RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEWIS M. BLOOM

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
JUNE 21, 1994

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Lewis M. Bloom, Class of 1942 on June 21, 1994 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. . ... I guess I want to start out the interviewing with some questions about your parents. Before getting into your father's military service in western Pennsylvania, which I thought was the most striking thing you told me. I want to first ask why your parents came to the United States.

Lewis Bloom: Well, I really understood why my father came when I visited his village this last October. I was in Belarus. It's now Belarus, the contested area and in my father's time, 1910, was the province of Lithuania in Czarist Russia. My father was a very intelligent man. He wanted to be an engineer. He was in his late teens. He was Jewish. And the local authorities resisted his going beyond Gymnasium. He had gone through Gymnasium. He was very adept in mathematics. And my grandfather had done everything including bribing some local officials on a number of occasions to get him accepted to some ... engineering institute within the confines of czarist Russia. It fell through. And he wasn't getting anywhere, and ... the only thing he could do was apprentice out as a tailor. Now that's about the only thing he was permiteed to do as a Jew, and he did for awhile, still trying to get into one of these schools. Then he was told that he had to serve in the Czar's army and Jews were very heavily persecuted in that area. He certainly received no favors from the Czarist regime. His education was denied him, and he had no desire to serve. So I don't have the details, but there were techniques through which these people, people like him, could leave. He had a very close friend in the same situation, and he upped and left.

KP: Was your family a victim of any of the pogroms?

LB: Not a victim of the pogroms. ... Not in this area. In the area it was known then as the Lithuanian portion of Czarist Russia, it is now actually part of Belarus. But Jews could go so far and no further. They couldn't own extensive lands, they couldn't do, they couldn't get involved in real estate beyond owning a small plot. They were essentially artisans and merchants and no one could do anything else. You weren't allowed to. So that was ... the rationale for his decision.

KP: When your father came to the United States, why did he enlist so quickly in the Army?

LB: Well, he came to a great aunt. She sponsored him. He came off the boat ... from Ellis Island to Battery Park. It's a very famous place, then called "Castle Garden." And they had to walk from there to the subway or to the elevated. His aunt lived in Brooklyn, right across the bridge, and he went with her. Her husband was a butcher, a wholesale butcher. He didn't have a butcher shop. They lived in a large brownstone, about three or four stories high, and the first floor was devoted entirely to a refrigerated area for meats. My father was put into the refrigerator the first thing the next morning to go to work and to handle these carcasses. He lived up in an attic, and at the end of the week, after the Sabbath services, he asked if he could get paid because he wanted to visit some of his (Landsleit?), his, you know, people who came from his area in Europe. His aunt's husband told him that a greenhorn like him does not deserve any pay, he's teaching him a trade, he bought him a pair pants and a shirt, and therefore he should dispel any ideas of getting paid for quite a while until he earns it. Well, my father was a very independent person who could fend for himself. At four o'clock the next morning he packed up,

he had a marvelous sense of direction, and he walked across the bridge and made his way to Whitehall Street. The thing that impressed him when he got off the boat, was, as he was walking down Whitehall Street to the elevated, were these vertical signs "Join the Army and See the World," in many, many languages. And now he spoke ... many languages. He spoke Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Yiddish, and Hebrew, and German. ... He also saw a sign in Yiddish. Well, that was the first indication that anybody treated Jews on an equal basis, so he figured that well, hell, this thing must be interesting. He was [a] very adventuresome young man. He walked in, he knew nobody else, he walked in and he ... enlisted. His name was Max Abraham Berezowsky. They put him ... in a reception station on Governors Island. After a week there, he complained to the first sergeant that his name wasn't being called at first call in the morning, or even at reveille in the morning. They found out that the Irish sergeant who had enlisted him couldn't spell his name so the first thing he could think of was Bloom, so he put down Bloom, and that remained with the family ever since.

KP: And when he went to enlist in the Army where was he sent? Do you know where he did his service?

LB: Well, he did a number of [things]. ... I don't know the sort of day to day, or month to month specifics, but he eventually, I presume, after what we know as basic training, he was assigned to the ... 29th Infantry Regiment that had just come back from the Philippines a year or so before. They were involved in policing prisoners on Governors Island. They ... also went up to Fort Slocum, New York and received training as horse infantry, that is, they rode horses ... and came to a certain point, ... they got off the horses and went on, theoretically, to fight as infantry. Now how much they did that I'm not all together sure, but eventually he was sent down, as the tale as it cames to me, to a place called Mount Gretna in Pennsylvania. I have no idea where Mount Gretna is. They started a series of maneuvers that took them to Fort Niagara, at Niagara Falls. ... Now whether it occurred going through Pennsylvania [or] when they got up to Fort Niagara, he often spoke of some Indian hostilities that existed and occasional scraps that they had, that is the 29th Infantry had with the Indians. To what degree that's in history today, I'm not all together sure because these things have a way of getting lost. It was not, certainly not, a major thing. This occurred in 1911, twelve years after the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1899. The national attitude towards Indians and the attitude of Indians towards the white men was certainly a little different then they are today, so there must have been some hostility.

KP: No, that was surprising when you first told me the story several weeks earlier. Almost everything I could sort of place somewhere, but when you started talking about how your father had been sent out to fight Indians in western Pennsylvania that was something I had never heard anything about.

LB: Well, it wasn't going out to fight Indians in the same sense that they did out in the West. ... We recently, within the last year and a half, or two years, we had along the Canadian border there was hostility between the Mohawks and the local residents, and that's been going on really for a long time. And I would imagine that at that day it was much more pronounced than it is now.

KP: Why did your father leave the Army?

LB: He left the Army because on one of his leaves he met my mother. He only left the Army some months before his enlistment was up, about six months before, and he wanted to marry her, and ... there was some provision for buying out--and of course my mother felt the same way. You could buy yourself out of the Army for a 100 dollars, something like that, and this was 1913 or 1914, I'm not altogether sure, I'd have to check my records at home. And there were other people doing the same thing. I think also the regiment had some other assignment, and it was a propitious time for him to get out if he wanted to get married.

KP: Had your father been drafted in World War I or ...?

LB: No, my father went to volunteer, but I was already born. I was born in 1917, and we got into the war in 1918. In fact, my father used to tell the story about trying to contact members of his own regiment. He felt very strong, a strong attachment to the people there. ... That lasted for many, many years. We would meet many of those people. But at that time he was advised that since he was married and had a child that they were very, very reluctant to take people like that on.

KP: When you say he remained in contact with his regiment, what was the Regiment like, what groups, nationalities ...?

LB: Oh, they were everything, absolutely everything. There were Jews. There were quite a number of Jews in there. A lot of people don't realize that. In fact, I have pictures home of about a half dozen of them in his company, ... yeah, in his company. But they had everything. They had Germans, Poles, Russians, English and Irish. The Army, at that time, was probably smaller than some national police forces. I don't think the Army was over a 120,000 men at that time. And it was ... literally a repository of all sorts of nationals who had come to the United States. Very few of them could speak English. And, incidentally, he ... had a high school equivalency or something, it wasn't exactly that. But he learned English ... and various other things ... while he was in the service.

KP: Tell me something about your mother.

LB: Well, my mother came from a ... village in the same area that my father came from, it's about 30 kilometers away. I visited that--it wasn't a village, it's a town. It's a town about 20,000 people. A very famous town during the Second World War, the town of Volkovysk because it's on the Nieman River, and it's the traditional path into Russia, the same one Napoleon took into Russia. So they took a horrible beating when the Nazi Panzers came through. She came from that village. Her father was an ordained rabbi, who did not practice his rabbinic office because he felt that the recompense was too pitiful. ... It wasn't recompense in money. It was recompense in kind, in food and clothes. And he also was very talented. He was a scholar, but also a very talented man. ... To make a living he did everything from bakery to building houses. ... They decided to leave for the same reason millions of others decided to leave. It was a dead end, certainly for Jews it was a dead end. And it ... was a dead end for people other than Jews. I mean, they just couldn't get anywhere in those countries. Visiting ... that area this last October

and speaking to a lot of the people I can understand. ... You know, if you have any strong feelings about expression, education, and so on and so forth. If your not a passive person, this is no place for you.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your family?

LB: Well, in many ways it did not affect us as badly as other people. My father, through a ... series of events, economic events, ended up as a manufacturer of women's apparel in New York. He had a partnership with two other people. He was a production specialist. Production was his forte, and he literally could build and develop a plan from scratch and train people and so on. And he was [a] partner with a finance man and a man who was very knowledgeable in sales and marketing. They weathered most of the Depression. However, I'm not altogether sure what the reasons were, but sometime in the midst of the Depression, I think it was about ... 1930, '31 when they decided to break up. ... I think the two partners wanted to retire and do other things. They'd made a fair amount of money, and my father retired for a short period of time. He was too young to do nothing, and he went into a number [of] ventures. One of which was in New Brunswick, and that's what brought us to New Brunswick, and it was a successful venture, but unfortunately my father had a very serious heart attack. And he was out of action for a period of about two years. He couldn't do anything. Heart attacks then were not the thing that they are today. I mean you were really incapable of doing anything medically for a considerable number of time. And during that course my mother got seriously ill with some kidney problem and my sister, who had injured herself when she was very, very young, and a latent disease that was beginning to develop, and ... all this began to drain his resources. There was no such thing as medical insurance. It didn't exist. No one ever heard of it. ... Although when he was able to work, he made a good living on a comparative basis. ... We didn't starve, but it was very, very rough. Principally, I mean, there were times when we were in debt for a long, long time. And he eventually paid that off. His skills, as a production man, always were such that people could find use for him and pay him a good living wage. But his heart condition was such that he couldn't undertake going into ... a risky business anymore. So that's how the Depression affected us. Of course, it affected me in another way, because I was right in the midst of this and I could never get ... the money that I made ... in the summertime always seemed to end up in helping out the family for some medical problem.

KP: You were a waiter. Where were you a waiter at?

LB: Oh, I was a waiter at Camp Tamiment in Pennsylvania and at Grossingers in New York and at a place called Sharon Springs, New York, called the Hotel Adler. But prior to that, I tried to get summer jobs when, I think, I'm not sure just what the years were, but I ended up going three years to something called the Citizens Military Training Camp. I seriously looked towards the military as a career and took the West Point examinations but, unfortunately, when I took my physical they found out I had a certain form of color blindness. ... I forget whether I was a third alternate or fourth alternate, whatever it was. ... The first time that I took the examination I was told that I could never get in because of my eyesight. And it was my color blindness. But I attended the Citizens Military Training Camps, which were established by Theodore Roosevelt right after the First World War to train citizen soldiers. ... After four years you could get a

commission. I'd completed three years, but in the fourth year I made enough money to go ... to Rutgers, and I think it was Rutgers. ... No, it was Middlesex Junior College in preparation for going to Rutgers, so I couldn't take on the fourth year then.

KP: When you said you were interested in military career, was this a result of your father's experiences or ...?

LB: It was, well, number one, I ... think that had a sort of peripheral effect. It was ... something I wasn't afraid of because it ... was often spoken about in the family, and there were his friends, who I saw in the military. These seemed to be very, very fine people. But I hate to compare, ... I don't want to compare myself to Dwight Eisenhower, ... but ... there were a good many professional military men who got in the services in those days ... who got in because they couldn't afford to go to college. And that was one of my reasons, ... I wanted to be an engineer. That's a Rutgers tale, I was talked out of engineering. I started in engineering here, but ...

KP: That's very common. Pershing, in fact, went to West Point because he wanted to be a lawyer ...

LB: Exactly. Exactly. See, so, the only place I could think of getting a damn good education and having been through ... CMTC, was to take a crack at West Point, and ... I did. I did very, very little preparation for it, and I think I came in third or fourth or something like that. And I figured I would take ... another crack at it the next year, but I took this physical and that fizzled my chances.

KP: West Point ... Did you stay in ROTC for the full four years?

LB: No. I didn't stay in ROTC. I came here, and the ROTC people were very kind. They knew about my, I told them about my CMTC background. ... I saw the texts and the outline of the course, and to me it was so elementary, that in discussing it with my ROTC instructor, they gave me constructive credit for the first year. And since we had to take two years of ROTC, ... I immediately went into the second year class. And I don't think I ever did my homework or anything, and I was able to pass the course with a C or B or something like that. ... The reason I couldn't go into advanced ROTC, was because I was working. I worked seven days a week while I was at Rutgers. I worked, ... I got 35 cents an hour working in the Economics department as an assistant to ... Dr. Max Gideonse. And then the personnel office of Rutgers would get me all kinds jobs, from mowing lawns, to working in the library, all sorts of odd things. And then I had jobs outside. I worked for many of the stores in New Brunswick, for the Bond Stores factory, ... for the WPA, and so ... to take advanced ROTC you had to go to summer camp, and I had to work in the summer. That was the mainstay of my financial needs.

KP: Which WPA project did you work on?

LB: Oh, I don't remember. I worked on highways.

KP: Oh, okay.

LB: They would call me, snow removal, I don't know.

KP: Did you ever get a NYA job?

LB: Oh, yeah. The NYA, the assistantship to Dr. Max Gideonse was NYA, and I compiled statistics on balance of trade for him, you know, for some of the research that he was doing. It was very interesting. Very interesting.

KP: You mentioned that he was your favorite professor.

LB: He was my favorite. He, Arthur F. Burns and a man by the name of Jay Wilner Sundelson who taught Economic Resources and one or two other courses at Rutgers. I liked Dr. Eugene Agger. In fact, I liked him a great deal, but I only took one course with him and that was in money and banking. Although later, ... he chose me as undergraduate assistant in the Economics Department.

KP: Why did you come to Rutgers?

LB: Well, I lived nearby, and I couldn't afford to go elsewhere. In fact, Rutgers, believe it or not, helped me try to get scholarships at other schools. And Dean Walter Taylor Marvin arranged, personally arranged, that I visit--the schools that I remember were Randolph Macon, Wake Forest, one or two other schools down South. And I literally hitchhiked. I drove down to Philadelphia, took a bus to Philadelphia, and then hitchhiked ... down into South Carolina and came back and saw the south as it was.

KP: You mentioned that on the group interview. What surprised you about the south?

LB: Well, it was, it ... looked like the country that existed after Sherman marched through it. It was a mess. There was unbelievable erosion, land erosion. That's the thing that really shocked me. And to this day it's made a great impression on me because I kept going back to the south during the war. I trained at Fort Meade, Maryland and then I trained at Camp Davis, North Carolina, right on the coast, and I saw what the Civilian Conservation Corps did planting trees in those areas. And it just profoundly changed the topography of the land and the character of the land. It brought life back into the land. And, of course, when I went down there the poverty was ... was knee thick. The way blacks were treated were, you know, it was obviously, obviously horrible. Well I saw that in the CMTCs, too, and I was shocked by that.

KP: When you say you saw it in the CMTCs, what did you see?

LB: Well, we were, the first year at CMTC we were at Camp Dix, and that was the basic infantry course. I was subsequently assigned to Coast Artillery at Fort Hancock, New Jersey. I never saw any blacks there. But at CMTC, remember this was an old army. It was a horse and mule army, and the Army really ... couldn't afford very many trucks in those days. So the horses and mules did the dirty work, the quartermaster, the logistical work, was generally performed by blacks.

We had an open air theater, the Fort Dix or Camp Dix as it was known, was just a remnant of the First World War, so the buildings were ... really in a mess. There was no such thing as a theater. We had this outdoor movie and the first row, I can still visualize it, consisted of officers, the second row consisted of non-commissioned officers, and then the rest of ... the theater, this open air theater, was where the privates, and privates first class personnel sat. However, way in the rear, in the wings, and blocked off by a fence, which was about chest high, that's where the blacks sat. They were not allowed to sit even with the enlisted personnel, and that included the non-commissioned officers. I saw, I mean, ... a black commissioned officer was a no-no, as far as I was concerned. I never saw any, I don't know ... if any enlisted non-coms ...existed. I know, Benjamin Davis had gone to West Point, but I don't know time wise ...

KP: ... He was one of three ... I think.

LB: Exactly ... Right ... And the way they were herded around the place, and the things that they did, and the warnings you got about staying away from them, and so on, always made a very profound impression on me. And of course, I saw a lot of that in the service when I got in during the Second war.

KP: In terms of the service what were your experiences? Were they similarly ...

LB: Well, they certainly were not, there were ... no blacks in my Officers Candidate School in artillery, that is coastal and anti-aircraft artillery. And blacks did not mix in combat outfits. They were in quartermaster. They were in certain transportation units. A new branch of service was formed called the transportation corps. I saw them there, and occasionally in signal corps units where they laid wire. ... Oh yes, they had them in anti-tank units. I remember those. I never saw them in tanks. I know that they existed, but I did run across anti-tank units. However, after the Bulge, when our 200 man companies were down to 40 and 50 men, and we began to get a tremendous infusion of all sorts of personnel, and I guess ... it was President Truman, at that time. I wasn't in the states, so I wasn't aware of whatever orders that he gave to include them, but we began to get some blacks, a very small proportion of blacks, into the infantry forward lines. And also a lot of prisoners from U.S. Army prisoner camps in North Africa and other places. Some of them, terrible ones, and the one I told you about, who we had up for a Congressional Medal of Honor and found out that he was a ... murderer, a congenital murderer. He had raped and murdered his way through the service and that's what he enjoyed. He enjoyed killing people. So they pulled him out because ... they were afraid that there'd be a public relations disaster if he got the Congressional Medal of Honor. But African Americans began to infiltrate the ground units, however, I didn't see any officers. I never saw any officers, nor did I see non-coms. And I mean all sorts of prognostications about how units were going to crack-up and fold because they had blacks, they wouldn't work with them and so--that was all nonsense. In the first place they were as good as anybody else, and sometimes they were better, strong, physically, and they picked up the cudgel, so to speak, the challenge, and once they got in and they ... began to function, strangely enough, it happened so fast that no one made a fuss over it.

KP: Did your unit have any black soldiers placed in it?

LB: No, we had no black soldiers.

KP: Your division?

LB: No. Well, I was with two divisions.

KP: Yeah, I know, the 28th and the 100th.

LB: The 28th and the 100th. Right.

KP: Sort of coming back home for a bit, you did not live on campus?

LB: No, I didn't. I lived in Highland Park.

KP: And walked over.

LB: Walked over, brown bagged it, or went in and had a sandwich somewhere nearby. ... We had a few little places on Somerset Street where a group of us would eat and then went back, had dinner, and then came back again and worked in the library. No, that's ... what it was. Remember Rutgers was a tiny, tiny little school and if you didn't know ... everybody, you could recognize a face at least. ... It was a totally different school. Dean Metzger, somehow or another, knew everybody's grades and whether or not anybody had done anything, good or bad. And you'd walk down College Avenue from Van Nest up to Bishops and or the gym and if he'd be walking along, he was always coming and going, he'd stop you and, you know, and say, "Hey, I hear you got a good grade in economics" or "How you'd do in math, on that math examination." He was strict, but he was very fair. And I don't know, the ... administration at that time was a different breed of animal. But I loved them. They were very good to me, very kind to me because I was having a rough time and ...

KP: Did they help ... arrange a loan for you?

LB: Yeah, sure.

KP: ... Odd Fellows, I saw ...

LB: Well, no, the Odd Fellows loan came through my father. ... Dr. Marvin was a member of the Odd Fellows. He was, I think, the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. I don't think he had any role in that. My father who was active in Odd Fellows was able to arrange it. But the school was kind and gave me additional funds, which I paid back, maybe about 1949 or 1950. And I still have a beautiful letter that I received from the Treasurer of the University after I paid back the loan, wishing me well and, you know, so on and so forth. But I couldn't have made it without, not ... only the money, but ... they gave me a sense of encouragement. The school was so small that I knew they knew whatever plights I went through, I had. And you could sense the empathy. They were almost as ... they were a part of a family. And it was a warmth that I appreciated a great deal.

KP: You mentioned there were divisions at Rutgers. You provided about the most unsentimental view of some of the divisions at Rutgers. What were some of the divisions, say, within the student body, your fellow classmates? I know the classes were very separate entities, and there was a great deal of class pride.

LB: There certainly was a cohesion. There was a feeling of you being part of Rutgers and Rutgers being a very special place. But within that, like any human organizational structure, things existed, and number one, there were ethnic differences. The children who were ... of Jewish extraction were, in almost in all cases first generation, ... first generation Jews. And the first thing we had to buck up against was going to Sunday chapel. Chapel was required. Now the University ... tried to make, I know that they made a conscious effort ... in having the chapel service non-denominational. But you're talking about a first generation child. A young man whose parents looked upon anything other than a Jewish institution, in not a favorable light, because they had been discriminated against, strongly. So the thought of going to anything that even looked like a chapel was ... antipathy to many of the parents. A lot of these kids tried to get out of it. I, nor my family, although we came from very orthodox background, my grandfather was a rabbi, and my other grandfather was a very, very orthodox gentleman, we were more adventuresome. ... I like the architecture. I have an eye for that sort of thing, and it was interesting to me. The interior was interesting, but more than anything, I loved the music. I loved the Bach. I loved the Handel. I loved ... the little sermons that were given, not necessarily by members of any religion, but they would have a senator, the state senator, the congressman, the mayor, I don't remember whether the mayor was there, but people of note would come and speak. ... It was good for me because it got me down to the school at nine o'clock in the morning, and I went through it and then when the library opened, the library would open I think at one or two o'clock, and I'd ... walk home quickly, have a bite, come right down again with my books. Sometimes even eat locally, and I could study, so I didn't sleep late. It was a good discipline, but more than anything, I liked the music. And I was one of only a very few Jewish students who did not ask for permission to ... not go.

KP: Now could you get permission not to go?

LB: Yes. Yes. You had to have valid permission, a letter from your rabbi, your parents and so on. But I went. Now, the other divisions, ... there were the fraternity people who were no different than they are today. Generally they came from affluent families, and the greater majority of us had problems, economic. And you'd see these kids riding down in Fords, or better than Fords, Model As, or what have you, and it ... sort of scratched your back, you know, ... it turned you off. Also, they weren't that serious about studies. Then you had the jocks. No different, ... I guess than, you found in many places, yet interestingly ... enough there was always a high proportion of athletes who were excellent scholars.

KP: Well, ...I read in the yearbook that you had boxed in ...

LB: Yeah. I boxed. I had boxed at high school. And I played baseball at high school, junior varsity, but then New Brunswick didn't have enough money to send ... the team anywhere, to get

us uniforms or equipment, so they dropped J.V. And there was something called the Neighborhood House, I forgot the street it's on, in New Brunswick. And Frankie Redd, who was well known in this area as a professional boxer, was the coach, and I used to box for them. I'd get my head knocked off most of the time. And then I used to, believe it or not, I used to swim for the YMCA in town. I belonged. I never paid full dues, but that's another story. And I did ... my workouts there. And I liked to run. And when I got to Rutgers I had to find a sport. I wanted to do something because I was inclined to do something. I couldn't get into 150 pound football. I couldn't get in because you had to play Saturdays, you see, and I worked Saturdays. Now intercollegiate, interscholastic boxing seemed to offer the best possibility. One, I'd done it before, and secondly, a lot of the bouts were during the week. ... Although ... I was called into box a couple of intercollegiate bouts, I don't remember, not too many, that was it. That was it. To get back, I want to get back to the other thing that we had one black in each class. And in each instance that black young man was the son of a ...

KP: A minister?

LB: A minister. And then we had one paraplegic in each class ...

KP: Any reason you think ... why the one in one in each class or ...?

LB: I leave that to other people's judgment. No one, I mean, I never sat in at meetings when they said, you know, we'll have one black or one paraplegic or two or three. I don't know, maybe there were two, but I never saw more than one, and there was always one in each class, see, freshman and junior and senior. And how that decision was made, I don't know.

KP: Did you know the black student in your class?

LB: Yeah, I did. He was very bright. I don't remember his name. I don't remember. I'll have to go back to ... the yearbook, but he was a very bright young man, a very fine young man, and I have no idea what he did, you know, subsequent to graduation.

KP: My impression from reading the yearbooks and reading through some of other documents that a lot of students were mainly concerned with getting through school, financially ...

LB: Yeah, sure.

KP: And the work.

LB: A big problem.

KP: In terms of the politics of it, you had mentioned at the group interview that there were in fact some Communists. There were some ...

LB: Oh, yes. We had ...Trotskyites on the campus. See, I was in economics. So they ... sort of collected around, you know, economics, history, political science. And they were fun guys, you

know. You'd horse around, you'd tease them a great deal, but the kind of harshness that sometimes you see on other campuses did not exist. There were a lot of people who looked down upon them and the fact of the matter is, I think they were rather ridiculous. They were very highly opinionated, totally closed to any kind of arguments. They were not liberal in any sense. Not liberal, in any sense. And the few that I knew, their backgrounds suggested it. They came from families with very strong pro-Communistic, you know, be it Stalinists, or Trotskyite, background. But the issue amongst themselves, that is whether one was a Stalinist or a Trotskyite, was very, very strong. Something that I met even after the war when I went to Columbia Law School, these people turned me off. ... The minutiae that they would get into and their arguments, totally irrelevant to me, and their whole, you know, way of life and outlook was so foreign to me that I couldn't understand them. But they were tolerated, you know. They were, you know, a little fly, a pesky little fly on the campus, but they weren't really that meaningful.

KP: Why do you think they were not as meaningful as say City College, which had a real strong left?

LB: ... Let me tell you something about it. I knew a lot of people from City College. ... In the first place the students that went to City College were really intellectually a cut above most University. It was very unique. It's not like it is now. A lot of those ... people's backgrounds were Eastern European. You must understand that amongst the Eastern Europeans, be they Jews or otherwise, you can't lump them all into one political batch. A lot of, most of them, if they lent themselves to any political flavor so to speak, would say they're socialists, you see. And in those days, in many people's minds the distinction between a socialist, and they weren't really socialists, they were in the European sense, social democrats. They were more social democrats than anything else and that was being duplicated in their experience in the United States. They had to be what they were back in Europe for all the reasons that chased them out of Europe, but when they ... came here in this open society, both political and economic, and many of these people began to make a good living, go into business and so on, their outlooks changed a great deal. So the majority of students at a place like City College I would put in that category. Now how can I speak like that? In addition to many friends that I had, through family and family friends, the first place I got a job in, I had no idea what it was. It was a place that advertised itself as the Rand School, in New York, off 14th Street. And they were the social democratic base in the United States. Now what the school teaches, I'm not altogether sure. I never saw their ... catalogues or what have you, but it was a social democratic school. Now those people ... raised the capital to build this Camp Tamiment in Pennsylvania, Tamiment, Pennsylvania. And it became a place where liberal social democrats, and also liberal Democrats, Eleanor Roosevelt would speak there, [and] many, many other people. ... A lot of those people were City College graduates, see, so it ... became a sort of shibboleth. City College Communists, ... I've never saw a Communist from City College, and I've seen literally many, many, many people from City College, and their background was social ...

KP: Social democrats.

LB: Social democrat kind of background. Yet, I'm sure that they had Communists. And maybe in a numerical sense more than most other people but, percentage wise, most people wanted to get an education and get on with living in the United States.

KP: The reason that I partly bring that up is I know someone ... who went to City College, and he remembers very distinctly that there were very stark divisions ...

LB: Oh, sure.

KP: ... in terms of political divisions, but he also remembers one of the divisions was that he didn't like wearing his ROTC uniform because there were a number of pacifist groups ... who would berate him for wearing his ...

LB: Oh, yeah, right. Well, we had a couple of guys here. We had it in a lot of places. When I went to Columbia Law School they had that too, after the war. They had Communists. They had pacifists. They had all sorts of things. I guess you find that, especially in an area like New York City.

KP: Is there anything I forgot to ask about Rutgers or that ...?

LB: I don't know, it ...

KP: That I'm missing in terms of interest ...

LB: Well, the only thing is, I started out as an engineer, and I walked out of the classes because we ... had a emergency in the family. ... Besides that, Dean Marvin had spoken to my father, in my presence, and told me very candidly, right on the campus, in front of my father, he said, "Max, don't let your son take engineering because Jewish boys were not hired in the field of engineering, and you are wasting your time." There ... weren't enough jobs for non-Jewish boys ... in it, and I forgot, ... I don't remember how many students they would graduate, but out of the number of students only a very few actually ended up in the field of engineering.

KP: Because there just weren't enough jobs?

LB: There weren't enough jobs and, of course, if you were Jewish you had absolutely no chance. He said, "He's going to end up selling insurance." I remember that very clearly. He says, "Or becoming a salesman or whatever." He says, "But the chances for him becoming an engineer of ... succeeding as an engineer, are minimal." And that plus, we had two or three crises in the family, and I just walked out one day. And I said, "I have to give this, you know, ... I have to go to work again." And yet, ... I have a certificate in engineering from Middlesex Junior College. I was first, the first year, and I came in second, the second year. And the guy I came in second to, went to West Point, and he beat me by about a fraction in terms of grade averages. But ... things change. You know, as soon as the war broke out, they needed engineers. They didn't care whether you ... what the color of your skin was or what the background was, they just needed.

KP: When did you think war was going to be inevitable between the United States and Germany ...

LB: I didn't ...

KP: ... And Japan?

LB: I didn't, I just didn't. None of us, I don't think there were many Americans, at least those that I knew, who were that sophisticated. Nor were the newspapers providing us with the kind of warnings that existed. [The] situation in Europe was a mixed bag. A lot of people forget. I sat at that meeting that time, and I listened to the guys, and I said to myself, "My god, they don't remember anything." I mean, there were the America-firsters. And it was led by Mr. ... Lindbergh, Colonel Lindbergh, and by a lot of very fine people in the United States. I'm just trying to remember some of the ... other people, but I not sure whether Taft's were a part of it. Yeah, I think they were. And a great number of really fine Americans ... who said, "Let's not get involved, you know, let's concern ourselves with our problems--and besides, you know, the trains are running on time in Italy, and Mr. Hitler is ... just a temporary thing. You know good German common sense will bring back things." And the situation in England was such that, there was--what was her name? Vicountess, I think, Astor, and ... what's that group? I forgot the name of the group, that ...

KP: The Mosely's Black Shirt?

LB: Yeah, the Mosely Black Shirt. But there was this group of aristocrats [in] ... which Mrs. Astor was a very important factor, that tried to bring about a rapprochement between the Germans and the ... Cliveden set and so on and so forth. And then the thing, the situation in France, the ...

----------End of Side One, Tape One----------

LB: ... the attitude of Americans. Europe was in a mess, there's no question about it, and I think ... if I'm a measure of attitudes, my first inkling that this thing is bigger than it seems is when Roosevelt establishes lend lease ... and gave ... Great Britain a number of destroyers to protect themselves from submarines. I felt that that could possibly lead into war. But as far as the Japanese thing was concerned, I was quite knowledgeable about what went on in China, Manchuria, the establishment, the re-establishment of the Manchu dynasty in Manchuria, the attack on the various cities in China, and so on. But the distances [involved]. I, also as an economics major, was aware of the internal economic needs, especially in natural resources, we studied that. The need of the Japanese for oil and timber and natural resources of all kinds which they did not have, and it was quite obvious that their movements in the South Pacific ... were to obtain many of these things. ... And ... they were a war machine, there is no question about that. However, this business about Pearl Harbor was a shock. I was in the library when Howard Crosby came over to me to tell me that there was a report on the radio that Pearl Harbor was attacked. No one even knew where Pearl Harbor was. And Howard, myself, and a couple of other guys ran out. I had my father's car, and we had a radio in it, and we turned it on, and we

listened to it. Well, this was on a Sunday. Monday morning we were already asking where the recruiting offices were. And within a week or two, I don't remember exactly, they were on campus. And we all made our rounds. ... I volunteered and many, many other people. But I was Dean's List, and I was advised that being on Dean's List, I could stay on until graduation ... and so on and so forth.

KP: What service did most people want to join?

LB: I don't think ...

KP: ... Was there a ...

LB: No, people ...

KP: ... a move to the Air ... Corps or the Navy?

LB: ... Yeah. It depends. The first people on the campus .... I can't tell for sure. My personal recollection is that the first people on campus was the Navy and maybe Marines. And I tried to get into flying, but again my eyes, canceled me out. And they ... wouldn't take me in anything because of my eyesight. And the fact of the matter is that another classmate-- ... he wasn't in my class or was he? Yeah, he was. Elliot Katz and I, Elliot came from Long Branch, we actually started at Monmouth Beach, and we worked our way down along the coast to see if we ... could enlist in the Navy, especially in the Navy flying programs. Navy, Coast Guard, and so on, but none of those places would take us in. I had taken chemistry and physics in junior college, and my physics lab was one hour less than given at Rutgers. And I applied eventually and was accepted by the Army Air Corps for an engineering program. Because I had a certificate in engineering, and at Rutgers I had taken math courses and that impressed the ... recruiter. ... However, I was one hour short for physics lab, so it was arranged that I took ... an oral, I think, by the chairman of the physics department. I took the oral and passed it with flying colors, and I received a waiver, and I was put into something call the Queen's Flight, so immediately upon grad[uation], or the Queen's Squadron, I've forgotten, but immediately on graduation I was to be, I was to get my orders to go to an engineering school for the Air Force, someplace in Colorado. And I did. And I packed up. I had to go to Newark, and I kissed my mother, my father, my sister and my girlfriend. They had a party for me. And I left the next morning. I got to Newark, got on a train, and some young ROTC second lieutenant, was sitting on the train. I was sitting on the train, and he went through all our papers, and he found this waiver, from a full colonel, for this one hour lab difference, and he insisted that the waiver was not valid. And he threw me off the train. So ... he literally threw me off, I didn't want to leave. He ... was going to get the MPs to throw me off the train. And I got off the train, I came back home, and my poor mother, she thought it was a sign from heaven that I wouldn't have to go into the Army. But I immediately reported the next morning, no, that afternoon, because this, I was in Newark in the morning, and that afternoon, I walked into the draft board and told them what had happened and said that what I would like to do was take a lab course in physics over the summer and then go on to the next class. And they said, "Fine," said "Fine." I think a week passed, or less than a week passed, when I got a card in the mail telling me I was drafted. And I got in, and I was drafted and sent

down to Fort Meade, Maryland, to the 76th Infantry Division for training. And I did my basic infantry and advanced infantry training there. I was supposed to go to North Africa, for the North African invasion, and I was in a truck to the port of embarkation, I was an acting squad leader with my squad, and I had just gotten them in the truck, and I piled in the truck and all the trucks were waiting ... to move into Baltimore harbor where a convoy was being set up. ... We didn't know it but they were the troops, they were part of the troops, that actually landed on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. And somebody came over, somebody drove down in a jeep and stopped at different trucks, and called out names, mine included, and I said, "Oh, here we go, I got some dirty detail that I have to take care of." I got into the vehicle, next thing I know, somebody blew a whistle and all the trucks took off and here I am sitting in a jeep. And so I assumed that they would drive me into Baltimore, you know, into Baltimore harbor, within a day or so. But as it turned out, I was being sent to OCS, and it was a last minute kind of thing that pulled me out.

KP: Had you applied for OCS?

LB: ... If you had a 108 in our infantry company, I think the figure was a 108, on the Army intelligence test--if you had over a 108. I may be wrong about the number, but 108 sticks in my mind. If you had, I guess it was an IQ test of some kind, of 108 or more, they gave us two tests, that and certain aptitude tests. [If you had] 108, you were more or less called in by the company clerk, and you had an interview with the company commander. And if you wanted to, you filled out the forms. It was pro forma. Well, some how or other, I fitted into that picture, plus my background, and I just filled it out and everybody had to put down infantry, so we put down infantry, and we forgot about it. I mean, like hundreds of other forms we had to ... fill out. You were infantry and that was it. ... About two months passed, and I was pulled out of some drill, of some kind, and I had to go before a board. Only that was an interesting board, it was the divisional board, and about five or six staff officers, two of the staff officers were Rutgers grads. And they looked at mybackground in CMTC and ROTC, and they began to ask me technical questions. I remember one of the technical questions was, "How do you set up a battery of three inch anti-aircraft guns?" And I was in this room with a ...

KP: Blackboard.

LB: Blackboard. And I went up and set up an anti-aircraft battery for them. And ... that was that. And after they asked me questions in math and a couple of other things, that was that, and I saluted and left. And all of us had the same experience. They would pick on something, you know, in our background, and we, again, we forgot about it. And the next thing I knew, ... and I thought I was going to Fort Benning to Infantry School, because ... we put that down. We had to put down, first choice, Fort Benning, second choice, combat engineers, and third choice, I think, armor, or something like that. And I think I did put down artillery as the third choice, but nobody was given third choice. Well, when I got my orders, my orders were for Camp Davis, North Carolina, anti-aircraft school. I was absolutely amazed. I was the only man there, at the school, who had ... infantry training.

KP: At the ...

LB: At Camp Davis. The only one in my class that I knew from infantry. [There] may have been others, but I didn't know any. So that's how I got to OCS.

KP: And you stayed with an anti-aircraft unit for ...

LB: Yeah.

KP: ... several months.

LB: Right. I was ... assigned as a platoon leader of quad-fifties, four 50 calibers on a half-track. And in fact I have pictures in here. I'll show them to you later. And I was platoon leader, and I enjoyed it a great deal. We were at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. And we were on maneuvers almost continuously. ... These 50 caliber we used around airfields, but also, to assist infantry. We had unbelievable firepower, and we could move in and literally clear a wood, in no time at all with them. Anyway, we, in anti-aircraft artillery there is a great stress placed on being able to see in different, you know, in three dimensions, and so on and so forth. And we were always being given tests and taking courses. And I took this test, and I came in first in my brigade, in being able to see in different perspectives and ... being able to see things stereo-scopically. I could see even today. I don't need a stereo-scope. I can set my eyes to see things stereo-scopically, and so I could see in-depth. And that was that. Then time passed.

The next thing I knew I was called out, and I was told a new brigade was being formed, and I would be an assistant S-2, and I would be sent to a training camp, called Camp Ritchie, Maryland, Military Intelligence Training Center ... for training, for a three-month course. And then I would come back, and I'd become the assistant to this new brigade. And when I got to Camp Ritchie, Maryland, I found a whole bunch of guys there, a couple of hundred of us, we were all assigned as assistant ... S-2s to all different kinds, engineer units, engineer brigades, infantry, regiments and battalions and so on. It was all phony. And what they were doing was planning, personnel planning and specialist planning, for the invasion of Europe. And they were securing people of specialized backgrounds to be part of the Military Intelligence Service in ... their specialties. But this was a ruse to get them there. The fact is I left all my personal equipment back at Camp Edwards, which eventually had to be sent down to me. And they put me in aerial photo interpretation, aerial photo analysis. And ... that's a combination of two courses. Everyone took a basic course in intelligence and then you specialized, aerial photos interpretation, interrogation, electronics, intelligence, etc., etc., etc. And a lot of men were pulled out in the middle of things for very secret missions, through Anzio, and various other places. And I finished the course, and I was to be assigned overseas to an aerial photo interpretation team. To be assigned anywhere from division headquarters up to do, you know, photograph interpretation, mapping from that, and all sorts of things. And everybody left, and I was alone, in this big confined quarters, because once you were alerted, you weren't allowed out. They're all gone. I wasn't assigned to a team, and I began to ask questions, and I was told to mind my own business. Well, eventually, after raising a lot of hell, because ... I didn't know what the hell was going on with me, they told me I was going to be an instructor in an electronics intelligence course. And I told them they were crazy. I said, "... I know absolutely nothing about electronics

whatsoever." And they accused me of trying to ... get out of it, and I wanted to go overseas. I was very gung-ho. And a lot of us were like that. And it was a funny story that I found. I'd had pneumonia the year before, and when I got to Camp Ritchie, on a maneuver, I got pneumonia again. So I was in the hospital for ten days. And the guy in the next bed was the guy who'd taught Morse code at the electronics section. We all had to take the electronics and radio course and so on. And we ... used to have a lot of fun together because I think one of my weak courses, although I think I came out first in PI, one of my weakest courses was Morse code. And here was the instructor. So we used to sit and have fun, and we would tap, tap, to one another, and he would teach me all sorts of ways, so when I got back after the hospital, they put me in some kind of class, sort of a make-up class, [be]cause they always had a number of students get sick, or go out on a special mission or what have you, make-up class and it was a cinch for me. And I got an A, and I was the only one who got an A, so they assumed .... Oh, ... there is another thing, I organized my anti-aircraft platoon at Campt Edwards. We got new radios on these new half-trucks, and I know very little about electronics. And we would have contests, radio contests on at Camp Edwards, and mine came out first, in my brigade. And I had a special pennant on each of my aerials, and so on and so forth. And the reason we had it was because I had sense enough to understand that I didn't know anything about it, so I called the guys out and I said, "Hey, we got any radio nuts here?" And I got four of them and I said, "Look, I don't know the first goddamn thing about these radios. Put them in the half-tracks and have fun." ... Get them going, and these kids, I got them out of KP. I got them weekend passes, and they developed a net that was terrific. I got the credit for it, and my battalion commander put down, put a letter in my file, telling me what a great electronics genius I was. That plus my A in the Camp Ritchie radio course, and they assumed I was a radio whiz. Well, anyway, I ... had one hell of a time talking my way out of being an instructor. I really had one hell of a time, so they pulled me out, and they sent me to Order of Battle Analysis School, and that's what I became, [an] order of battle ... analyst.

KP: As [an] order of battle analyst what ...

LB: What is an order of battle analyst?

KP: Well, I have a rough idea of what it is.

LB: Read what an order of battle of analyst is. Just that first paragraph .... It will give you a quick insight into what Order of Battle Analysis is. There were very few men trained. I don't think there were 200 men trained in the Army in order of battle analysis because ... the teams consisted of one officer, two enlisted men. Sometimes they were augmented, and we were attached to the divisions, and we never had a hundred divisions, and they were attached to Corps and Armies, so I would say between 200 and 250 men were trained in that field.

KP: How would you characterize your training? When did you stop training and how useful was your training?

LB: ... It was certainly, the training was ... a sort of open door ... to ... a new ... field where I could apply a lot of what I knew. I was a military buff. I mean, I read all kinds of things. I had a

pretty good idea of how the German army, of how foreign armies functioned and that's what order of battle is. And I had been three years to CMTC. I was in infantry, and I fired eight inch railway rifles, ... I don't think I was 17 years old, on railway mounts, twenty miles into the ocean off Fort Hancock. I'd fired three inch guns. I'd fired 50 caliber machine guns. I'd fired, of course, rifles, 30 caliber machine guns. I understood the organizational structure. I knew what units had to do in the field and how they performed. I served in infantry, basic and advanced, went to Officer Candidate School, ROTC, I mean that whole bit, so my insight into what a military structure was and the meaning of military structure, equipment, logistics, personnel, ... it was on a level that was a little different than the average guy. So that when I moved into this, it was a very natural thing for me to do. I knew what I was doing.

KP: ... Did the order of battle, did you get a better perspective of the general war, often ...

LB: Oh, yeah, sure ...

KP: ... Often, even officers if they are fighting in a very narrow sector have a very narrow ...

LB: Absolutely, ... absolutely. I mean, I followed German Army personnel on almost a personal basis. And their effect on the order. ... Everything, I mean, I could tell you, show me a pistol, and I could give you a picture of the unit, just by what a man was wearing on his clothes.

KP: How would you characterize the German army that fought in France?

LB: Northern France, they were highly professional. Northern France, Normandy, northern France, I was in four battles. Normandy, northern France, I forgot the exact terminology, I think you have it down there ...

KP: Northern France, Rhineland.

LB: Rhineland.

KP: Central Europe,

LB: Central Europe. The guys up in Normandy, ... let me say this, if you know anything about the structure of the German army, they had reserve, something called reserve Divisionen. They were occupying reserve units in that whole northern sector, in all of France. They were second-hand troops. They were older. They were static. They weren't built to maneuver, and so on. But the reserves, that one often reads about that Rommel, you know, kept behind, and these reserves were highly experienced personnel. I mean, they were the engineers of the business. When I say, engineers, I don't mean military engineers, they'd been to, they'd fought in Russia. They fought in Africa. They ... fought in France, all over. These guys really knew how to handle themselves. And as the war progressed, the stubbornness was there all along. That never left, with some exception, but the professionalism ...

KP: Of the ... units.

LB: ... was dissipated. Not on top. The ... leadership was always very impressive. That's what held much of them together. I mean, ... they would be a unit. Whatever the unit was called, *Panzerabteilung*, that is a tank battalion or an infantry, [an] armored infantry battalion. The commander was someone whose name was Franz, for example. If that unit was destroyed, and if Franz was alive, Franz would stand on a highway and pick up as many troops as he could and organize a *kämpfgrüppe* Franz, a battle group Franz. A battle group could be 50 men, or a 100 men, or a 1,000, 2,000 men. And he would immediately make contact with people on his right and his left and the rear, and he'd give you resistance. That capability, that resiliency, was their leadership, the nature of their leadership. They had exceptionally fine military leaders, and of course, they believed in something called, if I remember the term, is called ... *Einheit Prinzip*, that is unit principle, the principle of the unit, the structure, the development of the unit. Now, that, all this not only could be done on a combat level but, interestingly, on ... an administrative level because every soldier carried in his coat or his jacket, on the right side there was a big packet, and he had a booklet and that was called a *soldbuch*. I should have brought one here, I have them in the house. And the *soldbuch* had his whole history in it, including the number of his rifle, where he was trained, where he came from, the units he had been to, everything. And if you took a hundred of those *soldbuchs* out, you could get extremely good intelligence analysis of what went on before, and that would give you a pretty good inkling as what could go on in the future. So with that *soldbuch*, ... you could be on a highway, for example, ... anti-aircraft artillery personnel, air force, army, navy, etc. and be mobilized into one fighting unit. He would have these large railway cannons. They could be (Kusten?) artillery. They could be naval personnel. Army personnel, SS personnel. He could mix them all together and with that *soldbuch* he had an administrative unit, immediately, you see. And he had everybody's history and background, knew what to do, so it was a very professional kind of thing, but we became very professional, too. We were in many ways, of course ...

KP: When you say we became more professional ...

LB: Well, we ... learned our business. We began our own way. ... Of course we had heavier fire power, there is no question about that. But our men learned very quickly and adapted very quickly and the experienced ones were as good as theirs.

KP: You mentioned that you were frightened often during the war. You never were wounded. What were some of your frightening moments?

LB: Well, the worst fright, the first fright that I had was when I was in London. I was with the 28th Division in Swindon, and I was sent into London. I don't read much about this, but there was supposed another invasion at Brest, and the 28th Division was supposed to be one of the lead divisions into Brest, that is as the second punch, after Omaha and so on. Now I don't know whether that was a feint because a phony army had been formed called the "Third Army," you've ... read about it.

KP: Yeah ...

LB: ... We were part of that, see, the 28th was part of that. So I don't know whether that was a phony or whether it was our first goal, and ... if we couldn't participate in that, we'd move into Omaha Beach, which we eventually did. But I was called to London for a week, a ten day conference on the order of battle along the Normandy coast and into France. And we'd go beyond. To prepare me, to prepare our two section, my G-2 section, you know, wherever we land we should know a lot about the enemy we meet. So I lived in a house in London, in a section of London, in Kensington, and Kensington Palace was sort of a block or two away on a hill. At night I'd go down and I always had plenty of whiskey, and I would take a bottle of Scotch, and these Englishmen who ... they were old soldiers generally, who were spotters, and they would spot the V-1s. We were being attacked by V-1s every night. And ... they'd spot it, and of course they'd call it into a net and so on and so forth. And these were set up with concrete bunkers, etc., and I'd go down there and bring my bottle of whiskey and warm them up at night. And I went down there one night, and it was very quiet, and this one English old gentleman, he was a major in the reserves and he said, "Have you seen the barrage balloons?" And off the top of the hill was this copse of very, very high trees and I said, "No, I haven't seen it." And he said, "Well, come on, let's walk up." He says "I'll show you, its pretty quiet." So we walked up the hill and there was this tremendous barrage balloon filled with hydrogen, and all these hydrogen tanks lined up under the trees. And all of a sudden the sirens took off, and we began to see V-1s coming in, see, so we stayed up there. There was a ... telephone, and we stayed up there, and we watched the V-1s come in, and they were about a couple of miles to our left, and we actually saw one hit. It began a wobble, and it sort of wobbled off to the left like and went behind us, see. The next thing we knew, we began to hear the putt-putt, putt-putt, putt-putt of the V-1, and we looked around and, of course, the height is very difficult to see the thing through the high trees, but we knew it was very low, and we saw the son-of-a-bitch coming in on us. And he was aiming right at the barrage balloon. The two of us, all of us, began to run like mad down the hill because if that thing hit there would be one fireball, an immense fireball, and we would be instantly cremated, see. And we began to run. The thing cut out and ... when it would cut out, it would drop, see, and it cut out just above, a little behind and above us, and we dropped down to the ground. And then it caught on again, and it went about five or six blocks, this thousand pound bomb, and it exploded. And boy, it raised hell. It just leveled that block. I don't know how many people were killed then. And it shook us up. Well, the two of us were down on the ground, and I got to say, I lost control of my legs. I couldn't get my legs up. This brave guy on my side, I thought he was going to get up, he lost control of his legs, so the two of us just sat there. Scared the hell out of us, and we sat there for three or four minutes, and we finally managed to get up, and we both walked down, and we finished a good portion of that bottle, of whatever whiskey, we had, you know ... that used to be issued to us. And from that night on, I didn't sleep in that Kensington house, because, Kensington was two blocks away from where the other one was hit. I would sleep at night in the ... underground bunker. Now a lot of other people slept there. But I'd leave my bedding roll there and go off and leave a lot of my personal effects, and for ten days, these things were lined up in the bunker, and I didn't have so much as a toothbrush taken. I mean, they netted up my blankets. I had blankets in the bedroll. It was an officer's bedroll. Nothing was touched. Nothing was touched. That was my first. But after that ... in Normandy, prior to our debarking from our ships, we were strafed by 109s just going up and down the beaches. ... Not the beaches where the ships were, just at random, until they were chased off. And then we were ... bombed in Normandy, and we lost, I think, five kids were killed

in the motor pool just a little ways from us. Some strange experiences there with the 28th Division.
But I ... have to tell that tale because after it was over we all, the 28th Division was racked by very, very poor staff work. Most of these guys were Pennsylvania politicians, and it was not a top division. Omar Bradley had been called into straighten them out and did and then went on to other commands and somehow or other it lapsed back into its ...

KP: When you say it was full of Pennsylvania politicians, it was a National Guard ...

LB: National Guard ...

KP: And so the quality of leadership ...

LB: The quality of leadership at the staff level as I saw it, was poor. And the ... funniest case was that after this bombing--well, they went into the field, and I was absolutely shocked. When we hit the field in Normandy they had crews and trucks. And they would, they had an officers, pardon me, the general had his own latrine. There was a latrine for the three generals. There was a latrine for ... field grade officers. There was a latrine for officers. There was a latrine, this is division headquarters, for first three graders, and there was a latrine for enlisted men. And after this bombing we all had to run to the latrine, and I just barely made it, and I got into the field grade officers latrine, and I was only a second lieutenant. And my colonel came in, saw me sitting on the pot, and he bawled the hell out of me and ordered me instantly to get off the seat and get out of his goddamn latrine and go into the ... this is true.

KP: I believe you ...

LB: See, this is the truth, and I sat there, you know, and I ... well. ... Of course, they didn't do too well at the Bulge ...

KP: This ... was not typical of other divisions ...

LB: No, no. Absolutely ...

KP: This craziness with the latrines ...

LB: No, no. I'm sure that once that they got into the field the situation [changed]... I mean, later after [extended periods of combat] .... This thing went on. I was with the 28th in northern France, St. Lo Carentan No, forget Carentan, that was Carentan peninsula. I was thinking of something else, a town nearby, well, in any case, St. Lo. And I was outside St. Lo when it was bombed, and it was as far as the eye can see from the horizon to horizon with bombers coming over and the earth shook like it was an earthquake. And we went through St. Lo, we couldn't go through the streets because the buildings inside if they hadn't collapsed ... they took grappling hooks, and they threw them onto the buildings and pulled the walls down, and the dead Germans would come flying out, and the dead civilians would come flying out. Dead bodies all over. It was horrible, absolutely horrible. And then we went east to close the Falaise Gap. We were part

of a special corps of three divisions and when we accomplished [our mission] ... We just rode continuously, continuously. From Normandy on, we were on the move everyday. We would move two, three times a day. And then we went down to Paris, and we were the division that went through Paris. I was sent into Paris. We were outside of Paris, and I had to make the contact with the underground, the French, ... not the underground the a ...

KP: The resistance ...

LB: No, not the resistance. The 2nd French armor division the Duisme Blonde, Leclerc's armored division which was getting a pasting inside of Paris. And then when we got into it pretty much, and we got into Versailles, I went into Paris again to make, to find where the interrogator cages were, the prisoner of war cages were, because we wanted to send interrogators in to find out certain things. There were a lot of experience[s] ... Germans were all over the place. They were unarmed, but they were hiding. They were swimming the river. I mean, all sorts of strange anomalous experiences that we had. And then from Paris we went on towards Bastogne, and we took Bastogne, and we got settled outside of Bastogne when we ran out of ...

KP: Fuel.

LB: We ran out of fuel. We ran out of ammunition. We ran out of food. Believe it or not I lived on K-rations, and I eventually developed malnutrition. You lose your appetite with these K-rations, and you know, you drink a great deal, and you pick up a hard boiled egg here or dead chicken there, and so on and so forth. And of course you weren't getting the kind of nourishment that you really should have, and you were expending a tremendous amount of energy. But we got outside of Bastogne and of course I read all sorts of books on the Second War and all these pundits who argue, "We should have marched on to Berlin." Well, for God's sakes, we didn't have any food. We didn't have any fuel. ... The G-2 ... of our section came out ... with pump, pumped the fuel out of my jeep, and I couldn't move my jeep because we put it in his jeep because he was the acting chief-of-staff, G-2, and he needed a car to move around. We had, between four and eight rounds of artillery shells for our divisional artillery, so how the blazes could we go forward? I mean, we would've, the Germans would've picked us off. So we stopped, and we dug in at Bastogne. We stayed in Bastogne. This was August-September, I don't recall exactly when, maybe later, and I developed my pneumonia again. And I was taken out and sent to a hospital along the Cherbourg peninsula. And then, ... not immediately, ... I went through a whole series of stages, and I was in the hospital for about five or six weeks, and I didn't know what happened to me. I had no way of communicating with the 28th Infantry Division. I didn't know, there was no communication whatsoever, and then when I was considered well enough to return I was just given an order allowing me to proceed through this [territory]. I literally hitchhiked back. I hitchhiked to Paris on the Redball Highway and got to Paris and found out that the Military Intelligence service, see, I was attached, I was not assigned. I was assigned to the Military Intelligence service, but they would attach me ...

KP: To different ...

LB: To ... an army group, who in turn attached me to an army, who in turn attached me to a corps, who in turn attached me to a division for duty, for duty with the 28th or for duty at the 100th, and that's what screwed up all my records later. My records were lost until 1958, from '46 to '58. And this battle is being fought again today, you know, you saw this with this ...

KP: Bronze star.

LB: Yeah, that's ... sort of nonsense. But it keeps popping up, and I'm sure it's going to be turned down, and they, you know, they can't find it, even though my colonel notarized a statement to the effect that he recommended me for the award. But that's unimportant. ... So I made my way to Paris. In Paris, I bumped into a guy from MI who should have been in London, and he says, "No, we're here now." He says, "The fact of the matter is, you should come over to headquarters [be]cause I think there's orders on you." There weren't very many of us, so I went down to this place, and the orders had been written relieving me from the 28th and bringing another guy in. See, they needed someone desperately. And holding me aside for new assignment. And they gave me, I stayed in Paris, and I had two assignments. One was to find the records of all the prostitutes that the ... German army had taken from ... the French police. These records were some place in the city, and they needed that for, ... you know they were afraid of an epidemic once troops got in there. Prostitution, you know, was a licensed thing, so they were afraid of that. They wanted to find the records. The Germans had somehow or other taken all those records and it disappeared.

KP: Did you ever find them?

LB: No. What I did find, and I got a certified copy from somebody is that the records were taken to a man who dealt in buying waste paper and making pulp out the paper and making other paper from it, recycling paper. So we knew that they would destroy most of them. I would say 90 percent. And then my second assignment, the two of them were sort of together, was to find ... the records of property confiscated by the Gestapo from Jews in the city of Paris. And that I found. I not only found the record, but in the building where the OSS was. The target was downstairs in the cellar in a tremendous room which was banked by coal and so and so forth, it was a black-market operation. In that room, it was like a basketball gym, about that size. ... There were mounds of all sorts of things: scalpels, and scissors, and then another one, medicines of all kinds, and another one, children's clothes and dolls, and so on, and then another one, plaques, that is doctors' plaques from their home, and all sorts of things in there. And we caught the man who did that, who was, you know, hiding this and slipping it out into the black-market. And then I also taught order of battle analysis, that is, field application for ... battle ... analysis, to new teams that were coming in. And then when the 100th Division came on the scene, they landed at Marseilles. I met them at a little town called Raon d'Etape.

KP: Oh, so this is why ... if you had stayed with the 28th, you would have been in the Battle of the Bulge?

LB: Ah, yes. The man who took my place ... is probably dead. He ... was machined gunned. He had panicked, and he left his documents. Our documents were, ... we had a jeep and a trailer

with just three people in the team, in an order of battle team, an officer and two enlisted men, a master sergeant and a staff sergeant. ... In our trailer we ... had certain cases that we kept things in, all secret documents. We were not allowed to be captured and all that sort of nonsense. And we had Thermite grenades literally tied on to ... all our vehicles and the trailer and also to the cases so that in case anything happened you pulled the trigger and you ran, you see. And he panicked, and he forgot to do that. And the colonel who commanded, this Colonel Messick, who was the G-2 of the division, asked him if he had destroyed the equipment. This is the story that was given to me. And he said, "No, he had not." He had just ran out. So he order[ed] him back in town. When in got back in town the Germans were there already, and they machine gunned him, and ... I understand that he was captured, and that he had been in pretty bad shape the last I'd heard, so I don't know whether he lived or .... Two enlisted men were captured also.

KP: But your're not surprised that the 28th didn't fare well at the Battle of the Bulge?

LB: No ...

KP: ... Had the division improved ...

LB: I don't think, ... I wouldn't fault the 28th. The tactical disposition of the American armies at that time was defensive, spread out, and the ... thought was clearly amongst us that the Germans were not going to counter-attack in force and that we were already in the process of building up a counter-attack capability. Now to do that you put a lot of your troops back, you train them, you rest them, you know, you're sort of weak at the front. We assumed that they were weaker than we were. So we sat there. And of course what the Germans did was, as everybody knows, they counter-attacked. We had a comparable counter-attack in the Seventh Army. I was not First Army at that time. The 100th Division was Seventh Army. We were in the Vosges Mountains, and we were surrounded. We were surrounded for a long, long time. We'd break through for a couple of days. It didn't mean anything because if we wanted to break through we took a bunch of tanks, and we just broke through. They didn't, they just, you know, ... let us go through. They were pretty thin themselves. But for awhile there, they gave us a lot of problems.

KP: You mentioned you'd participated in the Rhineland and the Central European campaigns. Do you have any ...

LB: Well, we took Stuttgart, the area along the Neckar River, the Saar River, and then we, when I say we took Stuttgart, ... I had the unusual experience of being with a division, the 28th was the left division of the U.S. Army forces, ... when I was there. The English and various others on the Left and the 100th, we had the French on the right. You have to understand the topography of the area as to how we were separated from the French by this mountain range. We were rather thin ... in between, and when we moved into Stuttgart, the city of Stuttgart sits on the western side, if I remember correctly, of the Neckar, and we were on the further, the eastern, the more dangerous side. And the town of Bad Cannstatt is right across the river. We took Bad Cannstatt, the French moved into Stuttgart. When you take Bad Cannstatt you can't live in Stuttgart, so all the French had to do was move in, see. And the French occupied, and that an interesting historical thing because very little written about it. I only saw one article in the New York Times

and that is, the 100th Division was in Bad Cannstatt across the river. It's like the French are in New Brunswick, the Americans are in Highland Park. And incidentally the river isn't much wider then, maybe a little wider than this one. And we were all supposed to move on the East, and the French refused, and they were raising hell in the city. I mean, they were, because of course the French army at that time was not a French army. It was a colonial army, officered by French and non-commissioned, mostly French, see, so you had Moroccans. You had Algerians. You had Senegalese. You had Goums. ... These were all colonial troops, and very few actual ... French.

KP: French units.

LB: Right. Now we had to start moving out, and Mr. de Gaulle said, "No." And that was a political problem because a decision had been made at SHAEF, we were already getting close to the end of the war, that if we were going to occupy, as I understand it, ... the occupation troops would consist of American, British, Canadian, and maybe some mixed troops. The French were left out of any occupation zone. ... There had been no delineation of an occupation zone for the French, so it became a terrible political fight. And the French actually refused to leave Stuttgart. We began to deploy our artillery, to force a move, as I understood it, maybe that's denied, but it sure was talked about in our headquarters.

KP: About deploying artillery, did you actually deploy it?

LB: ... Well, ... artillery? You just move it. You go in that direction instead of this direction. But now, did I see it deployed? No. But we used to talk about. ... We were going to get the French out. Now, my sergeant, the assistant commanding general, because my sargeant spoke German, and the assistant commanding general of my division and one or two other personnel, were sent into parlay with the French, across the river into Stuttgart, to talk to the French. The French kept them prisoner for about a week. Just wouldn't ... now when I say prison, wouldn't let them move. See, put them in a house and stuck them there until Mr. de Gaulle flew in at our artillery spotter field. We had a field set up out in, where we kept our spotter planes. He flew in on a white plane. General Patch came in, and I was like 50 yards away, and I saw the damn things land and out he came, and there was DeGaulle. He went off somewhere, and a lot of, a lot of, a lot of, a lot of talk, and then he flew back out and, within a day later, our, my sergeant and the assistant commanding general came back. I mean, he ... didn't suffer anything. They just kept him in a house, see, they came back. And within a day or two we took off again. So, now, when I came home, I was very interested in that. And I began to, in fact I came here, I went through the *New York Times* for that period, and I found a small article somewhere, I think the first page, "Congress Discusses This, That, Stuttgart, etc, etc, etc." It was never, never mentioned again. In some of the writings it's mentioned but in passing *au passant*.

KP: What's your most vivid memory of the war? If you had to single out one or two incidents? ...

----------End of Side Two, Tape One----------

This continues an interview with Lewis Bloom on June 21, 1994. You were saying on your most vivid memory ...

LB: Well, there are a number things at ... different times in my life, the memories take on different perspectives. But today, this day, number one is the attitude that existed within me. It was a[n] attitude that I'm going to live like [this] ... forever. The war will go on forever and ever. When the war ended I had no idea that the war was coming to an end. I subsequently looked ... at papers that said that we're nearing the end and so on, but when you're there and you know people are getting killed everyday, and everyday people were getting killed, to you the war is not ending. You're not even conscious of the fact that the war ...

KP: Even in say in January, February, March, you ...

LB: No, none whatsoever. Your, you just, your mind, you develop a certain mind set. This is your life until you get killed or something, but you're going to go on. It's going to last forever because if you start thinking any other way, you're going to be an unhappy person. There's a tremendous amount of work. You work around the clock. ... I'd work until my colonel would say to me, "Hey, get the hell out of here," you know, "and take a day off. Go disappear someplace and sleep late." So it's ... that mental grind that sets in that never leaves, and the assumption is that ... this is the way that life is going to be from now until the end. That's number one. That sticks with me.

The other, of course, I mean, there are a hundred different tales. Things have happened. You almost got killed here, or you almost got killed there and somehow or other that really disappears. What stands out in my mind is really things that occurred after the war. Immediately after the war in Stuttgart, I was going from our headquarters ... to my billet, and two girls called out to me in German, and I ignored them. And ... I thought that they were just prostitutes. And then one of them, after doing this for a couple of days, called out to me in Yiddish. And I was shocked. I came in, and I cocked my pistol, walked into their room, to their ... building, and they had this unusual story to tell. They were children in Cracow when the Germans overran it, took their parents, brought them to the ... airfield and, eventually, the parents were killed, I think at the airfield, and they somehow or other, a guard let them through. I think the girl once told me that she allowed the guard to subject her to some indignities, she said. He led her through, apparently they knew the area, and they got to a Christian family, who they knew who immediately took them to the local church, and they kept the ... priest kept them there underground for about three months. Incidentally, I have their pictures at home, and took them underground and gave and developed false papers for them. [He gave them the identity of] ... two other sisters apparently who ... had been killed, of approximately the same age, and taught them the Catechisms and taught them what they had to do to pass as Catholics. And didn't try to convert them, merely just taught them this ...

KP: And this was in Poland?

LB: And this was in ... Poland, in Cracow. And kept them about three months underground. There were other children there, as well, and eventually this priest had a request for two girls to

serve as housemaids. And one of them to take care of children of the local Gauleiter, German Gauleiter. So he took these two Jewish girls, and he sent them, and these two Jewish girls remained with this Gauleiter until the end of the war when he returned to his home city of Stuttgart, and then he disappeared when the war ended. He had heard that he was going to be ... arrested for crimes, and these two girls were living as Catholic Poles, see, with other Polish girls in an apartment house. They chased out the Germans who were living there. And I immediately went back to my colonel, and the colonel gave me permission to talk to the chaplain. The assistant divisional chaplain was a rabbi, and I gave him that information, and he took the girls out and put them in a United Nations Relief Agency Camp nearby, UNRA Camp, kept them there. I took their pictures, had them developed, sent them to my wife, my wife had a cousin who was very active in Jewish affairs, in New York City. Oh, yes, the two girls said that they knew they had a relative, a dentist, in Brooklyn. ... My wife took the pictures to her. They traced the dentist, and he through some, I presume, Congressional channels, was able to get the girls moved out of the UNRA Camp, and they disappeared from the camp and presumably went to the United States. ... I never saw the women. I lost ... their names. I have their photographs. I have since written this stuff and sent it to all the organizations, but I can't find these ... two women.

The other one is ... something that occurred during the war. We came into the town of Geislingen. We took Geislingen, which is not too far away from Stuttgart. And it's the center of a factory called *Wurtemberger Metalwaren Fabrik*. They made, they used to make very fine cutlery, and they had a process of binding metal to porcelain. And during the war they made vanes for jet planes. I had surveyed the plant for that reason. And they also made parts of submachine guns and aircraft empennages--that is tail sections for aircraft. And we took the town, and we got into Geislingen. The day we got into Geislingen they were still firing all around us. We got into the center of town, and we set up our divisional headquarters in a series of stores. Actually the G-2 section was in a little Rathaus, and somebody came running in and said, "We have a big slave labor camp nearby." ... I ... [was] talking to the colonel (G-2), and the general said, "Well, we better get somebody down there right away." He turned to my colonel, and he said, "Why don't you send Bloom over? He speaks the language," and also this sergeant there who spoke about five languages. So, our colonel went over to me, and he says, "Get to the headquarters commandant and take three or four jeeps and infantry men and get up there." So we organized this and got up there real fast. And I came into this circular section, and there's mobs of people, and they had already attacked some of the guards, the German guards, and I calmed them down and told them that they had to release the guards to our custody. And I spoke to their leadership. There were Czechs and Russians and Hungarians, they were all mixed, and asked them what they needed. And, of course, they needed food and medicines. And I said, "We will get them to you." And I turned around and went back and made my report and within fifteen or twenty minutes we were already piling trucks in there. I never went back there [be]cause I moved on with the division.

Many, many, many years later, my wife and I had a little reception ... for some people from our Temple. One of them was a woman by the name of Rose Ringel. And Rose still has the tattoos on her arm, and so on. ... She suffered very badly. In fact she's, I don't think she's going to live very long, now. She's in bad shape. And she [is] sitting and somehow or other she picked up this album, and there's this picture of Geislingen, and she let out a yell. And she said to me,

"This is Geislingen isn't it?" And I said, "Yes, it is." She said, "How did you get there?" And I told her. And she said, "Oh, my God." She says, "You're the ... lieutenant who came in." I was the lieutenant who came in. And that ...

KP: Oh that's very ...

LB: And that's here in Highland Park. And you know, there ... are many, many little vignettes, I'm ...sure ... everyone of us has, you know, experienced things like that. ...

KP: ... How did your attitude toward the Germans as an adversary change after you occupied Germany? Did it change at all?

LB: Because of the work that I did, I knew what went on. ... I had been in many, many labor camps. I had already received ... all sorts of secret intelligence documents. I knew that they ... had a pretty good inkling. And after the war was over, I was invited to go to Dachau. I was also looking for my father and mother's families. I sent out feelers. My father's family, mother's family were all lost as far as I knew. And I was invited to go to Dachau, and I couldn't go. I said, "I couldn't take it." I was, also, not in good physical shape. I was down to about 125 pounds. And I ..., inwardly it ... made its mark on me. ... I treated the Germans with ... honor, in a sense. That is, I ... wouldn't abuse anybody or anything. But I know how totally the country, almost totally, the country was behind the regime. And I felt very badly about it. It was, you know, there's not much to say.

KP: Did you ever go back to Germany after the war?

LB: Yes. Yes. My wife and I retraced it 34 years later, ... maybe less than 34. I've forgotten. We went through, we followed the 100th Division, not the 28th. I couldn't do both. So, and besides, we went through. I had to meet one of my 100th Division colleagues, the French interpreter in Luxembourg, who ... had remained as a professional officer, at military attaché. He was the French expert. In fact, I saw him just at the beginning of the year. He's in Florida, retired, now. And since I had wanted to go to Luxembourg, it's the opposite direction of Normandy, ... so I had hoped that we'd go back, and I hope we will soon. And I went into Germany and, you know, you can't--that generation is gone. And I've seen some very nice things relative to young Germans. My son is a scientist, my oldest son, and he has had a number of young Germans in his lab. In fact, when was it? Last year, or the year before, he was invited to speak at the Max Planck Institute and also at Heidelberg, and he was treated very nicely. And ... even when I was called back, in 1961, '62, I invited two German officers to dinner and became friends with them. You can't visit the sins of the parents on the child. And I've learned one thing. You take one guy at a time. You don't, I ... try to teach my children this all along, and other people, too. I, every once in a while, I get to preaching about this. You can't take an ethnic or a national group, even though the majority are agin you, you know what I mean? You can't do it. You can't live that way. You have to look a guy, in the face, in the eye, he's good or he's bad. Period. One on one. And that's how I live my life.

KP: Were you thinking of becoming a career army officer?

LB: Yes. I was ... recommended for R[egular] A[rmy] right after the war, ... immediately after the war. And I wrote to my wife. She approved of it, and I was supposed to get leave. They'd just told me I'd get leave to go home. But before that, I'd volunteered to go to Japan with my division. My division was supposed to be a lead division. And of course, that all went ... down the drain when ...

KP: When you said the war was never going to end, you expected once Germany was defeated that you would fight Japan?

LB: Well, I was called in. My colonel called me in. We ... were a very small group. The G-2 section, very cohesive, very tight staff. Charlie Prout, a Rutgers grad, I think '41, was part of our team. And we, it's ... hard to tell you, ... what a tight team we were, I mean it, with a wink, we knew how the other guy was going to function. And we worked so, there was no such thing as rank, division. I mean, my colonel was a day older than I was, that's all. He was a West Pointer, you see. So our rapport was quite unusual. And the colonel came into me one day, and he says, "Look," he says, "This is our assignment in Japan." He says, "Are you going to be with us?" I said, "Do you want me?" He says, "Yep." I say, "Then, I'm with you." And I was married already.

So, of course, when the war was over, I was recommended immediately for Regular Army. Military Intelligence Service ... before the Second World War was not an active branch of the service. It was only a reserve branch. You were assigned as infantry, or as artillery to M.I., that kind of thing. You did not wear the M.I. insignia. You wore your branch insignia. Mine was Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft. And afterward, it became Army Intelligence, with their own branch of service.

So I ... wrote back. Then I met a guy, a guy came in from Frankfurt, and ... my assignment was in Italy. I had to fly to Rome and pick up an aircraft, and I was to head a team. I was to be promoted immediately, and I was [to] head a team to scour the Mediterranean basin for all sorts of intelligence data, history and so on and so forth. And he gave me two weeks to go home and that's all. Then I wouldn't see my wife. You couldn't bring your wife over then, see. I wouldn't see my wife for another possibly two years. So I asked him, "How many?" He said, "You get two weeks, including travel time." I said, "You are out of your mind." And I didn't like the guy anyway. And we had a few words, and I told him, "To shove it." So I went back. The general said, "You're out of the picture?" I said, "Yes, I'm out of the picture." "Well, I've got something else." The State Department wanted us, the Diplomatic Service. And I accepted, filled that out, wrote to my wife, she approved. And a man, who I hadn't seen until last February, the assistant G-2, who's a wonderful guy, a Richmond, Virginia aristocrat, you know, old family. You can't say "Civil War" to him. You have to say "War Between the States." See, that whole bit. And the two of us got drunk one night after the war was over. And I was the only Jewish guy in a VMI and West Point Divisional Staff. And he began to laugh. We were kibitzing one another, and I was calling him a "rebel" and he says, "I got to tell you something." He says, "Until I met you," he says, "I thought all Jews had horns." See. So he says, "By the way," he says, "I put my signature," he says, "Also, to your ... to this diplomatic service." He says, "Don't go." I said,

"Why not?" He says, "Because you're going to be discriminated against. You'll end up in a Banana Republic," he says, "Just stamping passports." He was just being funny. He says, "And you," he says, "You just don't, unless you were, let's see, the Morgenthau's." Mr. Morgenthau became ambassador to Turkey. "Unless you have that kind of reach in money," he says, "You ain't getting nowhere." He says, "Don't even try." Hey says, "You are going to be very frustrated." So we went in the next morning and tore up the papers. [laughs] And ... I just got out of the service, that's all.

KP: Do you have any regrets about that?

LB: No. No regrets. No regrets. Yes. I had another thing. See, from Rutgers I had an MIT Fellowship ... when I graduated Rutgers, in Industrial Economics. Mr. Arthur Burns arranged for that, ... I think. And I went to see him after the war was over, and he pulled out a book, in his office up at Columbia, and he says, "Do you know anything about this?" And it said, *EDP for Economic Research*. I said, "What's EDP?" He says, "Electronic Data Processing." I never heard of electronic data processing. He says, "You're going to go to MIT." Oh I'd already ... had an appointment at Cambridge. My wife and I were going up, we going to take it up. This is a doctoral program. So, I went up to, when I saw him, he says, "You are making a mistake." He says, "You will not be able to do your work effectively, unless you're grounded in this new science." So I said, "What do you suggest?" He says, "Well, I suggest you stay here at Columbia, get your masters here." He says, "We'll take you in ... economics, and we'll concentrate on this EDP portion of it, and then when you finish then you'll go to MIT." I said, "Wait, it took me seven years to go to college." It took me seven years, see.

KP: Three years at Middlesex.

LB: Four and half years in the Army. I said, "Two years of the master's. Five years for a doctorate, and my life will be half over." I said, "I don't want to do that." So he says, "Do you want to go to law school?" I said, "No." He says, "Think it over." Well, I had a brother-in-law who's a lawyer. When he heard about it, he says, "Go." Well, in two weeks I was in Columbia Law School. But I weighed a 125 pounds. I was weak, malnutrition, had a vascular problem, I had a terrible allergy, a tobacco allergy and I was smoking and it wasn't diagnosed, and I used to conk out. And I once conked out half way through the course, rolled down this little amphitheater. ... I had to stop whatever I was doing to ... get well again. But, in the mean time, one or two of my friends had graduated. The legal profession, in 1949, was worse than it is now. I couldn't get a job. And I said, "Why the hell do I want to go back?" Somebody offered me a job in business, and I took it. And then I went on to graduate work in business. But, you know, I don't consider that in any way, any different than my colleagues. All of us were affected, one way or another. That is our fate, whatever paths we took ..., you know, was changed.

KP: One of the things that strikes me as a historian is that when you look back, it seems to have this inevitability after World War II with the opportunities opening up all over the place. But you mentioned before this interview that there was a wide spread fear of depression in the immediate postwar period.

LB: Oh, sure, sure. It concerned me. I mean, I used to get a lot of cracks from my, including my father, my father and his friends, you know. "How you doing in school?" I'd say, "Fine." He says, "Do me a favor, get me a pound of economics and see what price you can, you know, you can sell it at." You know what I mean? What's the latest price for a pound of economics? How the hell do you sell economics? I mean, who thought that you could make a living? You know what? I took those courses, and I had no conception as to how I would make a living as an economist. I didn't know what an economist was, even while I was taking the courses.

KP: Your entrance into the clothing trade, clothing business, is that family? Or ...?

LB: No. That was somebody who lived in the neighborhood. ... I couldn't get a job anywhere else. I tell you quite honestly, Rutgers was not very helpful. They kept, even when I was here, my thesis, my honors thesis was on the aircraft industry, ... history and financial, and economic and financial history of the Curtiss-Wright Corporation.

KP: Oh really?

LB: That's why I wanted to ... go MIT. That's ... where they recommended, in industrial economics. And I have the thesis at home, see, and it's here somewhere in the library. And ... Lewis M. Bloom, Class of '42. And the personnel department kept, I kept asking for interviews, even though we knew that there was a war on, they would give me these interviews. And I said, "Look, if you're going to give me an interview, I want Curtiss- Wright, I want Boeing, I want decent people, ... I'm interested in." You know what I got? I got Hahne's department stores, L. Bamberger and Company, company like that. I got once so mad at that the personnel guy, I just, I told him off one day. He was a guy who I knew from Highland Park. When the war was over, it was a little different. ... There was this thing in the air, I was looking for a job any place. They sent me to a guy, I think it was Bankers Trust in New York, or Irving Trust, or one of those places. This guy sat down, and he talked to me. He thought I was Dutch. Bloom is a Dutch name, see. When he finally woke up to the fact that I wasn't, he wasn't very friendly. He wasn't very nice. But it was ... still, very, very difficult to get a job. And I didn't have, I mean, I wasn't an engineer, I just had a bachelor's. You couldn't get into any of the Wall Street firms. I applied to one after another, it was impossible. You had to be a certain background, and so on and so forth. So this guy came along, I was recuperating. And he said that there was this job open. He says, "It's a great opportunity." He says, "You will assist the executive vice president, and you will learn how to buy woolens." I said, "Fine." I was married ...

KP: ... So you didn't really know anything about the clothing business?

LB: Well, my father had been in it. So I'd been around it.

KP: But you'd never really, you'd never worked for your father ...

LB: No. It was something that down deep in my soul was an anathema. I did not know ...

KP: ... You did not, in fact, want to go into ...

LB: No, I did not want to. And I tried over the years, many, many times to get out. The only place I could get out was insurance, and that didn't appeal to me. Insurance and then years later, many, many years later, the brokerage companies, some of them set up special training programs. But then, again, I was already married, was developing a family, and after the training program, they would pay you on a commission basis, see, and I couldn't, I mean, it was obvious that the young people who were involved in that were people who came from affluent families ...

KP: Who could afford to wait a year or two or three.

LB: Well, not only that. But as soon as they walked out ...

KP: Yeah.

LB: ... they began to get business through their families, see, I mean, some of my very dear friends, so, I ... stayed in textiles. I worked for Bonds for four years. Then ... the company I was buying most of my goods from--I moved in different areas within Bonds, eventually into women's wear, and I took my master's at New York University. And I took a lot of courses on the technology of textiles. ... New York University used to give that [degree] and FIT was just a little trade school. And I learned a great deal, and I became very valuable, and I began to become an expert on synthetics. And I did most of my business with Burlington and then Burlington offered me a very good opportunity and that took me away from apparel into textiles.

KP: And you found that more rewarding?

LB: ... More interesting. Rewarding? I don't know. I don't know how I would have done elsewhere, you know. ... I was always technically oriented. Although I was in marketing, my work always took me to a spot where I was the hub between sales, marketing, and the technical aspect of the company. Even to this day, I do consulting work in the same fashion.
KP: You ... were activated, you were in the reserves.

LB: 1961. I stayed on in the reserves. And I retired as a lieutenant colonel. I commanded the 24th Air Reconnaissance Support Battalion. And in '61, shortly before '61, around 1960, the ... concepts began to change ... as the Army Intelligence Service began to grow. And they formed a new, two new units, two experimental units, one in active army, one in the reserve. The active army unit was the 1st Air Reconnaissance Support Battalion attached to the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, to support airborne operations for Strategic Army Command, STRAC. And ... its counterpart in the reserves was the 24th. And ... they chose me for the 24th. See, before that, all these intelligence units were composite units, and they had little sections, order of battle interpretations, photo-interpretation. So, they pulled me out because of my background in order of battle, in where you have to know organization, and materiel, and so on, and be able to interpret it properly and so on. And my photo interpretation background, [be]cause there's a lot of photo interpretation done there and then the broad military background that I had. And I was made the Air Reconnaissance Liaison Officer, that is ... I was the person who ... worked with the Air Force on the Army's requirements for aerial reconnaissance. And then after the

reconnaissance returned, ... we got duplicates of the photos for our own interpretation, and then after the Air Force interrogated the pilots, interrogation is not the word, I could come in on the scene and also try to get some special information for the Army. We were a unit that could scatter all over the globe. We had highly specialized equipment. We also had twelve aircraft.

KP: Were you based in Maryland, or Fort Bragg, at this time?

LB: Well, when I was called back in '61, it was at Fort Bragg.

KP: And you spent the duration of your ...

LB: I spent the duration there, '61, '62, for the year.

KP: Did you have any involvement with the Cuban Missile Crisis or ... ?

LB: Well, we ... actually came in on the Berlin crisis and then the Cuban crisis came along. So ...

KP: So that was the motive?

LB: Yes. I was on quite a number, in fact, that was my job to accompany the 82nd Airborne Division on maneuvers, about once every month, once every month and a half. Maneuvers were held in warm climates.

KP: ... I saw in the clippings that they have on file that you were married in the Camp Kilmer Chapel. ... Especially given the fact that you lived in Highland Park, why did you end up being married in the Camp Kilmer Chapel? Is there a story in that?

LB: Yeah, there is. I was graduated from OCS, I think on the 21st of July of 1943. We had already arranged, my bride and I, that ... we would be married on the ... 23rd of July. And I already had orders to go overseas. I was attached to a unit at Camp Edwards. And I had a ten day grace period after that, so we arranged to have a honeymoon at a place called Camp Copake ... up in New York State. And I came home on the 22nd, and we were supposed to have a quick, you know, it was customary, wartime marriage. Our parents got together. My mother knew about this. I love my mother a great deal, but without telling me she made arrangements to postpone the marriage for the following week. And she refused to accept the fact, even though I showed her orders that I ... could get court-martialed if I didn't come. And she said, "It could be arranged. And I didn't want to do it and so on and so forth. And that she had already alerted the family ...." Well, I didn't know what to do. I was in this terrible quandary. She just wouldn't give in. So, my mother-in-law was willing to accept it. She also wanted something, but she was more flexible. And I was caught on the horns of this dilemma, and I just walked over to my bride and I said, "Look, nobody is going to our wedding except you and I." And we got into my father's car, and I drove into Camp Kilmer, and there was the rabbi, I'd called him up and told him I was coming. There was one guy, who was practicing a violin for the services, and there was another, there was a religious holiday that started that night. I think it was a Friday night, so

according to Jewish tradition and religion, you couldn't get married for another, you know, long period after that.

KP: It was a long holiday.

LB: Yeah, it was a long holiday, so, he said he would marry us, under certain conditions. Anyway, we had, we needed two witnesses, one guy was mopping the floor and the other guy was playing the violin, and we explained it to him and he asked us, asked me how old I was, and he said, "Did you explain all this to your parents and to your in-laws?" And my wife and I both agreed, and we said we had explain it and all, and he married us. We came home, and we presented everybody with the fait accompli.

As it turned out after the ten days, somebody goofed on the orders and said I was supposed to return back to Camp Edwards on a certain date, but didn't put the time down. So I took the late train. And I got in into the evening at Camp Edwards, and when I reported to my battalion, they were ready to court-martial me. One guy yelled, and he says take my commission away from me. He says, "You're supposed to be here in the morning." I said, "There's nothing in my orders that shows that." "Let me see your goddamn orders." So I showed him the orders. He couldn't find the time on it. I said, "All it says is [that] I have to be here on this day." Well, what happened was there was an administrative cut-off by that noon. So they pulled someone out from another unit and put him in in my stead, and the unit was already fixed, alerted and was leaving, I think, the next day or the day after, see. And I never got part of that unit, and I was put into an officers pool pending the activation of a new unit. Fate is strange to you.

KP: You had an active career in politics ...

LB: Yeah.

KP: How did this start?

LB: Well, I moved, we moved from Matawan to this area here ... not because we are native here, but because my commuting was much better from here than from Matawan, and so on and so forth. And we bought this house at the ... southern end of Edison and the developer was a dishonest person. And he was pulling all sorts of stunts, and nobody could really get him to do the things. There were no laws or ordinances in those days to do very much. And I knew a lot of people because we were local. ... Also I didn't like the way some of my very dear friends and neighbors were trying to get this guy to do things. It was very naive. There was a local councilman who lived nearby, and I got to him. He was a family friend. And he immediately got me a[n] audience with the members of the council, and that's where I met Bernie Dwyer, see, and Steve [Capestro], I knew before, because he was in the Class of '42. And Steve was in the administration and a guy by the name of Bill Godwin who went to high school with me, he headed the department of public works. And so right then and there, I had all the friends I needed. And I got involved, and they began to help me. And a lot of people began to move in, and they asked me if I would become the committeeman. I said, "Sure." So in a period of about two or three years, I got everybody in that area registered. In those days you were allowed to

register in the house. We were registering people in my house at two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock, coming off these factory shifts, you know. ... I did this for a couple of years, and then I was called back in '61. And in '62 when I came back, my wife, I came home one night, and she said, "You know, I signed something about you." ... She thought she signed, I should, you know, run again as committeeman. But what they did was, I wasn't even aware of it. They were sending out a petition. The party sent out a petition to have me run as a councilman. So I was elected a councilman and then through a series of events, each time, five different times, I was sort of a compromise. I never expected to do more than one four-year term. I ran, and I stayed on as a councilman for twenty years. But in that period, in the first years, we were able to get in a lot of ordinances, regulating the development of property, the putting in of streets and curbs and gutters and ...

KP: Things we now take for granted ...

LB: Standards. They didn't exist. See, that was when ... Edison was an agricultural community. So you could do whatever you wanted, and that's what developers love, communities like that. And we were able to get this guy, literally hound him out of the area.

KP: Because of all the restriction you put on developers ...?

LB: Yeah, there's a whole story about that. But the point is, I was able to not only do that, but there were a lot, there were other developers, the land [that] was there was a lot of land then. There were developers and individuals, each one had strange ideas on how to get rich quick. And what I was interested in is really in developing a neighborhood, with very solid characteristics and that was accomplished.

KP: In reflecting back on the changes both to this area and the larger country, what's most striking to you?

LB: Well, the thing that hits me the hardest is the loss of open spaces, the ease with which communities allow developers to do their thing. Whether this was done out of ignorance, or out of greed, there was an awful lot of greed involved, an awful lot of greed. And I won't define the greed any further. I use that as an all-inclusive term. ...

KP: In other words, you think this area could have been better developed?

LB: ... Without any question, without any question, without any question whatsoever. You're up again, when you're in politics you feel that. You're up against power structures, and power structures mean dollars and dollars mean power. And politics means power, so these things are integrated, and they're so closely intertwined, and they're all so very difficult to expose, extremely difficult to expose, see. But I did the best I could, and my record is there to be, you know, ...

KP: To be studied.

LB: ... I sound like ... a politician. I stand on my record!

KP: Oh, you'd mentioned that you have a memory of Frau Rommel?

LB: Oh, yeah. Mrs. [Rommel]. ... Where is this? We all had many, many targets in addition to our order of battle covered everything, anything about the Germans. And a friend of mine in an adjoining unit, ... that unit came into the town where the Rommels lived, where the general lived. Gees, I had it here, oh, here it is. And he wrote the ... first report. ... The man that died, he ... had this man analyze that. The ... whole story of Rommel and his death was put together by this order of battle person. Now that, you've got to be very careful about that because it's coming apart.

KP: Yeah, no, I ...

LB: And then his sister was in Stuttgart, and they were going to kill her. The ... Nazis were ... going to kill her, ... or do something to her, to hurt her. She was a pacifist. And she belonged to a Swiss organization that exists today called "The Anthroposophical". Well, pardon me, the organization is called (hosha?)-- define (hosha?). It's the (-----?). It's like a religious, political organization there. It's ... based in Switzerland and it's, if you can take this down (hosh ?). ... Let me see.

KP: Anthropology.

LB: The Anthroposophical that's the name of it. They had a ... building in New York on Madison Avenue. I used to stop in every once in awhile.

KP: Did she sign this?

LB: Yeah, she signed this, but I want to give you the name, well, whatever. She signed them, and she writes, this is very delicate, ("*Wir wünschen einen*?)-- well, "We wish for a peace. Find the peace. (*um einen menschen geshengen*?)" and that is a rapprochement between human beings. And this was in (Selinbuch?), Swabia, on the 2nd May. I was sent in there to get to her because her life was in danger, so I got there, and I had a series, a couple of days there that I talked to her. We weren't there very long, but in the mean time we protected her. And we got some people, and I don't, I wasn't involved in the counter intelligence aspect of it, but there was a counter intelligence story related to it. And she gave me this book, which I certainly couldn't read. ... I'll see if I can the name of ...

KP: So she was a member ...

LB: She was a Rommel.

KP: She was a Rommel.

LB: She was a sister to Rommel....

KP: ...This was a sister, oh okay ...

LB: And she gave me these photographs of him. These are the family photographs. You know the story about what happened to him in Normandy. You know, he was fired on by a plane, and they lost control of the car, and he was hurled against a tree, and you can see one of his, I think his ... left arm is immobile, and you see his eye is closed. This is just before he got killed. She gave me this picture, ... it was in that car that this happened. And this is his bier. ... I think I have another picture somewhere. Do I have more pictures? Yeah, these are more pictures. Well ... I think they are pretty much the same. But I had some wonderful discussions with her over period of about three days. She was a charming woman, a German of the old school, a pacifist.

KP: And she remained a pacifist throughout the war.

LB: Yeah. She remained [one] ... Of course ... I had a number of these pictures taken because the, it was published in ... our division newspaper. These are old, very old. A Rommel is mayor of [Stuttgart], to this day. Here are the original negatives. ... ... I sat down a half dozen times to write to him, and I just can't get, can't get my, you know, excited to write to him. This guy's SS, a typical SS officer. I met many of them like that.

KP: When you say "a typical SS officer," what was the ...

LB: They had such types in the Army, too. They were professional German soldiers, and they were a breed unto themselves. I must get this thing duplicated.

KP: You actually, ... maybe I ...

LB: If you can get them ... I don't want to give this to Rutgers yet, and I have certain reasons why I don't, ... but if you can get this thing preserved, and if I could get a copy.

KP: Maybe we should. Why don't we see Tom Frusciano about it.

LB: ... As soon as I ... volunteered. I began to work on the Japanese Army. I wrote this. Of course, you always write it in the names of the colonel. That's my order of battle. ... This was done for me by artists at Mercedes Benz. ... Mercedes Benz ... had a department that made models, and they made me models of Japanese mines and Japanese weapons, and they made me three sets. ... This was painted for me, in ... three life-size, man size, and with ... little nails here, see, like here, I can tack on the rank, so I could teach soldiers how to recognize Japanese, who they were, what units they were, the ranks that they had. ... He did this in a watercolor for me. See, Stuttgart, 23 July 19...[45]. 23 July, ... that's my ... anniversary. That was, yeah, when he gave this to me. I mean, I told him what to do, and he made for me .... I ought to frame this. ... This ... is some of stuff that I worked with. ... One of the things I had to carry, I had to carry and develop my own library. See, these are the official, ... be very careful with those books because they'll probably end up at Carlisle.

KP: Okay, so you will donate these to Carlisle?

LB: Probably. Maybe within the next year. There's a reason why I'm holding on to them. We had a division reunion last ... year, and I was invited to speak before the reunion, and I did, and I showed them. These people were, you know, very fascinated with this stuff. But you can get idea of what I did, you know, the kind of work. Now this ... was academic stuff. This is the stuff I used as a sort of base. ... My library consisted of things such as this. ... Of course, we were moving everyday, ... you know. There was hardly a day when ... so I developed my own library system. ... One of the things that I wrote became part of a commanding general staff exercise. Oh, gees ... I want to fix these. No, I'll fix them ...

KP: Oh, okay ...

LB: ... Properly. ... And I have a whole bunch of these. I have them for tanks. I have them for vehicles. I have them for small arms. I have them for organization, and I have them for logistics, and they were continuously kept up-to-date, you know. And when I stopped ... in a moving division you lived in holes, or in broken down houses, ... I had a going research library, you know, that I could use. ... This is stuff that the Germans had of us. This is a little SS diary that somehow or other got in. I used to get in all kinds of documents. I should, I'm not sure what I'm going to do with that, I may send that to the German Embassy. See, these are technical stuff, ... send it back to the family of ... wherever ... See this weapon?

KP: Yes

LB: This weapon, a system of this weapon, became basis of the AK-47, of the M-16, of Israeli Galil. These are small arms, all sorts of small arms. These are actually photographs, unit photographs. Now the reason that I had them ... was ... they are very meaningful to me. They are very highly specialized. This is the MG-34, ... these [are] German soldiers with ... French army equipment .... And when ... German units had equipment like that. There were all sorts of deductions that you could make as to strength, and the characteristics, even organizations ... using the different weapons that appeared, at different times. Much of this came from intelligence data, and what I would do as ... ancillary to everything else that I did, was to send down this data to the units, you see. ... These are ... units ... that did a lot of killing. Now they are running this one here at .... They are French army, so they are not first line troops, but they would be used behind for all sorts of secondary purposes. This is also French. He's carrying a 1916 French weapon here, very old. Here they are ...

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

Revised 6/26/96 by Linda E. Lasko.
Revised 7/20/96 by G. Kurt Piehler
Reviewed 7/23/96 by S. Pollele
Corrections made by Lew Bloom entered 8/9/96 by Linda E. Lasko
Corrections reviewed 8/10/96 by G. Kurt Piehler