Hung together.

KP: Hung together, and that those that were not Academy officers received the short end of the stick. Now, you were in a very unusual position and you were in the Army, which made it even worse.

WB: ... I was a first lieutenant, and this guy is a lieutenant commander, I think, and, once he got on board, … you know, there was only so much equipment to go around, and he'd take the best radar. ... You know, we had to transmit, and, by this time, Connolly … said, "I'll see [about] something," and he really put the word out, "They're … to get equal treatment with equipment." … I don't know too much about transmitters and receivers. These were all technical people, … the radio operators were all trained code operators. Actually, the duty of the officers was really to manage the operation, but, I knew that we were getting a bad deal from this guy. Well, when the Gurkhas couldn't take Monte Cassino, they decided we were going to bypass the place, and we landed at Anzio. It was beautiful like, maybe, Asbury Park was fifty or a hundred years ago, but, in peacetime, it would've been a great place to be. … There was very little resistance at the beginning. The first night, we thought, "Heck, this is going to be a piece a cheese, you know. We're going into this place." ... A Ranger battalion went in, and they almost got to Rome, about thirty miles from the beach, but, they were cut off. I don't think three of them ever came back. We never found them again, because the Germans brought in three or four divisions, I think from Yugoslavia. They had divisions over there still, but, don't forget, we were still not taking over Europe. They were still in pretty good shape on the Continent. We landed there [from the] 22nd of January until the 2nd of February. This is in, I guess, 1944 by now. Yeah, '44. We were there so long. We thought we were going to be there about, maybe, four or five days, get these people ashore, and get behind Cassino. Didn't work that way. The Germans brought in a division, and they ... had a big gun, Anzio Annie, up on the hill there, I remember, and that would just shoot out into the harbor, and you'd never know when it was coming. It was a huge cannon, I guess, ... and there we were, out in the harbor, hoping it wouldn't hit us. You know, the sea plane tender looks small. I guess a lot of other people got hit, but, we were there a long time. We were supposed to be there a week, from the 22nd of January to the 2nd of February, '44. ... You know, we had code books. You had to set these machines according to monthly or bimonthly schedules. We ran out of how to set the equipment, and so, I had to go out ashore once, to an Army signal division, and get up to date settings, so we could talk to them, and, believe me, the Army people couldn't wait to get ashore. They hated to be on a ship. They figured there's no foxholes here. At this stage, I couldn't wait to get back on the ship, 'cause, you know, I hadn't dug any, and it was still rough at Anzio and Nettuno. I hope you're all cleared for all this, fifty some years later. [laughter] Finally, it was secured, and, I think, we went back to Naples or Rome, ... I'm not too clear. I remember they sent our unit out to Caserta, … where the king, in peacetime, had his castle, I guess, and we were heading out there. Of course, I didn't want to stay on the ship while we were waiting. … We were assigned, temporarily, to the Coast Guard cutter *Dwayne*, not the *Biscayne*. That was a Coast Guard cutter [and] was a flagship for an admiral, ... maybe a little larger for the landing. … We landed in southern France on the 15th of August, 1944. My birthday was August 16th. We'd been over here a long time. Now, I'll interrupt it to say a replacement unit was sent over sometime before. Admiral Connolly was still there then, and we were supposed to go home, you know. We'd been through [a lot]. ... Connolly said, while he was still [in command], before Admiral Lawry took over, … "I don't want any untrained people here." He put them on the ship going home and kept us. That's the only thing I had against him. He said, "I need these people. They're excellent. They're trained," and he brought me in, and he said, "You guys have been in it and I can't tell how good they are. We're over here to win the war. I'm sending them back on the ship," which we were supposed to go back on. … Can you imagine me telling our guys that we're [staying]? ... He kept the radio operators, the code men, and the repairman, and I knew some of these other guys from

Fort Monmouth, and they were laughing. They thought they were going to replace us, and they went home, and we stayed, and that was, I think, ... while Connolly was still preparing to go, ... 'cause Connolly left while we were just finishing Salerno. So, they must have come over while we were working at Salerno and he wouldn't let us go back. I loved him, but, I was lonesome. [laughter] ... These experiences don't come up very often. I met these guys later, they were sent out in the Pacific, eventually. One of 'em was at Rutgers, Larry Doyle. He played football here for a few months, but, he couldn't afford to stay. … Southern France was late. ... I guess there's no secrets anymore. We were supposed to invade southern France to take the heat away from Overlord, so that some of the Germans would be tied up, so, when they went from England to France, which already had taken place, [they would face less resistance]. ... We were so late in the operations in Italy, all those mountains, and the opposition, and so, by the time we got to southern France, [there was] very little opposition. The Germans had all moved up to try and stop Patton and the invasion. … It was another luck for me, because they figured we'd take the heat and keep them occupied in southern France. Overlord had taken place already and here we were. We went swimming in about four days. … We had some glide planes come in, … and the Germans had left these real tall posts, and a few of them hit these posts, and that was the only casualties I remember.

KP: So, that was really your easiest assignment?

WB: The easiest? Well, Sicily was pretty easy, but, Salerno and Anzio, ... I would say somebody up there liked us, that we're still here. The Germans had gone from southern France, very light opposition. We were about thirty or forty miles from Marseilles and Toulon. That's where that is, and I don't remember just how long we stayed there, but, I remember, we went swimming the third day, but, we did stay, because they needed supply information, and we ... called for supplies for the troops that were moving. They moved in fast. They took Marseilles in about a week, if I remember. Can you take all of this while I'm talking? You're doing good. You got a good secretary.

KJ: No, I am just taking some notes.

KP: No, she is just taking some notes. We are later going to transcribe the whole interview from the tape.

WB: Well, you can always come down to Rossmoor. I'll take you to lunch next time. The biggest thing that happened in southern France, a tremendous storm took place, and all the smaller landing crafts, smaller LCIs and LCVPs, ... they were swept ashore. We put up, I think it was on the *Dwayne*, full speed ahead, and it took all the power we had not to be washed ashore, and that was no opposition by the enemy. … Most of the ships, I remember vaguely, when we left, they were all on the shore. They were beached by the storm. So, no training can have storms. Course, this was in August of '44.

KP: Were you at all concerned during the storms? Was it dangerous at all?

WB: Just that, if we got washed up on the shore, … it, you know that was not the thing to be. I didn't know a lot about naval crafts, but, I remember, "Make full speed ahead against [the current],"

and we didn't go anywhere, but, we didn't get beached, and that was about the biggest thing I remember. I can add this. I heard, down at Marseilles, the minute that the Americans, … I'd say Allies, took over down at Marseilles, the French started serving the GIs drinks at about three dollars a glass and eighty percent of it was water. They didn't know the difference, and I know that the Army command smashed all the [bars] where they were selling these drinks. We just freed them, and here they were, taking advantage of all these GIs who didn't know a good drink from a bad one. That was a big port, Marseilles and Toulon. We sailed by there, but, I never went ashore there, but, I'd heard that the French were not the most polite people. They were selling drinks at high costs.

KP: What about the Italians?

WB: Oh, they were friendly. I'm not Italian, but, they were good people. … My roommate was an Italian at Rutgers, Orly Scoppettone. … A couple of months later, back in North Africa, heck, they were waiting on tables, playing dance music for dances for the other ships. ... A Third Army hospital was in the area, and they joined in, just like they were on our side. They became barbers, waiters, no trouble. I don't know about the French, because I never really stayed ashore, but, I remember, they did take awful financial advantage down in Marseilles. So, whoever it was, they smashed the bars, ... because they were selling drinks that really had nothing in them. That's my memory of it. [laughter] I was not drinking. American ships were not allowed any liquor, only the British. We went back, and where do you think we went to? Palermo, and we were separated from the Navy then. I didn't know why, but, I know now. No future major invasions were necessary in the Mediterranean. We'd been in there two years then. … We were there about two years, and we were put aboard a transport, and [shipped] back to the United States. However, we did stop, I believe, in Haiti, and picked up a bunch of Americans that were stationed there. It's so funny, they were so worried. A lot of them were, I think, American nurses and everything. They curtained off the ship You couldn't even talk to them. Those were different days. They didn't want any communication, even verbal, with any of the nurses.

KP: Even for officers?

WB: For anybody! We were not to talk to them. … I guess they were worried. Two years overseas, they didn't want to send anybody near the women. I had the same units with me. Some of them had gone home, a couple of them had gotten hurt, and some of them had a enough points by that time. ... Donovan had a broken spine. He got hurt and he was finished ... with the service. He was in the hospital. We got back and where do you think we landed? Fort Hamilton, and that same damned lieutenant that sent us out and let these guys free two years ago, he must have known somebody. He was there to take us off the ship. By that time, I outranked him. I had become a captain … on my birthday, August 16. I said, … "You know somebody, you stupid fool. Everybody else is overseas," but, he was there. ... Let's see what else I can tell you. ... One of the humorous things that happened while I was still aboard, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., came aboard. I think he was a direct commission. ... I think he was a captain or something. The British officers, they outranked him, but, Fairbanks, he was ordering this guy around, as far as I could see, and the humorous thing, he said, "Anybody got a comb?" and I always wanted that comb back, because Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., used the comb. He had an idea that we should go … down to Capri. … You can see it from the mainland, and, you know, Hollywood, he got permission to do it. … I think

we went over in a PT boat, but, only, I think, one other officer and a few enlisted men went, and not on the flagship. He thought he was in Hollywood, but, every building, and that's a beautiful place, the Isle of Capri. Have you ever been there?

KP: No.

WB: We were told, "Don't go in any hotel, don't go in any building, because it's probably [bobby trapped]," and it's true, every hotel was booby trapped by the Germans. … Of course, they left [the traps] where you could see liquor and beer, and I thought, "I want to go home … alive." ... We stayed near the beach for a few days, and those people were starving, the natives of Capri. I did see the Blue Grada. That's another thing you should see, some day. It's a beautiful place. Everybody said, "Well, you got a free cruise." I said, "Yeah, I'd rather not do it." ... Hollywood, he wanted us to send back to the States, because there were no Germans there to make the Germans think that we left a lot of soldiers. He wanted to send for football uniforms, and he was going to stand them up around the shore, so that they would think that there were Americans there. Of course, that never happened, but, he asked for them. Then, we went back, ... but, he was a character. The *Biscayne* crew, admirals and all incorporated, … they have a reunion every year, and, as I said, … Bob Maxwell and I were host for one in 1993, and [for] that, we had a hotel in Edison, very interesting. Unfortunately, because of Shirley, I haven't been able to [attend anymore]. ... One was in Los Angeles, I think, and the next one's in Denver. If she's alive, I won't go. ...

KP: When did you start going to reunions?

WB: Of the crew?

KP: Yeah, of the crew.

WB: I went whenever Shirley and I were able to, but, she's been so ill. She was operated [on] at St. Peter's Hospital here, and she's now in a wheelchair, and she can't talk, and can't walk. ... I always send my regards and they sent me this thing, this year, this *Biscayne* T-shirt. I send them the dues every year.

KP: When was the first reunion? How many years after the war?

WB: The first reunion was ten years or more ago. ... They sent me the history, some of the people that I met on the *Biscayne* before, General Mark Clark, and he was a much maligned guy. The war in Italy, he took a tremendous loss, … with the infantry, and that's why they got so far behind. We were supposed to be taking the heat off of the infantry. He became president of some university after the war, but, I thought, ... Ernie Pyle was on board for a while. ... General Patton, of course, and that was exaggerated. He's quite a guy, if I remember, but, as far as pearl [handled] pistols, I didn't see that, but, maybe he did, but, he … wanted to fight. That's the kind of guy you want when the war's going on. Fairbanks, Vice Admiral Hewitt, who outranked Admiral Connolly, he came aboard a few times, and we saw Bob Hope. ... He came over at Christmas. ...

KP: Did you see a USO show?

WB: Well, he had Frances Langford with him and it was entertaining. He could entertain you himself. … I was in Korea in 1951. He was still coming over. I saw him there. Cardinal Spellman used to come over every [once in a while] and hold Mass, … around Christmas each year. ... John Heins, ... lives in Hopewell, New Jersey now, he's retired from AT&T, he's very active still. I'll show you when we had the reunion. ... This is John Hein, who became a very high ranking guy with AT&T. He's retired now. He's still very active with the unit. This is Bob Maxwell. He became senior legal advisor … for Sears Roebuck East. He's now retired. He lives in Pennsylvania, next to Villanova, and we talk and visit. … This was while we had the reunion in New Jersey. We took these guys around Rutgers and these people came from all over the country. ... They never heard of Rutgers, but, ... we had some people here during the summer, and they took them on tour. What else can I show you? This is the ... muster list, if you're in the Navy. Of course, I'm listed this year as still part of the crew. In other words, we hang together. We had so much experience.

KP: I guess we have some more questions for you.

WB: This is a history of the *Biscayne.* I can leave that here, and this was written by John Hein ... sort of a cut down history of the ship. I could leave it here and pick it up. ...

KP: I would prefer to Xerox it. Kathleen is actually getting graded on this interview, so, I know she will have some questions.

WB: This also is a present list of the people that have died since. ... That's a letter from Hein, right now, and he just came back from a reunion, and he's telling me about next year in Denver, this you might like to have, while we were the hosts. ... I would want that back, and this was by someone on resolutions, about the crew of the *Biscayne,* when they were in New Jersey a couple of years ago. ... You might want to read, <u>You're Not Going To Get Me Court-martialed</u>. ... That was after the Salerno operation. ...

KP: So, this was your unit?

WB: No, that was a commendation from the Admiral.

KP: But, these were the men?

WB: Those were all the men that were under his command, really. Have you heard anything as interesting as this so far?

KP: You were one of the most interesting. I mean, most people did not get to see the behind the scenes portions of the war.

WB: General Bill Bauer probably had an interesting career. He was a general by the time he [retired].

KP: He really only interacted with the Army Air Force. He did not have the same experience. I mean, very few people get to be in the Army, but, then, serve on ships in two navies.

WB: When I got back in the Army, you know, officers stayed in at the convenience of the government. I couldn't get out because of all this. I got called back thirty days after Korea got started, another couple of years of my life. ... I had intended to be a lawyer, but, I had two children by that time, and I couldn't go back to college, but, I did handle ... about ten estates for well-known people, some of them here, some of them in Florida. I became president of Gus Jay Insurance, who I knew well when he died. So, I did extra type of work, but, by the time I got out of Korea, I got this ...

KP: You were a major?

WB: By the time I got out. I'd have rather been a corporal and never gone. ... My son has worked for the Navy since … he got his doctorate out of MIT. He got out of here in '68, got a five-year scholarship in Math. He goes to see his math professor, who's retired now, Sheila, a woman [who] lives in Highland Park. He was up a few weeks ago to talk with her. He's been with the Navy [since]. They got him before he got out of MIT, so, they got paid back, and this came in the mail this month. They wanted me to [come], even though I couldn't go there, just for fun. I don't know. ... Ernie Pyle's a brave man, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, Southern France. The *Biscayne*, actually, later on, went out to Iwo Jima, but, I didn't go with them. The war ended just about when we were getting ready to go to Japan, and, I say, thank God for Harry Truman.

KP: When you were sent back to the United States, did you have enough points to get out or was your unit disbanded?

WB: The war was still going on. We were being trained to go to [Japan]. ...

KP: You were part of the unit that was being trained for the invasion of Japan.

WB: Now, the commanding officer of every unit, when the war ended, in 1945, I guess it was, I had to stay with one Sergeant Fornier, poor guy, he's now dead, from just age, and write the history of the unit. Every unit that was going to be decommissioned, so to speak, had to have a history, and, … of course, I had probably about three months piled up of free time, but, I was on active duty in Brooklyn. ... It wasn't part of the Army, ... it was like Camp Edison, … for New York units in peacetime, what would you call them? We had them up at Camp Edison, ... National Guard Armory. They set me up an office there with Fornier, who volunteered to stay. ... He didn't have to, ... they all could get out, and I had to write the history of this unit. It was supposed to be sent somewhere, to the archives. ... So, the war ended in August, and, I think, MacArthur took the surrender in the Fall. I didn't get out until the following Spring, 'cause, after I was on duty, I used to go out to Ebbett's Field and watch the Brooklyn Dodgers play, after I got done every day. How long can you dictate? I'm getting tired here. ... This was a history from the beginning to the end, but, in detail, and ... then, … I had a real estate license in Plainfield, and I was managing property. ... Floyd Bragg, do you know him?

KP: I do not know him personally, but, I have heard the name.

WB: He was out to lunch with me today. I came from having lunch with Doug Graber ... I greeted him here when he first came here. He and Frank (Burns and I are good friends. Frank, I know personally. He was playing football here when I came home, Class of '49. Nice guy, great coach. ... I was on reserve duty. I got out, I guess it was '46, by then, but, when the Korean War started, ... I think I had to put in two weeks every summer. I was in the reserves, but, I was still on call. Thirty days after the Korean thing, I got … called back with the Army unit. I'll take the Navy any day as far as living. It was cold over there and it was unpleasant. ... I don't know what we ever did worthwhile over there. It's still divided in half.

KP: What was your mission in Korea? Were you still with the Signal Corps in Korea?

WB: Well, it was, again, a secret mission. We were to keep intercept[ing], ... well, at that time, it was the Chinese who were with the North Koreans, … and you couldn't tell the friends from the enemies. One guy once said to me, "If I could get up there, I'm going to kill," I think he said Uncle Charles. They hated each other, and they still do, over in Korea, and the other thing was internal security. We had been in one place so long. Do you know Vince Kramer?

KP: Yeah, I interviewed him for the project.

WB: I met him over there. He was a Marine. He was a regular, twenty-three years. He and I are close friends. He was in Korea and I was sent up to keep security. They were in one place so long that they were fighting with each other. The Marines were used to getting … into a place, take it, and get out. Vince's wife has been quite sick, I don't know. ... She broke her hip recently. Was he here since then?

KP: I interviewed him in the Spring.

WB: He's a tough guy, but, a good friend of mine. He's the one that convinced my son to go into the Navy. ... We're close. Well, … I was president of the Rutgers College Alumni Association, and he was here twenty-three years as secretary of the Alumni Association, and I was president in '68. He and I talk about old times. You know, when he came here, he was still in uniform. I think he was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, by that time, and he was ... new coming out of the service. ... So, I kind of befriended him. I introduced him around. He comes back to reunions. He was very mistreated by a woman who we kicked out of here, finally. She was brought in by Bloustein and she thought that she just was it. ... I think she was fired about a year ago. ... Do you know who I'm talking about?

KP: No, no.

WB: I'm not going to mention her name, but, she came from the Mid-West. I happened to be with Vince the day she came in, and she said, "From now on, you'll do it my way and you'll do it the way I think." ... That's the way she introduced herself, ... and Bloustein did a lot of good, but, some of the appointments. ... The woman hated our class so much that … she'd just leave whenever we

were around. McCormick's in that class. ... Jack Anderson used to publish the *Targum*, ... until finally it was taken over. He didn't have enough modern equipment. We had a lot of prominent people. Don Corwin, he was a great golfer. Sills was in our class. He died a few years ago. Ridgeway Moon, his father was here, and my father and he met in … Westinghouse, and found out their sons were both at Rutgers. Ridgeway Moon's father was a Westinghouse executive, also. I've been active here because I love football. I used to recruit for Frank when it was legal. … You're not allowed to do it [now], and I'm a friend of Graber's. Frank and Graber are good friends. Poor Graber, he looked twenty years older today. ... That was a horrible experience, ... seven fumbles in a football [game], ... and, of course, he's under a lot of heat right now. … Navy ran up a big upset, so, he's worried about Saturday. I'm worried, too. I hope I can get to the game, 'cause I can never leave my wife. You're not recording this, I hope. ...

KP: Yeah.

WB: Well, I'm finished. You can turn it off. This is just personal things around here.

KP: Well, can we ask you some more questions about Rutgers?

WB: Yes.

KP: Actually, Kathleen has some questions.

WB: Not about the people I don't like here. [laughter]

KP: No.

KP: No, you can tell us who we should not talk about.

WB: This woman was senior vice president that left here a year ago. I guess the place is so big, we were here, two hundred people, and everybody knew everything that happened.

KP: No, I think I have only met the president, for example, once, where people have said that the president, in former days, would walk down the street and say hello to people.

WB: This guy here, ... I feel sorry for him. … I'm talking about the President now. ... The Board of Governors voted to back him and I think that's well-known, it's no secret. … One misplaced speech, and, you know, as I say, you can't let the inmates run the asylum. That's about the way we feel. ... He's had a lot more difficulty. There's not money like there used to be. He's not getting the cooperation. So, I think for now, the Board is going to back him, for the time being, if he can survive it. I don't think they're about to let him out. This is in here, among us. ... I met him in Florida, when he ... first came in. ... I probably said some things here, if it ever got out, I'd be in trouble, but, two months after he made that slip about their difficulty in getting high IQs, somebody was out to get him. Now, he's not the greatest [Rutgers president]. ... I went here when Mason Gross [taught]. ... Without any notes, he could tell everybody. His trouble was being on television as ... the cigarette company. That's how he almost didn't get to be president. Then, a guy came in,

Jones, he didn't last long here. He had no sense of humor. I was here when Clothier [was president]. Clothier used to come and watch us play tennis every time we had a match. He was from a different era. So am I, for that matter. I was here in the thirties. Clothier's son got killed in the war and it turned his poor life [upside down]. ... He was from the Clothier people in Philadelphia, an extreme gentleman. You don't find people like that anymore. I knew them all.

KP: What about Dean Metzger? Did you have any experiences with him?

WB: He was a pain in the neck. [laughter] His son I got along with. He … was terrible.

KP: Most people have a story about Dean Metzger.

WB: I'm not going to give mine. [laughter] I could never go home weekends on account of him. "You're going to chapel whether you like it or not." ... Then, if you didn't make thirteen chapels, you couldn't graduate ... as a freshman. Now, I guess, you go if you want to. He meant well, but, he was from another era also.

KP: People say he had a very stern facade.

WB: He was stern besides the facade. [laughter] I got out of the fraternity, ... I think I come out of the Deke house with Orly Scappettone one time. Orly was a Deke, and I knew all of 'em, and we come out ten minutes with the chaperones. You know, you could have a party, but, you had to have two pairs of chaperones, and, ... you had two or three sleep-in [for the] Soph-Hop, the Military Ball, or something. The other ones, you have to be out at midnight with your dates. We came out ten minutes late, and ... we used have, like, ... an Inter-fraternity Council. ... I was secretary, ... I was up in his office that Monday. ... Two months, no, nothing, you couldn't have a date, you couldn't have any parties. ... It was a different world. ... They used to have a formal dance at NJC. ... You come out of NJC at the Christmas party in white gloves and you'd shake hands with all the deans and everything, the women deans. Well, Jack Anderson, who was a good buddy of mine, he published the *Targum*. He lives right across the street from Frank Burns, and we thought it would be nice, ... so, we started singing Christmas carols, a bunch of us. ... We really went over there to see if the band would be good for another party, ... and, you know, we all got in trouble for causing noise after the Christmas dance over at NJC. ... In trouble again with Metzger. [laughter] It was a different world. Now, ... you signed out a date then and you'd be back at twelve o'clock. If it was twelve-ten, you're in trouble, and the girl's in trouble, too, if they were back ten minutes late. This was a different era. In some ways, it wasn't. It was one extreme against the other, and, which is best, ... [it's not for] me to decide. ...

KJ: Can I ask you something about your Rutgers experience? How do you think your educational experience here at Rutgers prepared you for the service?

WB: Well, I had two years of basic training. It certainly was a help. It probably got me in trouble. I figured, "I'm gonna stay as a Pvt. and get out when the war is over," but, they wouldn't let me. Yes, it helped, but, it was sort of a joke. Back in '34 and '35, who thought [there would be a war]? ... I think for fifteen weeks, you had to march up College Avenue, and you took two hours a week,

basic. You were in school. ... [It] was separate from your regular [studies]. It helped, but, I don't think it was the end-all, but, at least you had to put on a uniform, a private's uniform. What it's doing now, I don't know. ... It's voluntary, isn't it, here?

KP: Yes, it is voluntary.

WB: I thought all land-grant colleges, then, you had to go, if you're physically able.

KP: It has to be offered, but, I do not know in terms of the mandatory requirements.

WB: It's not required, I don't think.

KP: No, it is not required, but, it is offered, military history, ROTC.

WB: Some of those guys are great. I still meet some of them. I admire them.

KJ: When you were taking courses here, your professors in history or political science, what did they think of the situation before the war? Did they think we were going to get involved?

WB: Well, of course, I got out in '38, and, ... at that time, there was mainly economic trouble. We were in a heck of a depression. You people, you just hear about it. ... There was a guy here that helped you get work after graduation. ... He died recently, by the way, a very nice guy. ... Only one guy, and his uncle owned a big men's and women's clothing store in New York, and, I guess through some influence, he got a job with Macy's, ... Bamberger's then. All of us were on our own. Nobody else got a job through Rutgers, because there were none.

KP: How did you get your first job?

WB: First job I got when I got out of here, ... I had worked for the Westinghouse two summers, making instruments. I've still have got bad hands from it. ... His brother owned some property in Newark, and I had worked there the summer after I graduated, and I stayed there helping manage property. Eventually, I got a real estate license, after I got out of World War II. My wife, I got married in '41, she was working for her sister in Plainfield, who had a dress shop. I think I was making thirty-five dollars. … We had fifty dollars a week. ... Figure that out. Those were tough times. Maybe we were better for it. I don't know. You know, the professors here were poor. John George and I used to play in Bishop. He was a great man. ...

KP: Yeah, he was a very popular professor.

WB: Did you know him?

KP: No, I did not know him personally.

WB: He used to ride me all the time, 'cause he was very liberal, and he said, "I can prove that I have an open mind. I have a guy here that's going to be a Republican." [laughter] But, he would

not ever say Civil War. I took a course on the Civil War, he called it the Shovel War. He said, "No war is civil." He had been in World War I and ... they used that mustard gas. ... He was never really healthy. He lived in Highland Park. Most of the professors, you did your work, but, they weren't preparing you. You're talking prepared to go into the Army, not really. ... It's just the two years ... you'd at least heard about it, but, we didn't take it that seriously, but, there was a guy here that was assigned, because it was a land-grant college. ... It didn't hurt. It maybe helped, but, when I got in, I never expected to do anything like this. I still don't know why, till now.

KP: When you were going to college, one of the big issues was the Spanish Civil War and the Munich Pact.

WB: You're talking about the Civil War?

KP: The Spanish Civil War.

WB: Well, that was the liberals against the dictator. We took the course. Of course, looking back, we took a lot about World War I and all the wars, but, you know, World War II hadn't come up yet. World War I, there was a lot of blood shed, but, it was nothing like the equipment. We had no idea that we were going to end up being soldiers when we got out. I loved Rutgers, 'cause it was a small place, and I still have lots of friends, ... Travisano**,** Frank and I lived near each other in Rossmoor. I succeeded him as president of the Alumni Association. I think, I guess, he was in the service, but, he and I are good friends. Bill Jenny, who died, Class of '53, ... Fred Grunniger and I used to have a couple of drinks, but, when he was in the Alumni Office. ... No, he was in the Alumni Office prior to moving to assistant athletic director. ...

KP: So, Rutgers has always been an important part of your life?

WB: Yeah, I lived near here when I wasn't in the Army, and Dr. Reitman, RC '32, I don't know if you know Norman, but, he was a, I guess, chief of the Board of Governors here. He's retired now, but, he got after me all the time to be active. I knew him as a doctor and as a fraternity brother. I saw him at the past President's Dinner, and I said, "You know, you got me into a lot here." I still kid him. As long as I lived around here, I loved college life. I would've loved to [have] maybe taught here, but, I never could, ... not after the war.

KP: Had the GI Bill tempted you at all to go for your law degree, or to go back to school?

WB: ... I had nothing. My wife was living with her father and I thought it was pretty late in the game. I had taken pre-law with Dr. George. Professor George and he had persuaded me not to go into law school unless ... somebody would take me in. You had to pay to be a clerk at that time. Now, I guess, when they get a good clerk, they pay him. Then, you paid maybe five dollars a week to be able to be in a law office. Larry Abrams, who was a well-known [lawyer], ... he was in Governor Minor's cabinet. He wrote the commercial code. He was my lawyer when I needed one. He lives in Florida. He's a Rutgers '37 graduate. He was up here and we went around, looking around, showing him what's gone on, but, he gave quite a bit of equipment. ...

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

WB: ... When we played the University of Hawaii, I flew over with my wife with the team. I loved [Rutgers football]. ... Well, my roommate was the quarterback back [then]. He's still alive. ... He's very critical of the way things are going on football. Len Frank and Twitchell, Class of '35, heck, we couldn't even beat Princeton then.

KP: Did you go to the famous '38 game?

WB: Sure. I was there when we opened the stadium and beat Princeton, and my friend was the quarterback, Arthur Gottlieb. He died very young. He married, and my father got him a job with Westinghouse for a while, and then, he opened a camp, and he taught. He was very successful. The poor guy died in his thirties. I was close to football. Of course, my roommate was the quarterback. It got in my blood. Jack Anderson, who was a good friend of mine, he was the manager. You can't interview him, he's so sick. He lives across the street, in North Brunswick, from Frank. We had guys that didn't like football, like McCormick. [laughter] He thought, "What the heck? People are beating each other up and this place ought to be just academic." I argue with him, but, we're friends. …

KP: One of the things we have noticed, from reading old *Targums,* was how important football was to Rutgers undergraduates when you were here.

WB: ... Yeah. It isn't now and I'm mad about it. If they'd support the place, I think we'd do better. We've got a good soccer team. They lost a tough game. I know all the coaches.

KP: It seems like you loved sports while you were here.

WB: Yeah, well, I played for four years, and I ran the chains, then. We ... had freshman football then. ... After Len Frank graduated, he was the freshman [football] coach under Tasker. Do you remember the name Tasker? He was the coach then. He owed everybody in town money. Len and I went around collecting money to pay off his debts, if you want to know, ... and he got fired, because he just was a gambler. Tasker, we kept him here for a year by collecting money, and I used to run the freshman football. They couldn't afford anybody, you know, pros. ... I used to run the chains with another guy in the morning and the game would be in the afternoon. My answers are different than most?

KP: No, actually, they are not. Well, some are different.

WB: I feel sorry for Graber, bad luck so far. He's got no excuses. The quarterback had a rough day and the team slopped around out there. I think the freshman played better. ... The new kids played better than the guys that ought to know better. They ran the wrong routes. I know enough about it. It wasn't all the quarterback's fault, although he fumbled twice. Okay, you got a couple more?

KJ: While you were serving in the Army and you were allowed to go on liberty, what types of places did you go?

WB: Where did we go?

KJ: Where were you able to go for your time off?

WB: Liberty?

KP: When you were on leave.

WB: … I enlisted, as you know, in the Spring of 1942, I guess it was. ... The only liberty I had was after I was commissioned for about four days and I was out buying uniforms. I didn't have any free time. I spent my whole life overseas. I built up three months. Not liberty, they don't call it [liberty]. ...

KP: So, for example, you did not get to go into Rome for a weekend?

WB: I was in Rome on duty waiting to go to Southern France. ... I spent my whole career overseas or in school, and they didn't call that leave. That was the worst thing they could have done to us. There was a place over there, near the American embassy, I think, and they just called us on duty. You could go do what you want[ed] while you were waiting, but, they never [called it liberty]. ... I spent my entire career either on duty here and overseas. ... I had three months built up, ... leave, and then, I was writing the history of the unit. I did, but, then, I was really out of the service, and they paid me for those three months. I went to Florida to get some rest, and we left our daughter with my uncle down there, and we went over to Cuba. We were friendly with Cuba then. There was a beautiful hall, I remember. ... I never really had any leave. ... A few days after I got my commission, we were busy just buying uniforms, you know, and everything. You're going to be a second lieutenant.

KP: I have been told that was expensive for you.

WB: [laughter] I was broke by the time I left Washington. On a second lieutenant's pay, if you were married, and lived not on an army base, ... I was going into debt. I mean, in Arlington, Virginia, three lieutenants rented the place, I was one of them, second lieutenant, and you had to be dressed. You had to have plenty of uniforms. It was costing me at least a third more than I was earning. I made a lot of money being overseas for two years. I used to ship it home, because you couldn't spend anything on a ship. I'd get the money, as soon as I get to the GI post office, I'd send it home. That was the best thing I did. ...

KP: You never gambled?

WB: Where?

KP: With the other officers?

WB: The enlisted men did. On the ship coming home, there was a lot of gambling, but, I had a wife, a daughter, and I'm a conservative Republican. I don't know, I just thought I couldn't afford to lose anything. I didn't know, you know, I might be going out in the Pacific, and the war ended, and I was living in Brooklyn. No, I didn't have the chance really. I did save money. That's the only good thing about living overseas on a ship, where there was no gambling on the American ships. On the troop ships, I saw some big money, but, I watched. There was a lot of money lost, unbelievable. ... They thought nothing of three hundred, four hundred dollars [being lost] on the turn of a card. You know, these guys figure, "I'm alive still." I'm still pretty conservative. You can probably tell. ...

KP: What did you and your father think of Roosevelt in the 1930s?

WB: Before the war, the executives at Westinghouse, I'm not going to speak for myself, because I was in school in the thirties, when he was working. If it wasn't for the war, we were still in a lot of … debt. The utility executives, in my estimation, hated him. He was too liberal for them. They didn't like him. I had no opinion. I was in college, although, John George always said, "Well, we've got one good Republican." I guess I was influenced by my father, because there was so much legislation. … Westinghouse [executives] were of a different breed, but, I don't know whether I might be getting in trouble talking about this. I don't know.

KP: I doubt it.

WB: It's pretty long ago.

KP: Yeah. How did most students feel about Roosevelt, your classmates, at the time?

WB: Not too much opinion. When you went to college here, you went to school. I don't think they had too big an opinion. ... Most of the professors were much more conservative than John George. We were too busy trying to graduate. I don't think there was a lot of heated opinion like there is now, trying to run the university on their political thoughts. Now, I think you came here to get an education. These kids come in here, they think they're ready to run the college, and they haven't even been to school yet. I'm talking about everybody. I'm not talking about any color. I was brought up that you go there to learn, not to tell the people how to run it. It's a different era. I think they have too much to say and they shouldn't be on the Board of Governors. They haven't enough experience. … We cut class once to go down to Pennsylvania to see a football game. We played University of Penn before ... the Army came up here. We got in trouble just to cut class once. We were here to learn and not to tell anybody. ... We had Saturday classes. ... What else would I say? ... It was a church college, still. You went to chapel Tuesday and Sunday.

KP: You have been very active with Rutgers. What of Rutgers has stayed the same and what has changed?

WB: It's too damned big. I don't know how they run it. They've got a college in Newark, that used to be Newark College. They've got this thing down in South Jersey. I don't know how they can run a place that's got 4800 students. ... You know, I'm from an era where everybody knew everybody.

We had eight hundred people living here, all the classes. There were a lot of commuters that couldn't afford to be here. Yes, I've been active. I'm still active on the board. ... The past presidents, we're having a dinner next week in Winants to talk about what's going on. I think the board, … they know that there's lots of problems here, and this is nothing about the Army. ... Are you still a student here?

KJ: Yes.

WB: My opinion is that the students have too much to say, and they should be here to learn, and not tell them how to run the place. He made a very bad mistake when he discussed that thing and it came out that someone was out to get him. I'm not, as Bill Bauer would might say, … a great lover of the president, but, he's here under very difficult conditions, and I think, for the president, that he should stay on, because you can't let the inmates run the asylum. I call it the asylum. Has anybody else said that yet?

KP: Not yet. You are the first one to use the asylum analogy. Did the prosperity after World War II surprise you at all, having grown up during the Great Depression?

WB: The worst that this country [has seen]. ... In fact, there was some possibility that the whole thing was coming apart. The war, maybe, kept the country together. Now, this country, ... eighteen different people are fighting with each other about how to run it, how to manage it, give it back to the states, you know. ... Other than the war, this country is in very deep … trouble. I'm not on any side, but, I think that … Powell might be like Eisenhower. ... I hear a lot of people saying that they'll vote for him because they're fed up with the whole bunch. ... I'm Republican, but, ... I think some of their ideas are crazy, and the Democrats are quitting one by one. They ... might have been all right for a while, but, they became a club instead of [a party]. ... They wasted a lot of money, too. I mean, from an outsider [point of view], this country's in a lot of trouble. I don't know what you people think about it, but, I don't know whether, being in the college, you realize how much trouble we're in. I was hoping maybe Governor Kean would run. I have a lot of respect for him. I think he feels that he's better off in college. ...

KP: I am going to let Kathleen ask a few questions.

KJ: I have only one. He answered most of the other ones already.

KP: Well, I am sure you will have a few more things to add.

WB: You might want this. [It] is a dedication of the *Biscayne* people. You think you can run that all off? What else do you have? ... I thought you were his secretary. ...

KJ: Oh, no, I am just a student.

WB: Doesn't he have someone assigned with him to help him?

KJ: He's got some people in the class that are working with him. What lessons do you think that the United States learned from World War II?

WB: ... You better be prepared. I'm not sure that we're doing it now. … You know that the American embassy in Moscow was bombed? ... A grenade hit it today.

KJ: I did not hear that.

WB: Well, you'll hear the news tonight. Fortunately, unless you're strong, we had nothing when World War II started. This world itself is in a lot of trouble. ... Like Wilke said, we better stay strong. ... I hope things work out. I think, as you get older, you get a little more pessimistic. I also thought, sometimes, … that Rutgers would have been better off if it'd stayed a small college and let the state build its own big state university, because we were neither fish nor fowl for so long. We were a church college when I was here, but, ... we were the only ones that were a land-grant college, a private college, a state university, and almost like an ivy-league school. How can you be all four at once? ... I think that's part of the problem. Even now, we're not sure what we are. … A lot of people … still think we're an ivy-league school, out[side] of New Jersey, and they have a lot of respect for Rutgers, more than the people here do. I feel badly a lot of people use the university and don't give anything back. I don't mean everybody, but, you get a good education here. The Ag School, as I call them, I know the Dean over there. There's some great education at a very low cost, but, it's so big. How can you manage it? … I found out where this office in Van Dyke is from my son.

KJ: Oh, really?

WB: Cause this used to be tennis courts.

KJ: But, your son knew where it was?

WB: Nice clay courts. I still play in the Alumni tournament, occasionally, over on the new campus. I know Rosenwasser, ... the women's coach, well, but, I hope it works out.

KJ: Are the sports teams run differently now as well?

WB: Oh, sure. Then, we played in a different league. … I graduated the year they opened the [new] stadium. We used to play over here.

KJ: I was reading some articles about that in the *Targum*.

WB: In the little old field, and we used to sit there like we were at a high school game. Lou Gehrig once hit a homerun, that was also the football field, ... into the Raritan. No one else ever did. Well, maybe I'm wrong, but, I liked it. … Still, I'm active. I want it to work out. Don't you feel that it's a huge operation?

KJ: It is a huge operation.

WB: ... I guess Newark and Southern Jersey must be almost independent. I don't know how one guy could manage it all. He can be the president, but, it's too big.

KJ: The movies that were made depicting World War II, how accurate do you feel some of those were? Do you think that they were glorified?

WB: Which ones?

KJ: Well, how do you feel about the Caine Mutiny?

WB: The Caine?

KJ: The Caine Mutiny, with Humphrey Bogart?

WB: I don't have too much ...

KJ: Or, there was one that Ronald Reagan was in, This Is the Army?

WB: I think that the war movies, the ones I saw, were pretty good, and I think a lot of young people should see how horrible it is, and that's why we should stay strong.

KJ: Right.

WB: Clinton, he wanted to work internally, but, ... you know, he avoided the service once, too, and some of us don't forget, although I feel sorry for him. Here he is in a war over there in Yugoslavia. ... He better have good people under him, because it's going to be tough over there. Those people have been fighting for centuries, and I think that Russia might break off, and we're going to have trouble with them. ... This is nothing new. This happens every fifty years in Yugoslavia. How Tito held them together, I don't know. They may make a deal. I bet you, two or three years from now, they'll start up all over again. They just hate each other. Like, in Korea, we had a guy, of course, I don't know Korean, we had a couple interpreters, he said, "We're going to get up there and we're going to kill Uncle Charlie." That's his mother's brother or something like that. The hatred in the world, I don't think that people realize that it's still there. They're all Korean. In Yugoslavia, they're Yugoslavians. ... I think this place gives a great education. They have a new ranking. I get the magazine. The *US News and World Report* ranked all of the colleges this week. I don't know whether you saw it, ... I haven't seen it. We were ranked in the first ten in education for the cost last year. I heard we're eleventh or twelfth now. It costs more. People who can't afford it certainly wouldn't turn [to Rutgers]. ... We do more for the state than the state does for us. That's why I thought we were better off when we were little, but, we wouldn't be existing as a small college. We couldn't afford it, but, ... there are a lot of Rutgers people down there. ... They use us, but, they also abuse us. I don't think they do enough for [the college]. ... Now, the new administration [down in] Washington, they want to give a sum of money to the states and let the states hand it out. I don't know how it's going to work out. I don't know we'll get by. They want Medicare, which the older people [want]. I'm going to be eighty ... next August. It's going to be very costly for some people if

they do it. They want people that have an income of over X number of dollars not to have any support. Of course, Medicaid is for people that don't have anything, and, for a while, people were giving everything away to get on Medicaid. You're taking what? history? We had some great history professors. Hield was a great guy. He was here when George was here. It was different then. ... Saturday was just as important as Monday and Tuesday. We went to class every Saturday.

KP: Really?

WB: Now, the professors disappear by Friday afternoon, but, that's part of my criticism. They're being paid well. Some of the guys here are getting money you could paste on the wall and … they stayed and taught. ... I mean, Rutgers was broke then, Rutgers College. I understand the senior professors are making around a hundred thousand dollars here. He doesn't have to leave early. Maybe I'm talking about one?

KP: No, not quite yet. [laughter]

WB: I was saying, these guys are teaching, and they take off Friday afternoon. We had classes every Saturday. ... George was getting paper money that wasn't worth anything, but, … their heart was in teaching, and, now, I agreed with Sonny Werblin, who I also knew quite well. He died a few years back. ... My roommate, Scoppettone and Werblin, built the Meadowlands ... and he was wrong. These guys are making money and, yet, the senior professors, it would seem, they don't want to teach. They want to just do research. That's part of the problem. ... We didn't have any unions then.

KP: No, that has been a big change.

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WB: ... I get so enthused about ... this unusual unit. We went over as a provisional unit and became a regular unit. They made a number of them after they saw how well it worked. My critique was, if they used a joint code, they didn't have to put the Army aboard. They could've done it themselves. I'm happy I did it, but, there were a lot of crazy [times]. ... We didn't have a big military until World War II. I was just telling this young lady, whether the President believes that we need it or not, they're closing down a lot [of military bases]. ... We're liable to be at war with Russia, even though they're not [Communist]. ... Well, they lost the Cold War, but, somebody over there shot at our embassy this morning. They wanted ... part of the Serbs. ... The world is still a mess, and we may not like it that way, but, we better stay strong. That's my feeling. Look at Pearl Harbor. There was a guy on the beach who was sending back ... that had just got his commission. ... If Roosevelt and the rest of them had listened to him, they thought the kid was nuts, or, maybe, they did want it. They wanted to get into the war, but, they never expected that much damage. Have you been to Pearl Harbor?

KP: No, I have never been to Pearl Harbor.

WB: I've been there. It's sad. In fact, we played the University of Hawaii, and I stayed for a while. ... My roommate was a prominent accountant, and he and Werblin sold the A and B bonds that built the Meadowlands. That's why we play one game there a year. That was our agreement, ...

'cause the kids don't like to go up there, even the players. The ground is like this. In fact, Jack Anderson and I, ... we used to give out a trophy put up by another classmate of ours, Goodkind. Well, his son was in our class, very wealthy, and he put up a huge expensive trophy to the winner of the Rutgers-Columbia game. Of course, they quit playing us, so, we kept the trophy. It's still, I think, in the lobby over there. Are you interested in sports?

KP: Not as much as some people.

WB: Not like I am.

KP: No, but, I will be at the game on Saturday.

WB: I hope I can get there. ... I have to get a nurse to stay with my wife. ... It'll be a tough game. ... Graber thinks it could be another upset.

KP: My mother-in-law picked this game, so, she must have known something. She follows college sports very avidly.

WB: Let me find something that I can put all of this in. I had a big envelope when I came in.

KP: I do not think that should be a problem.

WB: I think I have a big one. ... Let's see who sent this envelope to me. Crew of the USS *Biscayne*, Peru, California. This has something to do with Rutgers, I think, the one that fell down, Tenth Annual Reunion. We're ten years incorporated, and this guy, Hein, is very active. He was a corporal in my outfit, ... a brilliant guy. "New Jersey and you, '92." The *Biscayne*, you could keep that as a remembrance that I was here, and we toured Rutgers, it was summertime. The Alumni Office set up a group, and I brought [them] around, but, I wasn't sure where Van Dyke was for a while. This used to be tennis courts, but, I get over here. I'll be here next Wednesday night, the past presidents of ... [the] Rutgers College Alumni Association. We fought with the big Alumni Association for a long time. We thought that we ought to run the whole thing. The other one was in Newark. ... I was their delegate for a while when Bill Hess left to do something here. I lasted there about two months, and they asked me to leave, and you probably can tell why. … I thought that we should run it from here. Well, it's, I guess, more peaceful now. Bill Bauer might have told you some of the same stuff.

KP: Yeah, he has told me quite a bit.

WB: He's on my side.

KP: Yeah, yeah.

WB: Bill and I are good friends. He'll be at the dinner next week. I'll tell him he told you too much.

KP: [laughter] He will get a kick out of that.

WB: ... You know, he retired, they gave him the final [parade]. He was a general. This was in LA this year, and this they sent me, ... even though I couldn't be there, on account of my wife. Ernie Pyle was quite a guy. It got too peaceful. He wanted to go ashore. That was given out this year and they sent it to me. ... This was a letter from Donovan, after we got out. He was hanging around with a Rutgers guy, Larry Doyle. ... There was only one funny thing he said there, "I swore off about fifteen years ago those kind of drinks, but, I'll have a couple on you." [laughter] … I wasn't that serious. I mean, I am this afternoon, but, I had some good times, too. Didn't have any leave, only after I got out. They, I think, paid us for the leave. I accrued three months. You heard, ... I had four or five days after I became a second lieutenant and I was back to work at Fort Monmouth, and Shirley, we have a son that went here. ... He wanted to get into a small ivy-league school, not Harvard. I took him all around. He thought that Harvard was too big, and Yale, Brown, and they said they'd put him on a waiting list, and here's a kid, …he was a Harry Rutgers, ...Henry, ...they have a special group?

KP: Henry Rutgers.

WB: In three years, he was a Phi Beta [Kappa]. He stayed here, and worked on his own, and then, he got a five-year scholarship to MIT. He was nothing like me. I had more fun. [laughter] I had good times here, and he was a real student. He could've gotten into a fraternity, went over and looked at it. … He said, "It's filthy." He lived in a dorm while he was here. Real student, you know, still. He's doing work for a woman up at Harvard, now, ... medical research. Alan E. Berger, Class of '68. … You know, it was small enough then, the senior class, we used to have a dinner that the Rutgers College Alumni Association introduc[ed] the RCAA graduates, and he got out, and I was up there, and the guy that became president of one of the big advertising companies was up there, Alex Kroll, a really entertaining guy, selling beer. He's well known. He's now head of the whole company, and I must have got up and said something, ... "I'm really interested in this class. I've got a son out there." He never told anybody that his father was the president of the Alumni Association, and he said, "You shouldn't have done that. I didn't want to be messed up with you." [laughter] … Gross was still here, I believe, in '68, but, it was fun. I guess what kept me here was my son going here. When Brown said to him, "You're on the waiting list," he says, "Well, I'm not waiting for anybody." It was good. He got a five-year scholarship and he got a good education here. Even in the sixties, it was more peaceful and, I think, quieter. You were here then?

KP: No, no, I did not come to Rutgers until 1983.

WB: I didn't know you were that young or I wouldn't have said some of those things. [laughter] You're getting bald early.

KP: [laughter] That is unfortunately the case.

WB: I had a lot of hair, until I wore a helmet for two years.

KJ: It was nice meeting you.

WB: I hope I didn't disillusion you with what I think of the undergraduates.

KP: No, no, do not worry.

WB: They're here to learn and not run the place. Of course, that's what the older people think. They have good ideas, but, they want to vote on the Board ... like they've graduated. It's not wrong. I think they should be attending, but, not voting in a place like that. ... I have your phone number and ... I could leave it here for a couple hours some day.

KP: Yeah. If you know that you are going to be here on campus for lunch or something, that would be the best thing.

WB: I'm going to be here for a dinner next Wednesday, but, that's at night. You don't work nights?

KP: Well, Thursday nights. I do work nights, actually.

WB: This is Wednesday. ...

KP: Yeah, Thursday nights I am here.

WB: I'm going to be going to the city next Tuesday. I'm going to be over at Dr. Reitman's. I had an aortic valve put in ... nineteen years ago in Houston, and I get it checked out about every six months. I will be here Tuesday. … Three forty-five's the appointment. I could leave it here earlier and pick it up.

KP: That would be great. If that works out, just let us know. Great.

WB: Good luck.

KJ: Thank you.

KP: Thank you very much.

WB: Did I leave anything here with all of this?

KP: If we see anything, we will mail it back to you.

WB: Oh, here it is. I have a good memory for my age. I have a hat. I thought it was going to rain, so, I brought a hat. I hope you have some more interesting ones. ...

KP: No, this was very interesting.

WB: If you see Bill Bauer, tell him I was here.

KP: I will.

WB: I'll see him Tuesday, no, Wednesday at the dinner.

KP: Well, say hello from us.

WB: He was the president of the Alumni Association before me, then Travisano, and myself. I don't know how influential we are any more, not with you young people. Okay.

KP: Thank you very much.

WB: I got free parking out of it.

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

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