RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES B. CARLAW

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with James B. Carlaw on July 21, 2006, in Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for having me here.

James Carlaw: Our pleasure.

SI: To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

JC: Well, I was born in Brooklyn, New York, [Carson C.] Peck Memorial Hospital. That would have been September 23, 1922. I lived in Flatbush, Brooklyn, for just about a year, and then, we moved to New Jersey, Maplewood, where I really spent my years growing up.

SI: You put on your pre-interview survey form that your father was born in Canada.

JC: My father was born in Warkworth, Canada. It's a small farming community, north of Toronto. He was born on a farm and had a high school education. As a child, he fell, running through a field, on a corn knife, which cut through his leg, such that he had a stiff leg all his life. I was never able to beat him at golf or tennis. [laughter] He was strong, but it didn't interfere with some of his activities.

SI: What was his name, for the record?

JC: His name was Raymond Free Carlaw.

SI: Did he come from Canada with his family or by himself?

JC: Oh, Dad grew up as a high school graduate. He had some financial training and, during World War I, worked in London with a bank. He transferred to New York City, where he worked in a bank, and met my mother. He became a US citizen. I was born in the US, as we've said, so, I was automatically a citizen.

SI: How long was he in England? Was it just for the war?

JC: I think just during the war years. I don't know any more than that.

SI: Did he tell you any stories about being in London during that war?

JC: Oh, yes. I remember his very heavy suitcase, made of walrus hide. Empty, it was heavy enough to hardly lift, and I remember all the winter, woolen underwear he had. … I also remember how he would never eat Brussels sprouts afterwards, because of how many he had to eat in London; [laughter] so much for my knowledge of his years in London.

SI: He never talked about zeppelins coming over or anything like that.

JC: No, no.

SI: Do you know anything specific about what his job was?

JC: He was an auditor, yes, and that's what he did in the US, also.

SI: What about your mother? What was her name?

JC: Mother was Edna Barton Hodgman. She was born in Chicago. I don't really know the circumstances of her leaving Chicago to come to Brooklyn, just don't know.

SI: Did she work outside of the home before meeting your father?

JC: Well, my mother was a graduate of Smith College, Northampton, Mass., I think a pretty astute lady. She had no paying jobs, that I know, other than, during World War II, she worked at the Orange Screen Company in Maplewood, New Jersey, the town in which we lived, and they were making some kind of parts for the war effort. These things weren't talked about particularly and I did not know exactly what they were.

SI: It is unusual that she was a college graduate, in her generation.

JC: Right.

SI: Did she ever tell you about her time in Smith or why she went to college?

JC: No. I think it was just assumed that she would go to college. She was smart enough to enter Smith, which was fairly demanding. Her sister also went to Smith. My remembrance of Smith is going to reunions in July, hot and steamy, and I had wool pants; don't do that. [laughter] It was most uncomfortable, but I loved Northampton. They have a concoction called "The Ding Bat," which is an ice cream [drink], sort of like a "Dusty Road," and it was made in a drug store there. … [After] all these years, I remember "The Ding Bat." [laughter]

SI: Was there a family profession on her side?

JC: Her father was in the furniture business. They were based in Gardner, Massachusetts, and Granddad sold school furniture, I think fairly successfully. They had a lovely home in Brooklyn. We used to come from New Jersey to Brooklyn for holidays, to meet cousins and grandparents. The one big thing about the house was, from the second floor to the first, there was a circular staircase, and we kept the handrail pretty well polished, by sliding down. No one broke any bones, … but a lot of fun.

SI: Yes, I can imagine. [laughter] Do you know how your parents met? Did they ever tell you that story?

JC: No, I do not know how they met or the circumstances.

SI: Okay. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

JC: I have two sisters. Unfortunately, both have died. One, Mary, went to Smith. Frances went to, oh, a junior college in New Hampshire. Both were successfully married, with happy families. I repeat, I'm sorry they have both died.

SI: Where did you fit into the birth order?

JC: Oh, I was the only son and the oldest. They were each younger than I.

SI: I would guess that your earliest memories are of growing up in Maplewood.

JC: That's right, yes.

SI: What was your neighborhood like?

JC: Well, they were all single-family homes. We were within walking distance of a beautiful park, where we played baseball and … some tennis. In the winter, there was an overflow area for ice-skating. We could walk to the center of Maplewood, but, usually, we rode bikes, and, also, [we were] within walking distance of the railroad, because my father commuted from Maplewood into New York City. It was a lovely community. I've gone back. Strangely, the houses seem smaller than I remember them as. … Our house was located halfway between our Fielding Grammar School and the middle school, junior high school, and the Columbia High School. So, we walked to school. There were no busses used in those days.

SI: For the record, could you tell me which grammar school and high school you went to?

JC: The grammar school was Fielding School, I believe, now, is a headquarters for the educational system, (Ricalton?) Junior High, and then, Columbia High School. Columbia High School, the whole system, gave an excellent education. We were very proud of it. It was run by the town, with the adjoining town of South Orange. So, it was a joint school system and, to this day, we've had many reunions with our high school class and, also, with [other] graduates of Columbia High School and we have fond memories of those years.

SI: As a child, growing up, it sounds like you were interested in sports.

JC: Well, you know, you came home from school, changed your clothes and went down to the park and you played pickup football or pickup baseball. Later on, I got jobs in the park. I was in charge of laying out the baseball field and putting lime down for the lines for the different sides and home plate, putting the bags out. I kept score for a number of years for the different baseball games. So, the park was a big part of our life. That's where the Fourth of July celebration was, and we were just so lucky to be able to just walk down and enjoy its facilities.

SI: Were any of the sports organized or was it all pickup games?

JC: I would say that some of the baseball games were organized, because it was the evening games at which I was the one who laid out the field, but it was a good mix of organized and

unorganized. [laughter] We were lucky to have a bunch of kids who would just come down and play.

SI: They were all kids from the neighborhood.

JC: Yes, yes. Of course, the neighborhood was pretty expansive, when you talk about putting [yourself] on a bike and riding down [to the park]. So, kids came from all around the town. So, it was a center of activity.

SI: Was it a mix of different ethnicities, recent immigrants and older families?

JC: Those issues never were apparent. … There were no racial issues at all, or, if there were, we were unaware of them. …

SI: Not even in a bad sense, but just in terms of the makeup of the community.

JC: No. … I think Maplewood was essentially a commuting town. The parents either drove or rode to Newark or New York City. There were no; I was going to say no factories, but there was the Orange Screen Company. There were a couple of nurseries, feed stores, but no large commercial activities, a beautiful library. I worked in the library, putting the books on the shelf. It was a good place to grow up, yes.

SI: How early did you go to work in these jobs?

JC: Oh, as soon as I was big enough to make some money. These were the Depression years, and I think I made a quarter an hour working in the library. I don't remember what I made laying out the baseball field and working in the park, but it was enough to bring in some change.

SI: How did your family fare in the Great Depression?

JC: Very badly. My dad lost his job for a number of; well, I don't really know how long, but maybe a year or so, got another job, of course. He worked in New York City. It was a tough time. It was a tough time.

SI: Was his new job in the same field?

JC: Yes. He was an auditor. I can remember stray men coming to the back door, looking for food, and Mother supplied them with something. We didn't have much, but she was able to help out. So, they were tough years. … Some of our attitudes and thoughts still go back to those tough times. We don't spend our money loosely. [laughter]

SI: Did you see its effects on your neighbors? Did anybody lose their house?

JC: Oh, no, nothing that I was aware of at the time. I think there was some of that, but, as kids, we were not that aware of other people's problems.

SI: A number of people have told me stories about people coming to their door, asking for food. I was curious about that. How often would that happen? As a kid, did your mother ever say, "Oh, you just go upstairs and I will feed this man?"

JC: Oh, no, no, no. If it happened six or seven times, that probably would have been about it. Our house was not on the route, necessarily, from one place to another. It would be unusual for someone to come, but they did, they did, and she would give them what she could and they sat on the back step and consumed it, and then, went on.

SI: Did you ever talk to any of them?

JC: No.

SI: Were they primarily men?

JC: Men, men, no women, that I can recall.

SI: Was there a "Hooverville," [a common name for a shantytown built by unemployed and destitute people during the Depression] either in Maplewood or in the surrounding towns?

JC: What do you mean by "Hooverville?"

SI: A poor area, shacks, that sort of thing.

JC: No, no. I would say that Maplewood was middle-class from stem to stern, at least as far as we had knowledge. No, it was a pretty well-balanced, comfortable town. Since there was no major industry there, people worked elsewhere.

SI: As you were going through the Fielding School, and then, Columbia High, what were your favorite subjects and what were your interests in school?

JC: Well, in Fielding, I guess it was history, ancient history, perhaps. Of course, your interests varied with the curriculum and I think that ancient history and some US history [were my favorites]. … It was pretty broad and a good mix. I don't remember singling out any particular area.

SI: You praised the system pretty highly. It was a good system.

JC: Very highly. As we grew older and met people from elsewhere, we began to realize that the … school system in Maplewood and South Orange was as good as any school system in the country. Actually, the high school building, for awhile, was in the pages of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as a high school that met its goals. It was a good school.

SI: Were you involved in any other extracurricular activities?

JC: Well, I was on the swimming team and, for the rest of the time, … free time, I was working, either in the library or elsewhere, … but swimming was the major activity.

SI: Do any of the swim meets stand out?

JC: Well, we had a good swimming team. I think that we were second in the state, compared to Trenton High. The advantage Trenton had was that it had two or three junior highs, each with a pool, whereas our pool was in the high school. So, they were able to prepare swimmers over a longer period, and so, their team was [better trained]. I don't think we ever beat them, but we came close, but we considered ourselves at least second in the state. We had a good team.

SI: Which event did you participate in?

JC: … I swam the 220, we're talking yards, and relay, filled in where necessary, backstroke, freestyle, mostly freestyle, which I also did at Rutgers.

SI: Did you have any other interests, like the Boy Scouts or music or anything like that?

JC: I was never in Boy Scouts. [laughter] At one point, in junior high, I was going to learn how to play the oboe, but came down with appendicitis and that was the end of that. So, I never mastered any musical instrument.

SI: Later on, you went into forestry. I was wondering if you had any interest, as a child, in nature.

JC: Well, I went to summer camp, summers from second grade through fifth grade. This was on Lake Oswego, in Upstate New York, and I just loved the camping experience, got interested in identifying trees and plants and generally thought, "Great, that's where I belong, in the woods." Little did I know how different that was than forestry, [laughter] but, nevertheless, I would say that's where I got my interest started. So, that was four summers, eight weeks each time. So, I was very lucky to be able to do that. Of course, times were tough, so, I worked on tables and did other jobs at the camp.

SI: Was it a private camp?

JC: Yes, oh, yes. It was run by some schoolteachers, who also lived in Maplewood, and I have no knowledge of the financial end of it, but I suspect that my family got some help in that direction.

SI: Growing up in the Newark metro area in the 1930s, do you remember anything about the German-American *Bund,* either from what you saw or what you read in the local papers? I was recently reading some works on how the German-American *Bund* spread in that area.

JC: Well, we remember hearing about the *Bund* halls. It was never a problem *per se.* Certainly, they were away from the town in which I lived. We just generally [knew], through the newspapers, but we were aware of, yes, there were ethnic groups, and … this was not all

negative. I mean, there were places where people joined and sang wonderful songs. So, they were there and, of course, as they got into the war years, they were a problem here and there, but I was not aware of anything locally.

SI: In the 1930s, and then, getting into when World War II started in Europe, how aware were you of what was going on overseas, with Hitler's growing power and so on?

JC: Well, we read the newspapers daily, so, we were aware, but, of course, at a distance. There was nothing that affected us, other than, like I say, my mother going to work in the Orange Screen Company. … When I went to Rutgers, it seemed to me the right thing to do to join the ROTC, which I did, Rutgers being a land-grant school, so [that] it did have Army ROTC.

SI: Since your father was Canadian by birth and had spent time in London during World War I, was he earlier than most in getting on the "Let's help Britain" bandwagon?

JC: Oh, I don't remember any feelings that way at all, no. He was Canadian. In 1936, we took our new car and drove to Canada, where I met cousins and saw the farm where he grew up, but, really, I'm not aware of any nationality pulls toward England or anywhere.

SI: He was not vocal in saying that America should help Britain more.

JC: If he was, I don't remember it. I don't remember anything like that.

SI: Since your mother was a college graduate and your father was …

JC: Was not.

SI: However, he was a high school graduate.

JC: High school, plus business training.

SI: I would guess that they encouraged you towards college.

JC: Oh, yes, there was no question. … If we could afford it, I would go to college, and I was lucky and got a State Scholarship and that made it possible for me to go. Mother said, "We can get you through the first year. You may be on your own [afterwards], because you've got two sisters here that need to go to college," which they did do. So, I was lucky. I had the State Scholarship. I worked at Rutgers. I helped in the parking of automobiles for the football games and became in charge of one of the fields, I guess the sophomore/junior years. I learned that you can live on a five-dollar meal ticket a week. Can't do that anymore, but you could then. [laughter] We'd send the laundry home to Mother in a laundry box and she'd send the laundry back with crackers and peanut butter. So, we got through those years just fine. [laughter]

SI: Had you ever had any contact with Rutgers before the State Scholarship?

JC: We went to see Professor Frank G. Helyar, who was Dean of the Agricultural School, because of our interest in forestry, and Dean Helyar and the Dean of Forestry at Yale worked out a program for four years at Rutgers in pre-forestry and two years at Yale for a master's degree and, ultimately, that's exactly what I did do.

SI: What was your initial reaction to Rutgers?

JC: Oh, I loved it. I loved it. Of course, we were in the freshmen dorm with all sorts of people. I roomed with a fellow who was Gerry Hunter, who was quarterback for; oh, [I] forgot the high school he came from. So, he was playing freshman football and I was playing freshman in 150-pound football and it was pretty tough, trying to get the schoolwork done as well as the sports. … We both made it, [laughter] but I did not stick with the football. … With swimming and crew, that was about all I could handle and still stay afloat academically.

SI: Did you become involved in all three in your freshman year?

JC: Yes, and I became aware that that was just too much. The Chi Psi Fraternity, which I joined, had a number of people active in crew. So, that's what pulled me into crew.

SI: Which sports did you drop and when did you drop them? Which ones did you stay with?

JC: Oh, I stayed with the swimming. That was what I was sort of best at, and swimming is a year-round sport. You've got to stick with it, tough competition. As you know, [when] you go from high school to college, the competition becomes significantly tougher, but our freshman swimming team was successful. We did some traveling and we were pretty good.

SI: Do you remember some of the trips you went on?

JC: We went to Philadelphia. That's about all that comes to mind.

SI: The gentleman I interviewed yesterday was on the swimming team. He said that his class did not get to go, but later classes got to go to West Point and compete there and had memorable experiences. Do you remember going to West Point?

JC: … I don't remember. We did not go to West Point for swimming. I've been to West Point, afterwards. [laughter] No, I don't remember that.

SI: Do you remember if there was any kind of freshman hazing, aside from fraternity hazing?

JC: No, don't remember anything like that at all. No, I was not aware of it. I probably would not have accepted it.

SI: Okay, or any kind of initiation for freshmen.

JC: No, no.

SI: For example, had they stopped making freshmen wear the dinks by then?

JC: Oh, we had them, but … there was no pressure applied to it.

SI: That is kind of a broader use of the term hazing or initiation.

JC: … Yes. … We wore them, but they disappeared. … I don't remember it as an issue at all.

SI: You mentioned that, in your first year, you were in a dorm.

JC: I was in a freshman dorm, right.

SI: Was that one of the Quad dorms?

JC: Yes, yes, can't give you a name.

SI: There is Pell, Hegeman; I always forget the third one, [Leupp Hall & Wessels Hall]. Our office is in Bishop House, which is right in front of it. I always forget the third one, which is right next door.

JC: Well, then, I can't remember either--I think Pell.

SI: Aside from the summer camp, was that the first time you had ever really been away from home?

JC: I think so, yes. Of course, summer camp sort of becomes your second home. I loved that, you know. We were living in stabilized tents. It was good, … but that was the only time I was away from home for any length of time.

SI: Did you adjust pretty easily to living in a dorm at Rutgers?

JC: Oh, I don't remember that there was any adjustment at all. This is what you did and that was fine. I had joined the Chi Psi Fraternity, much to my family's concern. "What in the world have you gotten yourself into?" but it worked out fine, ultimately, and I became treasurer and that paid for room and board. So, it was a good investment. [laughter]

SI: You said it was the crew that got you involved with Chi Psi.

JC: The other way around. I got involved with Chi Psi and there were so many, I think three or four, actively involved in crew. My ultimate roommate, Ray Finley, was in that, and so, I went along with it and enjoyed it.

SI: You were an ag [agriculture] student.

JC: Right.

SI: You had classes across town.

JC: Yes, and this is where the bicycle came in handy. … I can remember pedaling my way through town, with a friend holding on the back on roller skates. I'm not sure you could do that today, [laughter] but the classes were offset by about a half an hour. So, you could get from classes downtown to the Ag School.

SI: I was curious about that. People have said it was difficult going back and forth between the campuses.

JC: No, we had no trouble. … That's what the bike was for. …

SI: I do not remember interviewing anybody who was in pre-forestry.

JC: Well, there are not many people who were.

SI: What do you remember about the classes and your professors?

JC: Well, the classes were small. I don't think there were but five or six of us, and that's a little hazy. The classes were largely general reading about forestry, an excellent course in dendrology, which is the identification of different trees. … My classes were basically the same classes that the pre-meds had. It was a tough course and more science-oriented, on the main [College Avenue] campus. There weren't that [many agriculture classes]. We had soils, we had microbiology, we had a general agricultural course, at the Ag Farm. I remember, Professor Helyar was just outstanding in his support. It was a good mix. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

SI: Do any of your other professors, besides Helyar, stand out?

JC: Yes. The soils professor was a genius. He was one of these fellows who could talk history, play the violin. He came to the fraternity house, on occasion, to have supper with us.

SI: Was it Dr. Selman Waksman?

JC: Yes, yes, Dr. Waksman. Unfortunately, he was so eloquent in his lectures that you forgot to take notes. You were busy listening, and then, when it came to the test, you didn't have much to fall back on, except the textbook, and that was tough, but … he was just a marvelous person. He really was. He's the only genius, true genius, that I've ever met, and he was good. That was a real experience, to know him. I'm glad that you remembered his name.

SI: He is famous.

JC: Yes.

SI: Obviously, he is one of our most famous faculty members and alumni. When he came to the fraternity house, was he the invited guest?

JC: Yes, oh, yes. We would invite him and we would invite other professors, during the course of the year, to come and have dinner with us and give us a little talk about whatever was on his mind, just short. It was an excellent idea. It worked out well.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit more about your activities related to Chi Psi and what kind of things you would do at the fraternity?

JC: Well, at that time, Chi Psi was a strong fraternity. It was well run. The alumni were quite strong in seeing that things were provided and cared for. "Bones" Harold G. Lundberg, [RC '24], was the main leader of the alumni organization, became a good friend. … The way the building was organized, there were study rooms where two people would have space, a sleeping room was up on the third floor, wide-open, windows never closed, freezing in the winter, but it was a wonderful time. I spent two years in the fraternity house. Like I say, I was in the freshman dorm the freshman year and, senior year, after the war, I was a preceptor at the freshman dorm. So, I lived in that dorm the fourth year.

SI: For the record, you were at Rutgers for your freshman, sophomore and junior years. Then, you went into the war and came back to Rutgers for your senior year.

JC: That's right. It was the Class of '44, but graduated in '47, and, when they asked me, "What class do you want to belong to?" I said, "'44," because that's where all my associations were, right. The last year at Rutgers was just, "Let's get through this."

SI: When you entered Rutgers, you mentioned that you joined the ROTC, thinking that was a good idea.

JC: Right.

SI: What were you thinking about your future at that time? Did you have any sense that maybe you would get involved in the war, which was still a year away?

JC: Oh, no. I thought that sort of a civic duty was in line here, and two years was just the basic military training. Then, it was offered for the advanced training and I said, "Yes, I'll do that," just thinking, again, "This is what a person ought to do." It was not worrying about the war or anything. … No one can know ahead, and I certainly didn't.

SI: Was the war discussed on campus, particularly before Pearl Harbor? Were there any discussions of isolationism?

JC: Oh, I'm sure there were, but it was not an issue of isolationism. Isolationism was not an issue, as far as I knew.

SI: You do not remember any particularly strong pro-British or pro-isolationist voices.

JC: Oh, no, I don't, no. Of course, you're so busy doing schoolwork that you're trying to keep body and soul together. [laughter] No, I was not involved in politics, as it was, away from campus.

SI: I have heard that college campuses in general, but Rutgers in particular, were much less political than they are now. People were not as politically oriented or vocal.

JC: That could easily be. I have no way of measuring what it is now.

SI: Tell me a little bit about ROTC and what you remember about drilling or what you learned in the classes; how well do you think it prepared you?

JC: Well, nothing prepares you for the real war. There just isn't any way to do that. I would say the basic training was good. You already know a bit about the history of our class.

SI: Tell me in your own words.

JC: There were about fifty of us who elected to take the Advanced ROTC, and that would have been in our junior year, and I think, now, I have trouble with dates, but I had a draft card, but I'm not sure whether that accounted for being enlisted or not. At any rate, we all were in the Army and we had the advanced training for one year. … Then, we got all shipped off to basic training in the South, which we all went through, came back to Rutgers as part of the ASTP, Army Student [Specialized]Training Program, were at Rutgers, taking silly courses that, unfortunately, didn't qualify for college credit. Then, we went to Fort Benning for the Officer Candidate School. We worked our way through that, became second lieutenants. I elected to go to parachute jump school, also there, and, from there, I was assigned to the 13th Airborne.

SI: Going back to your ROTC training, your class did not go to summer camp.

JC: No, we did not ever go to summer camp.

SI: Any exercises?

JC: No, this was all class work, other than parade training, learning how to walk, … not stepping on your neighbor's heels.

SI: Did they get into more practical issues, things that you would encounter in the field?

JC: We didn't really have small-unit training. That was more a matter of training once you were in the Army, but, at school, at Rutgers, there was almost no fieldwork. It was essentially bookwork.

SI: Was there anything that you learned in the ROTC that you realized, "That was good training," later on, or, "That was not so good?"

JC: I think what you learned in the ROTC training was that you learned how to get along with your neighbors and work together. So, it became a close-knit group, because … it had long train rides, to and from, you went through field conditions together. … As history unfolded, as a group, we sort of hung together pretty well. That's all begun to disappear, of course, with advancing age, but it was a good group.

SI: The group stayed together remarkably well.

JC: Yes.

SI: Can you tell me about your experience of going from Rutgers into the military, then, down to Fort McClellan, the processing, the train ride, that sort of thing?

JC: Well, that's pretty much a blur at this point. We did it and we endured the uncomfortable part. I have no regrets for any of it.

SI: Did you have to go for a physical? Were you sworn in, or was that all taken care of through the ROTC?

JC: Oh, I'm sure we had physicals. Good Lord, everybody had physicals, coming and going, and I guess we were sworn in, but I have no vivid memory of any of that. … I'm afraid those details, they fade away. [laughter]

SI: Do you remember the train ride down to McClellan?

JC: No, not really. …

SI: Do you remember being at McClellan and your training there?

JC: Other than being there. It was not a problem for me. …

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SI: Please, continue. We were talking about Fort McClellan.

JC: Other than being there, no, nothing sticks out as a problem or a joyous spot. You endured it.

SI: I have heard from other members of the Black Fifty that it was pretty physically intense.

JC: Oh, for those who went in good shape, it was not a big deal.

SI: Being in the ROTC, you were probably familiar with military life, to an extent, the order and the hierarchy and so forth. That was not a shock at all.

JC: Oh, no, no. "This is the way it is, boys. Get with it." [laughter]

SI: Do you think they were particularly hard on you as officer candidates, trying to whip you into shape, anything like that?

JC: Oh, no. Actually, we had a retired sergeant who came back into service. He had flat feet. How he endured the marches, I don't know, but he was so good that he cajoled us, he got us into shape, he made sure we behaved. … We owe a lot to him for having come back from civilian life into service when his physical condition was not the best, but he was a very good sergeant for us, and I can't tell you his name.

SI: Was it Pappy Vopat?

JC: Could be, yes.

SI: Do any incidents with that gentleman stand out?

JC: No, no. You learned to avoid his wrath, [laughter] but he was good. He was very good.

SI: Do you know approximately how long that training was at McClellan?

JC: Oh, boy, no. You probably have other sources that can tell you. … No, I don't.

SI: At the end of that training, what was your status?

JC: I think we … then became PFCs, private first class.

SI: Then, you were sent back to Rutgers.

JC: We went back to Rutgers.

SI: What was it like, coming back to campus?

JC: Oh, we were delighted, delighted, and we were back in the dorms, the freshman dorms, I think four to a room, because I know we had double bunks. Everybody was glad to be back home. [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that these classes were not very useful for you.

JC: Well, they had prescribed mechanical drawing, which we had in high school. We didn't learn much more, other than you put in some time drawing things. I don't remember, really, the other classes. They were not college material classes. So, when it came to coming back to school, after the war, to finish the senior year, there were no available credits from that time, and so, I had to do a whole year at Rutgers, when I really was eager to get on to advanced training.

SI: Did you notice a big change between the Rutgers you had left and the Rutgers you came back to?

JC: Yes, because I'd been through the war experience, such as it was.

SI: I meant during the war, between when you left with the ROTC and when you came back for the ASTP? I will ask you later about the GI Bill years.

JC: … I don't think that I have any vivid memory of that period, other than it seemed to me a great waste of time and effort, in the ASTP, yes.

SI: Was the ASTP kept separate from other students?

JC: Oh, yes, yes; well, kept separate in terms of the class work and the uniform. I don't really, at that point, remember the civilian end of it.

SI: Were you mostly with your Rutgers classmates, or did you meet other people?

JC: Oh, yes, basically with the Army units.

SI: What was a typical day in the ASTP like?

JC: Well, you'd muster in the morning and you'd march to food, and then, you'd go to class and that's about all I can remember. It was a regular routine, but what it was in specific terms, now, I don't remember.

SI: Were you told that you would be in the ASTP for the long run or that it was just a brief stopover before your next training?

JC: I think we were there just to kill time, until there was room for us at Fort Benning, at the Officer Training School.

SI: That was your next stop.

JC: Yes.

SI: What do you remember about your training at Fort Benning?

JC: I thought it was pretty good. In terms of, "What do you remember about it?" other than going through the classes, … we had some intermix of men coming back from battle to attend officer training, and, for the most part, those fellows were quite disillusioned and did not suffer easily the training, and most of them, to my memory, did not complete the training. They were just there to get out of the shooting war.

SI: Did you ever talk to any of these men?

JC: Oh, yes, oh, sure.

SI: What did they tell you that made you think that they were disillusioned?

JC: Well, … like I say, they were fighting the system, mostly. … It was hard for them to relate to us, these college kids, and I can now really sympathize with their position, but most of them didn't last in the training, and there would only have been three or four of them.

SI: You said they were disillusioned. Is that a judgment you made based on your later experience or did you realize that at the time?

JC: Oh, I think, at the time, we realized they were. One of us, either we or they, were out of step with the training they were being offered. It just didn't fit their needs.

SI: Did you ever hear about actual combat before you went into combat, either from those men in the training or any of the instructors, or anybody that they brought in to talk to you?

JC: Well, of course, I never did go into combat. The only training we had for that, we had officers who had received the Medal of Honor and they would come and talk to us, largely about issues of courage and doing the job right, but … those were maybe four or five occasions. … In terms of meeting people who had been in contact with the enemy, no, that just wasn't there.

SI: What was going through your mind as you were going through training and going through each progressive step to becoming an officer? You were in infantry training, then, you volunteered for airborne, which is even more risky. Did you realize what you were getting into?

JC: Well, somewhat. What I realized most was, airborne officers got a hundred dollars a month more, and I thought, "I could use that money." Of course, you don't know what you're doing, and I was glad to have joined the jump school.

SI: You were commissioned after Fort Benning.

JC: Yes.

SI: Then, you went to …

JC: Jump school.

SI: Okay. Was that at Fort Bragg?

JC: Yes. Well, wait a minute now; it was in the peanut fields of Benning, and then, I was assigned to the 13th Airborne, from there, which was, at that point, being formed.

SI: What do you remember about jump school?

JC: Well, jump school is a funny feeling. The first concern is one of watching the training sergeants jump off a thirty-foot tower, with tethers that slid down a wire, and that's where they separate people. … If you're unwilling to jump off the tower, suspended on those tethers, then, you're out of the school, and, as being an officer, you come right to the head of the line, and that

turned out [okay]. I could see that nobody was getting hurt. It was just a matter of, "Can you get off that tower?" and that was not a problem. So, we had numerous training jumps, with parachutes and whatever, and it was never a big deal, but you want to do it consistently. In other words, we had, I don't know, five or six practice jumps, one of which [was] when you pack your own chute. Normally, the chutes are packed by experts, but they tell you how to pack it, show you how to pack it, you pack it, and then, you use it, and you hoped you did it right, but [I] never had any troubles with that. Later on in my years there, after the war, I became a personnel officer. … I didn't get to jump very often, and that became a little more hard to do, [laughter] because you just weren't in the mood of it, the swing of it. … Then, of course, I was separated from service, and I have not since jumped out of an airplane, and I'm not going to. [laughter]

SI: Do you remember your first jump and what that was like?

JC: I have no clear remembrance of it. It was relatively easy. I think it was about three thousand feet. It was a very safe jump. Of course, as you get closer and closer to being used as a parachute trooper, you … jumped at lower and lower elevations. You want to have one, two swings and down on the ground. You don't want to be hanging up there with somebody shooting at you. So, three thousand feet was a luxury, compared to when you get down to five hundred feet or something, but that's the way to stay alive, is two swings and down, but those things are long in the past now. [laughter]

SI: What do you think was the most important thing that they instilled in you at jump school?

JC: I would say that the most important thing is to keep in physical condition to do the job.

SI: Did any of the men in the Black Fifty come with you to the jump school?

JC: No. I think I was the only one, the only one. … Our paths really separated at that point. I had good friends who just sort of disappeared into other units; for years, never heard from any of them, of course. No, I think I was the only one who went to jump school, at that point. There may have been; no, I think I was the only one.

SI: Did you notice any significant change in your status or your conditions when you became an officer?

JC: Oh, sure. Compared to enlisted status, you ate better, you slept better. Yes, that's the way to go, man. [laughter] Oh, yes, there is a real advantage in being an officer.

SI: Where did you join the 13th Airborne? Where was it being formed?

JC: [Fort] Bragg.

SI: What was your role once you joined the division?

JC: Well, I was in a temporary position, I thought, in the company. … Then, we got the word that we were going to go overseas and the battalion commander from an adjoining outfit, right

there, asked if I would join his group and I said, "Sure," because I didn't want to be just an add-on officer. I didn't want to be unassigned. I wanted to be part of a group, and so, I was very glad to do that, and I did. We went overseas in that condition. You don't want to be unattached. You want to be part of a group. [laughter]

SI: Why was that?

JC: Well, you know better what you're doing. You have a sense of structure, you know where your bed is, you know where the food is, you know where your friends are, but, to wander loose as an individual, that's no good.

SI: What were your duties in your new position?

JC: I was a platoon leader, had two excellent sergeants, one of whom, Sergeant Raime, was a Sioux Indian, big, burly, smart as a whip, and the [other] platoon sergeant, George, [I have] forgotten his last name now, who was an experienced regular Army [soldier], and those guys carried me through my learning how to live with the group. So, I was in good shape, thanks to them.

SI: What was your command relationship with them like, particularly in the beginning, when you were finding your role?

JC: … Oh, I had learned along in the game that, if you have an experienced sergeant, you want to listen to him, and so, I did. We had a good platoon, and we had some crazy kids in it and we had some very sturdy people. We had a good platoon.

SI: Were they all green troops?

JC: Yes, yes, yes. They were all brand-new. There were, … other than the sergeants, no regular Army, that I recall, no. It was a new outfit, just being formed. We went overseas, got to where we would see the White Cliffs of Dover, and then, sailed off to Le Havre, where the rats were as big as dogs, went to Amiens, where we were in the marshalling field, … and we sat there. [laughter]

SI: Did you not actually stop in England?

JC: No. We just saw it. I had hoped we would stop there, but, no, they kept us going to Le Havre. I guess it was, as we saw those cliffs, somebody was making a decision as to where we would go and we landed at Le Havre, very beat up. It was tough, glad to get out of there.

SI: How long did you have in the States, while they were forming the division, to get to know your unit and get to work well together as a unit?

JC: Not long enough. In terms of months, I can't tell you.

SI: Not very long.

JC: No. Never did I feel we had enough small-unit maneuvering training and learning how to communicate, when you're in the woods or moving around. If you can see somebody, you can communicate, but, if they're out of sight, holding your unit together … takes experience.

SI: You felt that was something that was lacking in training.

JC: Not enough time to do it, not enough time to do it, and, you know, we lacked the opportunity to practice it. I tried to get it, but we never got time to do it.

SI: Can you take me through the process of getting on the boat and going overseas?

JC: Oh, well, my fond remembrance of that is, the unit came to the camp on the Hudson River, in New York. What was the name of that?

SI: Camp Pine? [Editor's Note: Mr. Carlaw was referring to Camp Shanks in Orangeburg, New York, a large Port of Embarkation just north of New York City.]

JC: No. At any rate, it was a camp on the Hudson River. Those who were nearby, officers, were allowed to go home for a weekend, and I did that. I got lost in the subway system of New York coming back. It was in the wee hours of the morning when I got … back to the camp, and my unit is walking down the hill. Sergeant said, "We've packed up all your equipment. Better get in line, Lieutenant," and so, I got in line and off we went to Brooklyn, … to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where we got on a troopship and went to Europe. If I had missed that boarding, it would have meant a court-martial. I was so lucky, and I have hated that New York Subway System ever since. [laughter] So, I was lucky there and the sergeants had me all packed up and, thanks to them, we went off in good shape, not that a troopship across the Atlantic Ocean is a joy.

SI: Do you remember which ship you went over on?

JC: No.

SI: Was it just a regular Liberty ship?

JC: It was over packed and terrible conditions. Everybody who could slept on deck, rather than down below; wouldn't want to do it again. Coming home from Europe, we had something like, I don't know, more than one hundred people over capacity and nobody minded a bit, [laughter] but, going across the other way, it was tough.

SI: Did the whole division fit on one ship?

JC: Oh, no, there were several ships. We were part of a convoy and, of course, this was well into toward the end of the war. We were sort of behind the curve in the war, which is why the unit was never committed. We got there, got ready, at one point, to support crossing the Rhine, but Patton found the Remagen Bridge, and so, they didn't need us. Parachute troops had no role

to play. They have no transportation of their own. They just can be just shock troops, but that's it. … We were ready to go, but never got the call to go, and then, after the war ended in Europe, we went to Auxerre, France, and Auxerre Caserne Vauban. … Ultimately, they said, "We're going to go to Marseilles, and you'll then go from there toward Japan." That got countermanded and they sent us back to the States to re-equip and we were merged into the 82nd Airborne, and that was a little embarrassing, because we got all [their military decorations]. The 82nd Airborne had been in a lot of trouble and [earned] a lot of awards and they had all sorts of ribbons and the Prince of Orange, the hose affair, [the Military Order of William, an orange lanyard, the highest military decoration conferred by the Netherlands]. So, we looked pretty fancy, but we had never been committed.

SI: You mentioned seeing the White Cliffs of Dover, and then, going to Le Havre.

JC: Right.

SI: Then, you were sent to this town.

JC: Amiens.

SI: Were you there until the end of the war?

JC: We were there, next to a marshalling area, they called it, an airfield, and we were just there, waiting to be used, … but the war was progressing so fast toward the east that our particular capabilities were not needed.

SI: What was a typical day like in that camp?

JC: Oh, you got up and you ate, and the food was available twenty-four hours. … The idea was, "Eat, put on as much fat as you can, because, when you're committed, you'll need every damn bit you got." So, we sat there listening to the airplanes come and go, not knowing exactly when we would go, but it was sort of tenseful, waiting to be used, but never were.

SI: Did you have any false alarms or training exercises?

JC: No. We were pretty much there. At one time, they wanted some enlisted volunteers to fly to Copenhagen, and two of our sergeants did that. They were delivering supplies, and I guess that was fairly uneventful. They came to the airfield, threw the supplies out and flew off, and one of the sergeants said, "The partisans were coming up one end of the airfield and the Nazis were coming up the other end." They never knew who got the supplies, [laughter] … because, of course, they got up and got out of there. I just remember, I met some Air Corps officers who were flying their laundry to Rome to get done. … That seemed to me, "What? They're flying laundry to Rome to get it done?" but we were just sitting there. The armorers came in and took our bayonets and tested them and looked at all the equipment, trying to get us in good shape, and I think we were ready to go, but … we just didn't have a place to fit in the scheme of things.

SI: There were no maneuvers.

JC: No, no

SI: It was just calisthenics.

JC: Yes, right.

SI: Did you get to go on any leaves or anything during that period?

JC: I did after the cessation of hostilities. Yes, I had two weeks at the City University in Paris, which was interesting, because the professors knew that we sat in classes during the day and roamed the streets of Paris at night, so that come the next morning in classes, half the people were asleep. … I loved it, but that's when you get to see the Follies Bergère. Then, later on, I had a week or so down in the Mediterranean, where we were at Juan-les-Pins, and that was nice. That was very nice. I remember going to parties there, in selected homes that had been taken over. The rest of them were all still booby trapped, but I remember diving into the Mediterranean. It's one of the few places I've ever been where the water is still blue when you're underneath. It was still blue. It was marvelous. I just loved it. It was a rocky coast and very pleasant. Then, we got the word we were going to go to Marseilles, and then, that got countermanded and we got shipped back to Fort Bragg.

SI: Were you ever concerned that you might be sent to the Pacific Theater?

JC: Well, that was the whole point. We were going to regroup in the States. We, at this point, were the 82nd Airborne, and we were very glad when they dropped the bombs, … because we'd have never made it. So, that was the end of the fighting. Then, they sent me off to academic school, to become a regimental personnel officer, which I did.

SI: That was …

JC: Chattanooga.

SI: When you were in France, what did you notice about the countryside and the places you saw? You mentioned Le Havre was very damaged.

JC: Oh, yes. Well, in Auxerre, which is on the banks of the Yonne River, we were in an old army, well, they called it a casern, Vauban. [Marshal Sebastien le Prestre de] Vauban was a military architect, very famous. Small town, I have since been nearby, but not actually in the town, would love to go back. I was, I guess, the youngest officer, so, I was pretty much in charge of what was going on in the casern. The other officers were billeted throughout the town, but that was all right with me. … The problem in France, at that time, was when our troops got to see a little bit of Germany. Germany was neat and clean, France was dirty and beat, and it was awfully easy for people to say, "Gee, I like this German set-up and this French bit is terrible," but the French had been occupied and all the soap went to Germany. So, I enjoyed the time in Auxerre, fortunately, had a corporal who spoke fluent French, which I had just two years [of] in junior high school. So, we were able to communicate and see how people lived. We

would trade our white flour for their dark bread flour, because theirs was much better tasting than our white flour. [laughter] So, we got along pretty well in our stay there. I had a couple of visits to Paris, but pretty much routine there.

SI: Is Auxerre a mid-sized city?

JC: Yes, yes, I would say. I believe it's since grown in size, but … it was a small city.

SI: Had it been particularly affected by the war or was that just the general condition?

JC: … No. There was no bombed out buildings or anything like that, no.

SI: You mentioned that you observed how they lived; was this through stories? What did they tell you and what did you see?

JC: Well, we saw them. … We wandered freely amidst them. … Unfortunately, we weren't too idle. We would send the troops out into the field to march around and try to keep them busy. This was an awkward time, trying to figure out how to keep a unit going when there was nothing to do, … sort of glad to have that phase end.

SI: Were there any problems with discipline?

JC: Well, we ran the brothel and had a doctor do what he could. The officer of the day was assigned to walk through the brothel. … It was just fine, until the word came down, "This is not what we do," and so, they closed it down, and then, of course, people began to get into trouble. … It shocks my family to know that I was in charge of the brothel, at one time. [laughter] … Those things happen.

SI: Was that something that your unit, your division, came up with, or was that something that the Army started? I have heard about that in North Africa. It seemed like there was some, at least unofficial, Army approval of this type of system.

JC: Well, I have no idea how higher echelon [decisions], anything like that, was worked out. We just knew that, with our own doctors in charge, it was better than when there was nothing in charge, and you've got troops that are idle. You've got to have a way to control it.

SI: Was there a lot of drinking?

JC: If there was, I wasn't aware of it. At one time, I was asked to get the liquor for a battalion party. So, I loaded up a two-and-a-half-ton truck and a lot of jerry cans, we called them, and, off down the road, the sergeant said he knew where we could get some white wine. … We went down the road and went to a winery. It was unoccupied. The kegs were there. We found one guy lying on his stomach in the tunnel underneath, drinking, and so, we helped ourselves and filled the wine bottles and drove off, and have since discovered that was a famous white wine vineyard. [laughter] … A lot of things went on trying to keep troops organized, happy, ready for the next call, which you wouldn't know what or when.

SI: Did you have to court-martial anybody?

JC: No.

SI: Take any disciplinary actions?

JC: Well, yes, certainly, we did disciplinary actions, but we handled it within our own resources.

SI: How did you feel about being in charge of men? I am guessing that these sergeants were older than you were at that time.

JC: Sergeant Raime was, I guess, my age. George was a little older, yes.

SI: How did you feel being the platoon leader?

JC: Well …

SI: Were you comfortable being in charge?

JC: Yes, I was. I tried to make use of their resources, as well as my own. I have since attended a seminar at Yale where different leaders were brought in and there was a vice-president from General Foods who talked about consultative supervision. … I think I learned in the Army, and since then, that that's the way to go, because I've since been in charge of people who knew more about what we're trying to do than I did. … You learned to somehow bring forth what they can do to help the cause, and I think that's sort of the way we worked. So, it wasn't a matter of, "You do this and you do that." First, you find out what it is we're trying to do, and so, then, you pick the best course, if you can, and it works.

SI: It sounds like you listened to your enlisted men, particularly your sergeants.

JC: Oh, of course, sure, right down the pecking order.

SI: What were the living conditions like in Auxerre?

JC: Cold and damp, not the best, … which is why the more senior officers were billeted elsewhere. [laughter] I was at the bottom of the pile, but I didn't mind that, because I knew it. I think we did fine. I would say that the biggest problem we had was with the Red Cross. When was that? Oh, they were charging for donuts, when they knew and we knew that the supplies came out of our kitchen, but, apparently, the arrangement had been made, of course, in the US. … So, it really wasn't that they were getting free out of our kitchen, and then, selling [them back to us], but that was the impression at the time. … It's amazing how a lot of the fellows were pretty resistant to the Red Cross as a result of that, but that's unfair, because it was just the way things were arranged.

SI: Did you have access to Red Cross personnel or facilities, or USO entertainment?

JC: I don't recall any USO there. There were certainly Red Cross personnel, in and out, but we had to make our own activities. What we needed was space and we were in this military enclosure, so, we had to walk out of town to find open space. Then, of course, you're into somebody's field. … I'd suspect they were very pleased to see us go. [laughter]

SI: Did you ever have to handle complaints from, or work with, local authorities?

JC: Not at my level, no. … I had no trouble. They had a great, big swimming pool there, in Auxerre, that the troops were allowed to use. The water wasn't all that clean, but we made provision for that. So, that was good. Probably, now, they would have condemned it, because it was a little green, [laughter] but the recreational facilities just didn't exist. We set up a few basketball courts in the middle of the casern. That was about it. That and we tried to wear them out, doing calisthenics and marching around the countryside. It was a challenge to keep everybody physically and mentally together.

SI: What did you think of your superiors, the officers further up the chain?

JC: Well, gosh, I can't remember the regimental commander. He was an ex-football player at West Point, big, burly guy. Of course, we hardly saw him; not horribly impressed, but we got along, yes, had no periods of anger or whatever, dislike or anything like that, just sort of bland. We got along. We tried to do what we're supposed to do. So, we did have some West Point platoon leaders and, of course, they were treated with kid gloves, but they were my friends anyway. So, we got along. [laughter]

SI: Was there a distinction between regular Army, Reservists and West Pointers?

JC: No, no. Well, yes, sure, there's a distinction between those who went to West Point. Oh, yes, I think they were generally given [advantages]. If there was a choice to be made, they were the ones who got the benefit of it, and perhaps that's the way it should be. As I say, we were friends, so, we got along.

SI: During your time in the service, was there anybody that you came across that stands out in your memory, who was maybe unique, that you had never met anybody like this in your previous experience, somebody from another area of the country or a different background?

JC: No, I would say [not], other than my two sergeants. There were an awful lot of guys from West Virginia who were never going to go back in the mines. We had plenty of them. No, I don't think there was anybody that outstanding.

SI: What about your own morale? You talked about your men and the difficulties keeping them occupied, but did you feel like your morale was okay during this period?

JC: Oh, yes. I was too busy to be otherwise. I mean, I was essentially in charge of the casern. The officers above me would come and go and I was there. That's how I got to have the two weeks on the Riviera, because they figured, "Boy, get this kid out of here." [laughter] … I

enjoyed that. No, I don't remember, at this point, anyway, any morale issues, just too busy, which was good.

SI: Once you returned to the States and Fort Bragg, you were then sent to Chattanooga for this personnel training.

JC: Well, yes. This was the camp, in Chattanooga, where the WACs [Women Army Corps personnel] were trained. I can't remember the name of the camp. At any rate, I received personnel training and became a classification and assignment officer, C&A, which merely was a waste.

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

SI: This continues an interview with James B. Carlaw on July 21, 2006, in Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, with Shaun Illingworth. Please, continue. You were talking about this camp in Chattanooga.

JC: Yes. I was shipped off to learn to be a personnel officer, which I was, came back to be regimental personnel officer. The significant part of that training was, I got a ride back to Bragg with the Air Corps and they put me in the nose, the "greenhouse," of an … A-20 attack plane. So, you're out in this plastic nose as you land and, suddenly, you're beginning to pull your feet up, because the runway is getting up and closer and closer, [laughter] and the Air Corps [officer] is sitting back there laughing, but that's how I got a quick ride home from the camp. The training there was pretty good. Of course, as I moved into my office there at the regimental headquarters, there were sergeants there … who knew how to do the business. … My job was signing papers and, eventually, learning the real game of how records and the administration of a regiment goes. Soon thereafter, I had enough points and was sent home.

SI: What would you say was the real game of how the regiment was run?

JC: Well, it's a mess of paperwork and, of course, … having been to school, and then, coming back to actually perform, it's a different game. … I found that the sergeants who knew what they were doing were the ones who pretty much told you, "Lieutenant, this is what we do next," and that was all right. I mean, that's how I learned. I also learned to take the Coke machine from the second floor and put it down in the first floor, where I could not get at it, because it's a lot of tension and you don't need one more Coke. [laughter]

SI: What did the tension emanate from?

JC: Just the pressure of getting the paperwork done, no personality problems or anything like that, just a matter of keeping up with the paperwork, of which there was plenty.

SI: I have heard from other people who worked on unit staffs that, sometimes, the officers, the higher-ups, would have people write up reports, and then, if they did not like what they produced, they would just say, "Well, that's not what happened," or, "That's not what we're going

to go with. You're going to rewrite what I'm going to tell you." Did you find that in your experience?

JC: No, I never had that kind of experience. I seemed to be able to deal right on the top of the table with everybody and, if we didn't like what they were doing, we talked about it right then and there. So, I deal with people right nose-to-nose. We either go or we don't go, or yes or no, or we decide then, and then, we do it.

SI: At that point, when you were in this function, had the war already ended in Japan?

JC: Oh, yes. Well, the war in Japan had ended. So, as I say, … they were counting points and I had enough and went home, delighted to do so. [laughter]

SI: Was part of the job processing men out of the Army, or was it just related to the function of the unit?

JC: Related to the function of the unit.

SI: I have heard that there was a lot of pressure aimed at military bases, particularly by Walter Winchell and others, to get people out of the service. They would even single out bases that were not getting people out fast enough.

JC: Oh, I don't remember. I don't remember that at all, no, or, if it was there, it was over my head. … It was not part of what I was doing.

SI: Then, you got out. Do you remember when that was?

JC: Yes. Let's see, … I was in three years, so, '46-'47, came back; no, it's got to be '46, … because I went then back to school.

SI: Did you go right back to Rutgers or did you take any time off?

JC: I have a feeling I had gotten out with time enough to be home for a summer before school resumed. So, it would have been in '46, some time in '46, because I remember working [at] the gas station at the foot of the hill. Then, I went back to school, finished … in '47, then, '48, on into Yale.

SI: Did you live on campus when you returned or did you commute?

JC: Oh, no, I was preceptor of a freshman dorm

SI: That is right.

JC: Yes, and that was sort of a strange period, because I was just getting courses to finish up. I had some forestry courses, economics, chemistry. Well, I was pretty busy.

SI: These freshmen that you were the preceptor for, were they a mixture of veterans and people out of high school?

JC: No, they were all people out of high school. I don't remember any veterans at all. … Gosh, I can't remember; it was the one right behind Bishop.

SI: Hegeman?

JC: Hegeman, I guess it was. … I had my meals at the fraternity house, occasionally would go with "the kids" for lunch or something.

SI: How did you get along with these people who were much younger than you and had not been in the service?

JC: Well, you probably need to ask them. I think we got along fine. My job was to be there if they had a problem and to maintain order, if that was needed, which [we] didn't really need. I was just there as a resource for them. Of course, I guess I appeared older, different, but we had good relations; can't give you a name … of any of them at all.

SI: Did you notice, in observing the rest of the campus, if everyone got along or if they were any problems with the great influx of veterans?

JC: Well, what I remember is, the *Targum*, the newspaper, got into trouble, I can't even tell you what the issue was, and I was asked to become president of the *Targum* Council, which I did, but I was sort of useless. I would walk in, and I guess it was some editorials that were not in favor with the school, and I guess my job was to tone it down, which did happen. So, we were pretty busy then. I was president of the society that received guests. What's the name of that?

SI: Crown and Scroll?

JC: Yes.

SI: Which guests do you remember receiving?

JC: No. You know, there really was a system for handling them, and we weren't called upon to do an awful lot, as I recall, shake a few hands and that was it.

SI: These would be speakers and musicians.

JC: Yes, yes. It was not too demanding, as I recall.

SI: Do you remember what the subjects were of some of the editorials that you worked on for the *Targum* Council?

JC: No.

SI: Anything that they asked you to tone down?

JC: As I recall, my activity there was to walk in the office and smile, just be a presence. I don't ever recall being asked to rewrite anything. I think the editors had gotten into hot water and probably resented my presence, but you'll have to ask Howie Crosby [Dean Howard Crosby, '41] what happened, [laughter] because he's the one who said, "Jim, we need you to fit in here," which I did.

SI: Do you remember any of the administrators of that time, like Crosby or [Dean Earl Reed] Silvers, anybody who was particularly helpful?

JC: Oh, Howie Crosby, … in my freshman year, was one of the proctors of the freshman dorm and that's where we got acquainted, and I would say, over the course of the college experience, he was very helpful. … Then, there was George; damn I've forgotten his name. He and this fellow George were in charge of the freshman dorms, when I was a freshman, but Crosby, of course, stayed on campus for years and years, yes, became Dean of Men.

SI: When you say he was helpful, was he helpful to you personally or in general?

JC: Yes. Well, we were friends. That's about the size of it, as far as I know.

SI: Other than Dean Crosby, did you have any other interaction with administrators?

JC: No, heavens no. I tried to keep out of trouble, no. [laughter]

SI: Looking back through your career, how well prepared do you think you were by your education at Rutgers?

JC: Very well prepared. My courses, like I said, … my classmates were pre-med, pretty demanding, and some I did well with and some I didn't do too well with. Calculus was a problem, because I took a physics course that was explained in calculus at the time I was taking calculus. So, if I hadn't had a monitor there to help me through, I'd have never made that one. As it was, I barely did, but the rest of the courses were fine. I didn't have any trouble with them at all, but that one was tough. That physics course just did me in. [laughter] Well, I thought I was well prepared. Certainly, when I got to Yale, I found I was as prepared or well prepared or better prepared than anybody else, some of whom were coming from Dartmouth and other places like that. So, no, my preparation was fine.

SI: You were still following the same course that Helyar had laid out.

JC: Yes, well, the course being a sense of pre-forestry, and then, the master's degree at Yale. That worked out fine. My experience at Yale was excellent.

SI: Can you tell me about that?

JC: Well, Dean Garrett, at Yale, was very helpful, just a wonderful man with students, and we were a class of, mostly, I would say almost entirely, veterans. So, you know, everybody was eager and ready to get on with their education and we're trying to catch up in our years. So, I had a wonderful experience at Yale.

SI: Did you develop a specialty within forestry at this point?

JC: Well, I was interested in forest management and the school, at that time, was interested in forest management. They have since switched their emphasis to environmental concerns. … My idea of forestry was how to manage a forest for the production of goods, multiple use management, recreation, watershed management, the works, and, of course, in subsequent years, we've been overwhelmed by an emphasis on preserving and limiting the activity in the woods. So, it's a real political change. …

SI: Did you have to write a thesis at Yale?

JC: Yes. I wrote a thesis on watershed management. Don't ask me now why I chose that topic, but it was what I was interested in, and have had little to do with it ever since, other than in managing our lands in Maine and in the Northeast. We were pretty firm about how to not mess up watercourses and how properly to bridge a stream when you're crossing it with trucks, this kind of stuff.

SI: Does that require fieldwork or is it mostly bookwork and interpreting other data?

JC: No, no. It means experience and having somebody right there on the ground who knows what they're doing, oh, yes.

SI: Did your thesis require any fieldwork?

JC: Oh, to do the thesis, oh, okay. The thesis was bookwork entirely, because, … well, that's all you had time for. So, you're looking at … all the write-ups. It was bookwork. …

SI: Were you going to school full-time at Yale or did you have a job?

JC: Oh, yes. Oh, no, this is full-time and summers, one summer, I worked for the US Forest Service, and in joint activity with the Canadian Forest Service, and we worked our way through Canada. These were the days of the spruce budworm infestation, which was killing spruce and fir. … The question was, "How long after a tree has been killed by the insect is it still useful for making pulp for newsprint?" … So, we spent the summer, with a crew of six of us, going from Ontario all the way to the western end of Lake Superior, cutting down trees and splitting them and taking samples for rot and ending up with, at that point, just lots and lots of notes. … We had two professional entomologists with us, well, one entomologist, one pathologist, and their recommendation, at the end, was, "You have three years," which any woods boss could have told them the first week, but we had scientific proof. So, I guess it was worthwhile, [laughter] but that was a good summer, came home and got married.

SI: You both went to the same high school. Is that where you met?

JC: Yes. Well, Teddy [Theodora] was in the adjoining town of South Orange and I grew up in Maplewood. So, we went to the same high school.

SI: You got married before you graduated from Yale.

JC: Yes. She put me through school. I had the GI Bill and she worked at an architect firm in New Haven. We had an apartment in an area that has since become urban renewal. We laugh over the conditions, but they were fine. … We left there and put all our possessions on the roof of the car and drove to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where I worked for the Forest Service for a summer. I found out that they weren't making permanent appointments, because you took a test at the time as to what you knew. … Those who were veterans, whatever their score was was improved by ten points, or something like that, and that meant that they would be appointing people who'd been wounded and couldn't do the fieldwork. So, they just said, "We can't do this and we're not making any permanent appointments." Well, I said, "I'm going to go back home and start over again then," which we did do, and I got a job as 4-H agent at large at Rutgers, … but that wasn't my cup of tea. … I walked the streets of New York and got a job with International Paper Company and worked for them for thirty-four years. … After awhile, they said, "We can't stand this anymore. Why don't you go home and stay there?" and I said, "Well…" "We'll pay you for two years for not working." I said, "Where do I sign?" [laughter] So, we left Dallas, at that time, where we were, and came here to the Cape, [Cape Cod]. We've been in this house longer than any other one place we've ever lived. We were here in '86.

SI: Where were you working when you were recalled for Korea?

JC: In the New York office. I was hired by the New York office. At the time, I was the only forester there, and I guess they didn't know what they'd hired, but they thought they'd give it a try, and so, I worked there, went to Maine, where I was a scaler/inspector for a period of time, where I could learn the woods work, which I did. I came back to the office and became a technical assistant to the manager of woodlands, Larry Kugelman, and, ultimately, he got promoted, and so, I got promoted into his job, became manager of the northern woodlands, was able to move the office out of New York City, to Glens Falls, New York, which was much better, where we had an airplane and could get around Maine. In Maine, we had two airplanes, … on floats and skis and whatever. So, communications were much better up there. Then, they said, "We'd like to have you go to Mobile," and I said, "I don't want to go to Mobile." They said, "Jim, that's where the job is." So, I said, "Well, I'll be there tomorrow." [laughter] So, we went south and lived in Mobile for a couple of years, four years, I guess, and then, they moved the office to Dallas. So, we were there for a few years, until we retired. Job changed in tenor. In the Northeast, it was managing the woodlands. When I was down there, it was projects.

SI: What kind of projects?

JC: Well, we had projects in Canada, a project in Ireland, where they wanted to know, "Was there enough wood to build a newsprint pulp mill, world-class?" and I determined there was not, and I had a job in Russia, at that point. This was during the times of Brezhnev. … We could

build a pulp mill and have it up and running in three years. It was taking them seven years or more and it still wouldn't run, and you didn't have to visit Moscow very long before you realized why they couldn't make it work. … The problem was that, with their planned society, they had these organizations, one would make pulp mill machinery, another one would manage the woods, another one would be in charge of transportation, but they had no means of making those units coordinate. In the US, … the president [of the firm] would call the guys together and say, "Now, we're going to do this and we're going to be done by so-and-so and I'm going to see that you guys do it," whereas, over there, they had no means of forcing these different companies, actually, together. So, they were delivering pulp mill machinery to a roadside and it would just sit there, because the construction crews weren't ready for it. There was just no way for them to pull together, and that was why it took them so long to do it. So, this was a proposed mill on the Yenisey River. The Yenisey River is the size of our Mississippi. It has the misfortune of flowing north, to the Arctic Ocean, where everything freezes up. So, the season to deliver wood by water was about ninety days and the taiga is just a sea of mud in the summer, and so, they were having real problems pulling themselves together. … I spent about three weeks there, in November, delighted to have had the experience, but very pleased that, at that time, the Jewish vote in Congress would not allow the credits that the Russians needed to build anything. So, nothing happened and I'm very glad, because I would still be there trying to make it work.

SI: What was it like being in the Soviet Union at that time?

JC: We were the guests of the government and not that much aware of the political ramifications. We knew their sensitivities. We had a final banquet and we were all asked to give our impressions and I described their woods operations as being fairly primitive. The machinery was not on a par with what we used here in the US and Canada. … They all sucked in their breath, which was pretty well laden with vodka, and then, I explained, "But, not all is lost, because this primitive machinery can be repaired in these small villages, whereas if something goes wrong with our equipment, we have to get an expert to repair [it], but our expert is handy. He's just down the road or we can fly him in, whereas these little logging operations are so remote that the only way you can keep things going is to have simple machinery." Well, they all broke out in smiles and, of course, that's the key to their military operations. They keep themselves simple, which is not a bad idea.

SI: You were escorted all the time.

JC: Oh, yes. We were always; well, had to be. When I said, "I need to get in the woods and see what the operations are," I had a woman guide who spoke English. She was actually a geologist. She spoke English. So, that was necessary. So, she and I got in this little bus, with a couple of Russians, drove off into the woods, near Lake Baikal, which, if you've never visited, is a marvelous lake, just incredible. At any rate, we went to this small logging village, started to get out of the bus, and the guy grabbed my arm. He says, "Don't, because the mastiffs, the dogs, don't know you," and these dogs were the size of a pony, "and they'll eat you alive." So, we waited until the head man came out of the little office there and he shooed the dogs away, and then, we were all right. We could wander, but it was a real experience and I'm glad to have gone and glad to have come home.

SI: Did you have any other projects?

JC: Well, we were closing a pulp mill in Florida and my job was to sell 175,000 acres of timberland, which I prepared the paperwork for it, and we did. It went to Southwest Forest Industries. Our pulp mill there, I think the problem was, it needed capital repair and the company decided it wasn't worth putting that capital into it. So, they sold the pulp mill and the timberlands that supported it and, as I say, my job was to sell the timberlands. … I think that's actually what sold, the combination of land and mill, because the outfit that bought it was, essentially, a sawmill operation.

SI: Can you tell me about Korea and being recalled? You were in the Reserves.

JC: Oh, well, I was in the Reserves. It was inactive Reserves, because I was still a student, and I had finished my work at Yale, had been hired by International Paper. I was visiting foresters in Vermont when the mail came to my mother, who opened it up and said, "My God, they want Jim to report to Kearney Shipyards to be called up." So, she phoned us and I went and reported in and they signed me right up. I had a good friend, Frank Geiger, who reported the next day and they sent him away. They had their quota. So, my mother just felt terrible about that. At any rate, I was called up, went to work in charge of heat and hot water at Fort Dix. They gave me the fellows who couldn't pass basic training to run these high pressure boilers. I'm not sure how sensible this was, but it worked. At the time, if you had less than six months in service left to go, I was called up, I think, for a year-and-a-half, and, if you had less than six months to go, they would not send you overseas. Well, one day, before the six months period comes, you get your orders and away you go. So, I flew to Alaska, and then, Japan. They assigned [me] to two weeks in Gifu to the CBR, Chemical, Biological and Radiological School, and then, put me on a ferry to Pusan, where I became operations officer of the … 8069th "Repple-Depple" [Replacement Depot]. Our job was to receive incoming troops as individuals, equip them and assign them to units, but we did not handle units. They were handled elsewhere, and it was quite an experience, being in Pusan. The fighting had advanced, at that point, to north of Taegu and I was not near any of that. Like I say, our job was to receive troops and assign them and ship them off. Then, again, my six months were up and I came home.

SI: What was the base in Pusan like?

JC: It was an old Japanese-built school. The history of Japan and Korea is simply awful. They were terrible managers, ruthless managers. Korea really suffered when the Japanese were in control. At any rate, this was an old school that had been built by the Japanese. We had a fire that burned part of the school. The heating equipment was all kerosene pot burners and enough, over the years, had spilled on the floor, so [that] the fire was pretty devastating to that building. So, we set ourselves out in new tents and that was actually better living. Our experience was, however, that the Korean National Guards, during the fire, were throwing all their equipment over the fence, to compatriots, and it was just disappearing. So, unfortunately, we had to take all these soldiers, who were being mustered out of hospitals and newly [arrived] from the States, to be our guards and, well, available manpower as needed. … Pusan was an interesting place. I've never been through markets full of more strange looking fish and crabs, [laughter] things that people will eat there that we're just not used to, … and I walked the countryside. They were bare

hills covered with azaleas, because that's the only thing that had been left. Interesting country, but, again, I never got north to see much more.

SI: Could you tell, through the nature of your work, whether or not they were bringing a lot of men into the theater or rushing men in?

JC: Well, what I did observe was that we were two hundred company grade officers over strength in the Eighth Army. Trying to fill the company grade officer need, they were bringing guys, like myself, who had finished academic training, doctors, lawyers, putting them in uniforms. They were out of physical shape, that is, they were not in good physical shape, and we'd say, "Captain, your unit's on the top of that hill. Start walking," and it was just criminal. They were dying like flies, because they were just not in physical shape at all, but they were trying to plug what was going on on the hillsides. It just was terrible. I think if anybody ever wanted to write an article about that, they'd be all sorts of hell to pay, but they were doing what they had to do, because the troops were just not ready at that point.

SI: Did you see any rhyme or reason to the Army's method of placing people?

JC: The placing of people in the Army is, as a classification and assignment officer, with the training I had, you could interrogate a person, find out what his capabilities were, and that was good, but the problem was, what they needed were infantry officers, sergeants, corporals, and that's where they got sent. It didn't matter that you were a physicist; what we need is a rifleman. So, that's where you got sent. It's very hard to get everybody into that niche which they want to be, because that's what they liked or would want to do. I had forestry training, was never assigned to a forestry unit. That isn't where they needed us. They needed us with a rifle.

SI: What was a typical day like at the base in Korea?

JC: Oh, not different than any other office job. … Like I said, we ended up living in a tent, which was good. We had a houseboy, who came as just a waif off the street. We fed him, he stayed. Within two weeks, he was speaking English, smart as a whip, and we were glad to have him and he was glad to have us. The surrounding area was very primitive. I went into a couple of the homes. Their heating system was fascinating. It was clay tunnels under the floor and they'd build a fire and it heated the house, single-story, of course, and the house, … the building, was warm, because of their primitive, effective heating system. Their food was beyond us. One of the staples is *kimchi*, which is fermented cabbage, and, if you're in a room with them, your eyeballs, your eyes, will start to water, simply because the odor, the fumes, are so strong, but that was a staple, fermented cabbage, *kimchi*. You would see noodles drying on a clothesline next to the road, with the dust coming up and everything else, but that's how they survived.

SI: How did you feel while you were over there? Were you resentful or were you okay with it?

JC: Somewhat, yes, because, here, if I hadn't gotten to Kearney Shipyards in a hurry, I wouldn't be there. You know, it interrupted my job at International Paper. The law, at the time, was that they had to hold the job for me, … and they did, and I was thankful for that, but, yes, it was a time when … it isn't what you wanted your time to be doing.

SI: Did you notice differences between World War II and Korea, in your own personal experience?

JC: Well, it was a different experience. I had an active platoon in World War II and, here, I was just with a bunch of fellows doing the paperwork to receive troops and ship them off to units. So, it was entirely clerical.

SI: Did you work with any of the incoming men?

JC: No, no. Your job was to try to make them settle down and [say], "This is what we're going to do and you'll be out of here in two days."

SI: You told a story about the Koreans throwing the equipment over the fence.

JC: Right, yes. That was bad news, because I had established, I thought, a rapport with the Koreans who were working with us and I was beginning to learn their language. I was beginning to use their, call it their computer, slipping beads?

SI: Abacus?

JC: Yes, and we were getting along, I thought very well, but they did nothing to prevent the Korean National Guards from throwing equipment and stuff over the fence, where it was rapidly disappearing. So, they disappeared; we got rid of them. We no longer had any Korean help. It was all done by our own servicemen.

SI: They were clerical workers.

JC: Yes.

SI: They were not ROK [Republic of Korea military] people.

JC: No. Well, the ROK would have been the National Guard, but they were just not dependable and there was, you know, a market for everything they threw over the fence.

SI: In either Korea or World War II, did you have any contact with black markets or were you aware of any of that activity?

JC: No, no. … I wasn't aware of it, I guess temperamentally, wouldn't have been part of it. The only thing was what you could exchange for a bar of soap in France, [laughter] and that got spoiled pretty quick.

SI: At Pusan, were there any air raids?

JC: No. … I got there after Pusan itself was, at one point, the point of last resistance, and then, with reinforcements, everything moved up the railroad north. So, I was behind the curve there.

No, we had no enemy activity at all. I was cautioned about walking around the hillsides by myself.

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

SI: To wrap up Korea and World War II, what are your most vivid memories? What stands out most in your memory?

JC: I think, World War II, the memory was, we'd gone through a lot of hectic training, got to Germany and we were not used. Of course, maybe that was just as well, but that was a lot of effort and they didn't need us. In Korea, I was just glad to get out and go home. It was an interesting experience. I was glad to have been in Japan. Gifu is a very fascinating area.

SI: What did they teach you in the Chemical, Biological, Radiological School?

JC: Well, basic training as to how to protect yourself with the elements of gas and radiological exposure. A lot of that's all gone in my mind at this point, and I'm sure it's all been superseded by new information. It was one of those things that somebody decided was a good idea. "You may need it. You'd better get it now when we can give it to you," but, in terms of my use of it, I never had any.

SI: Returning to what you said about World War II, I have heard that from others, that it is built up in training so much that you are going to go into combat, and then, if you do not go into combat, it is quite a letdown. How did they build that up, in your experience, before you went to Europe?

JC: Well, the training is entirely to help you be prepared for the job they are expecting you to do. I don't remember any sense of building major anticipation or elation, that you're finally getting into doing something they trained you to do. You're there, you're trying to do a job and you'll do the best you can with whatever the job is. It's spread out over such a period of time that you don't build up anticipation particularly. Maybe the day before you do, [laughter] but, no, I accepted that all the training was somehow going to be useful and, boy, you'd better get all you can get, because, when you're there, you're going to need it all. … Certainly, that's what the sergeants tell you. "If you can lie down and rest, do it, because, sooner or later, you're going to have to get up and run." So, that's what we did.

SI: What about serving in an airborne unit? All airborne units have that *esprit de corps*.

JC: Right.

SI: They drill that into you. Did you have that sense?

JC: Oh, yes, oh, sure. Yes, you felt that, "Hey, we're something," and you were delighted to be part of it and they gave you all sorts of insignia to represent what you were and a hat that said so, but that's all part of the game that's played.

SI: We went over your career. What was it like going out to Idaho for that summer?

JC: Well, you're leaving the world behind to enter a new world, and you're taking your wife with you and all the possessions you own, and I went to Missoula, which was the headquarters of the Forest Service in that area. … They assigned me to Coeur d'Alene National Forest. So, we went to Coeur d'Alene, found ourselves an apartment and I went to work. The work was, at that point, on a pine disease survey. We were climbing the Western White pines to look for disease at the end of the branches. So, there you are, forty, fifty, sixty feet up in the air and the wind is blowing and you're looking for things at the end of the [branch], and I could no longer do that now, but I did then. … We fought a few forest fires. This was '49, when they were having terrible fires in Montana. So, they shipped everybody on the forest to Montana, except the hotshot crew of our pine disease group. So, when we had fires there in Coeur d'Alene, ours was the group that went out and tried to catch them before they got too big. It was a dry summer and the main problem were old snags, dead trees left from previous forest fires, usually during World War I time, that would catch lighting. … They'd have a dry lightning storm, where the lightning would strike these trees, but no rain. So, they would smolder and burst into flame, and then, you'd have a fire on your hands. We were in good shape. … That's the only place I've ever been where you walk out in the morning and you're walking uphill and, when you come home at night, you're still walking uphill, and I don't know how that works, but we did, but that … didn't get anywhere. So, I said, "We'll come back East and start again."

SI: How long did you work at Rutgers as a 4-H agent?

JC: Not long, a year, lived in veterans' housing, across the river. It was incredible. There were others there like ourselves, who had been in the service, in this veterans' housing.

SI: Were these trailers?

JC: Yes, yes.

Theodora Carlaw: No.

JC: No? What were they? Quonset huts.

TC: Little things.

JC: Yes, I'm sure they're all gone, long gone, oh, yes.

SI: Many of the GI Bill era alumni that we talked to were either in those or in the trailers on the Hillside Campus.

JC: Hillside Campus, where's that?

SI: I am not sure if it was an official campus. That is just what people called it, Hillside, but it is the Busch Campus.

JC: Yes, but we were across the river.

SI: Yes, over by the stadium.

JC: Yes, and the stadium's been rebuilt. … I haven't been back to see that. Well, I made good money parking cars there. I never saw a football game, but I parked a lot of cars. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything that we skipped over, anything you would like to add to the record?

JC: Not that I know of, no. I've already talked more than I should have, but I do appreciate your coming. …

SI: Thank you for having me. Thanks for volunteering to tell your story. If you think of anything else, you can add it to the transcript. Officially, thank you very much.

JC: Well, officially thank you.

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

Reviewed by Sean Benedict 11/14/07
Reviewed by Edwin Robinson 5/30/08
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 6/23/08
Reviewed by James B. Carlaw 7/4/08