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NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAWRENCE DOWNEY

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and
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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview Lawrence "Skip" Downey in Hopatcong, New Jersey on July 29, 2013 with Shaun Illingworth and …

Kyle Downey: Kyle Downey.

SI: Mr. Downey, thank you very much for having me here today.

Lawrence Downey: Fine, yes.

SI: Thank you to your family as well for their hospitality.

LD: Okay.

SI: To begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

LD: I was born in New York City on December 19, 1929. I was the second child in our family.

SI: Okay.

LD: I had an older sister, who has since passed away, [and three younger siblings].

SI: Can you tell me your parents' names for the record?

LD: Yes, my father's name was Lawrence Downey, but I'm not a junior. My mother's name was Agnes O'Hare Downey. They were also born in New York City …

SI: Okay.

LD: As far as I can recollect from information that was passed down, my grandparents on both sides were also born in New York City.

SI: Okay.

LD: So, when some relatives have said, "Do you have any history of when our ancestors came to the United States?" we don't have a clue. We don't know which ones came first or how long ago they came. So, it's kind of frustrating, but I think it might be kind of typical of Irish-American families. They're not very outgoing with things in the past, yes. I don't know why, but that's the way it is, like old photos are not saved and things like that.

SI: What do you know about your grandparents' generation on your father's side of the family? What did his family do?

LD: Well, I met my father's mother once in New York City, and I was very, very young. I think her husband had predeceased her, so I never met him. I have no idea when she passed, because I think I was so young I was never invited to the funeral or anything like that. My father had one,

two, three, I think he had three brothers, and they all worked in New York City. The most interesting one was, I guess, the middle brother, Will, Will Downey, and he was a hansom cab driver around Central Park in New York. The other guys, I think they worked for different, firms, but they were not professional people. [They were] blue-collar workers basically, yes.

SI: Where in the city was his family from?

LD: I believe it was on the East Side [of Manhattan] in the thirties, but I couldn't pin down I was born in New York City, and I think we lived there for a brief period of time before we moved to Queens. [Editor's Note: The five boroughs of New York City, New York are Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. The road grid in Manhattan is designed with avenues running north-south and streets going east-west. The thirties refer to streets in Manhattan that are numbered in the thirties.]

SI: Okay.

LD: So, I was basically raised in Queens. My father didn't have any sisters that survived. On my mother's side, like I said, her parents were also born in New York City, Jim and Catherine O'Hare. Again, Jim was not a professional. I think he worked for Nabisco for many, many years. He died [in] about 1936, I think. Catherine, my grandmother, died much later. She was quite a character. She was known for chasing buses with her umbrella when they didn't stop for her and things like that. The neighborhood knew her quite well, and she was [a] pretty shrewd investor. She owned a couple of apartment buildings in Queens. She was good. She had ten children, seven boys and three girls. My mother was the youngest girl. They were in various trades, I guess, painters and truck drivers, and Bill, my uncle Bill, was a professional soldier. I think he joined the Army when he was probably about seventeen, right out of high school, and that was before World War II, so he was in World War II. He was in the infantry, and he was also in the MPs [military police]. He was in the Battle of the Bulge, and he received a battlefield commission. Then, he came back to the States after the war, and then he went to Korea when Korea was on. Then, he retired from the Army after thirty-five years, I think. [Editor's Note: American involvement in World War II began after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and pitted America and its allies against the Axis nations of Germany, Japan and Italy. On December 16, 1944, Adolf Hitler launched Germany's last offensive in Europe in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium. German forces achieved a salient in the scantily-defended American lines, earning the battle its name, the Battle of the Bulge. The Americans responded with infantry and armor reinforcements and forced German retreat by January 16, 1945. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945. Japan signed its formal surrender on September 2, 1945, ending World War II. From 1950 to 1953, the Korean War involved American, South Korean and United Nations military forces fighting against the North Korean military, backed by Chinese military forces and Soviet weaponry, for control of the Korean Peninsula. Korea remains divided at the thirty-eighth parallel.]

SI: Oh, wow.

LD: He was quite a guy, yes, and quite an athlete, too. This is probably [an] aside, but Bud reminded me of this story that we were living in New Jersey, in our first house in New Jersey in Chatham. I didn't even realize it, but the Army had several Nike missile bases installed around New Jersey and one was not too far from where we lived. [Editor's Note: The U.S. Army set up Nike missile installations as a part of its air defense system during the Cold War.] Chatham was just a few miles away from Livingston. So, one day, Bill came over with a friend of his in the Army, both soldiers, and I can't remember the fellow's name that was with him, but he was black, okay. They visited, and we had a good time, talking about family things and things like that and the Army, etcetera, etcetera. When they left, my son Bud said, "Which one is Uncle Bill?" [laughter] That was quite a story. That's to be remembered for a long time. [laughter] So, anyway, the other guys, the other brothers, I think they've all passed now, but they were interesting guys, each one different, and family affairs, usually an argument would start. Irish Americans used to have differences of opinion about things. All in all, they were good, and we kept in touch quite a long time. Well, we kind of drifted away. When we moved to New Jersey and they were still in New York, and so we kind of drifted away a little bit, but we still kept in touch. I did have one uncle that lived in New Jersey. He came over and visited quite often …

SI: Your mother's family, were they already in Queens?

LD: They were in, basically, in Queens. Jim was in New Jersey. The others were all in Queens, right, and my two aunts, one was in New Jersey and the other one lived in Manhattan.

SI: When your mother was growing up, were they in Queens then?

LD: No, they were in New York City.

SI: Okay.

LD: My family didn't come to Queens until after I was born …

SI: Okay.

LD: Which would have been probably in 1929, probably in 1930.

SI: Your grandmother, she did not invest in the apartment buildings until after that point.

LD: Afterwards …

SI: Okay.

LD: Yes, and I don't know how she was able to do it. Financially, I have no idea how she was able to do it, but she was pretty tight, I think, yes, but friendly ... [laughter]

SI: What did your father do for a living?

LD: My father was what we would call a delivery salesman. He worked for a small company in Long Island City, where they made mayonnaise and ketchup and pickles and all kinds of condiments, okay. His route was in Manhattan, and he went to a lot of the restaurants, like the 21 Club and Toots Shor's and a lot of the famous restaurants. His job was to deliver what they ordered, and then try to sell them more. I used to have fun, because every once in a while, I would go with him, go on the route and meet some of those people. Of course, I met all of the fellows that were at his shop where they worked, which was very small. It was a lot fun going around Manhattan, hopping in and out of the truck and bringing stuff in and meeting the people and stuff like that. The only thing that surprised me with some of these really nice restaurants, the kitchens were really terrible. [laughter] If you saw some of the kitchens, you wouldn't eat there, [laughter] but anyway, that was fun to do that.

SI: Do you know how your parents met?

LD: I'm not sure. I know at the time they met, my father did not have this job. He had a previous job driving a truck for Macy's in New York City, and my mother was an executive secretary for a manager in Macy's. How they met, I have no idea, but they did. Then, they got married, and I guess Ann was born in 1927, a couple of years before me. So, they must have been married probably in 1925, something like that, but I'm just really guessing on that.

SI: Did your mother continue to work?

LD: No, she then became a homemaker. My mother died very young.

SI: Do you want to take a break?

LD: No. She was forty-five when she died. My older sister was out of the house basically. She went to nursing school under a government program that was on during World War II, so she became a nurse. I was in my senior year of college. My brother, Phil, was six years younger than me, and then I had two sisters who were, I think, eight and six, so it was kind of burden for my father when she passed. Anyway, where do you want to go from there?

SI: Well, tell us about some of your earliest memories of where you grew up.

LD: Okay, well, I do remember being told the origin of my name Skip. At the time, I was three or four years old, I guess, I used to get in a lot of trouble for some reason or other, and at the time there was movies going on with a character called Skippy. I think it was Jackie Coogan was the actor, and they figured, well, that's a suitable name for me, so they called me Skippy. [Editor's Note: Mr. Downey is referring to the 1931 film called *Skippy* starring Jackie Cooper and Robert Coogan.] I was accused of getting out of my crib when I was young and trying to make a malted milk with the mixer. Now, I was accused of it; I was never convicted. [laughter] Anyway, like I said, I grew up in Queens, and my father and mother bought our first house like in 1940. I think it was, yes, about a year before Pearl Harbor. Up until that time, we were living in rented apartments. First, there was just Ann and I in Astoria. I remember Astoria. We went to pre-school. Then, I went to Woodside. That was still pre-school, and then we went to Jackson

Heights. We were there a couple of years, and then we went back to Astoria. The final move in 1940, I think I was like in fifth grade, and we moved to Bayside. That's when they bought the house in Bayside …

SI: Okay.

LD: [I] lived there until I went in the Army, actually. So, we skipped around quite a bit, and I went to four schools from k [kindergarten] to eight, yes.

SI: Do you know if that was a result of the depression?

LD: Well, I'm sure it was the fact that they didn't have the financial means to buy a house, and they tried to find economically reasonable rentals. Although these places are different, they're not really very far apart. In fifteen, twenty minutes, you're from Astoria to Jackson Heights or Woodside or whatever, so they're not really very far apart. All the apartments were different, different sizes ... Some were just like a house with an apartment in it. Others were actual apartment buildings, things like that. So, we were migrants practically [laughter], moving frequently.

SI: Did your parents ever talk about how the Great Depression affected the family?

LD: They never did. I think my father was very fortunate he had a job all the time, and he was in a job that had access to food. Although there was serious rationing during the war [World War II], he was still able to keep food on the table and adequate food, too, but a lot of it was the loose connections Downtown in New York City, where more things were available. I could say that we didn't have a lot of money. We wore clothes for a long time before they got discarded and things like that. So, I couldn't say we were well off, but we managed and I think it was mainly because my father was able to keep a job all during the depression. My mother did not work, no. She was too busy taking care of us guys.

SI: Yes.

LD: Like I said, when we moved to Bayside, that's when my two younger sisters were born. They were born in Bayside, and it was kind of difficult, because there was like twenty years between my older sister and my youngest sister. So, that's quite a spread, and it kind of made things a little difficult for my mother. Anyway, Bayside was good. It was a nice community. We lived on a street which was very typical of the area. All the houses were the same, and all blue-collar workers, different trades and things like that. I was fortunate because I had a lot of friends who were my age. At the time, there were a lot of vacant lots, so we had no trouble playing football and baseball and hockey. We could always get a team together and find somebody from the next town over or the next area over and have a game going on the weekend. It was good. You go back there now, you couldn't park a car, for crying out loud. [laughter]

SI: Would you say the neighborhood was mostly Irish?

LD: Mostly Irish Americans, yes.

SI: Okay.

LD: They were mostly Irish Americans there, yes. Everybody got along fine. It was good, yes.

SI: Growing up in an Irish family, do you remember if any traditions were carried on in the family that came from Ireland?

LD: No, I think …

SI: Did you have Irish traditions?

LD: No, I can't say that, because, like I said, I think that the Irish migration to the United States was so far back. Sure, they celebrated Saint Patty's Day [March 17] and things like that, but otherwise there were no traditional reunions and things with bagpipes or anything like that, no, no. [laughter] Maybe we missed some of that. I don't know.

SI: What about the role of the church? Was going to church very important to you growing up?

LD: It was, yes. We always went every Sunday. Everybody went every Sunday, and holy days and things like that . Everybody in the neighborhood would go. You'd see all your friends and neighbors at church and all the feast days and things like that [when] things were going on at the church. The church was in walking distance, so that was another good thing about Bayside. Everything was within walking distance practically. Shopping and everything was close by, and you'd always see your friends and neighbors no matter where you went. You couldn't avoid them, if you wanted to. [laughter]

SI: Do you have any questions?

KD: I wanted to ask what you did when you were a kid, but you pretty much covered it. What did you do as a kid for entertainment?

LD: It was sports, basically, sports.

KD: Did you go to the movies?

LD: We went to the movies. That was always a big treat to go to the movies on Saturday morning, where they would give you an ice cream and you'd see the trailers and two chapters and then two movies. So, your family got rid of you for the whole day, basically. [laughter] It was good. Basically, it was sports. Now, whatever season it was, we'd pick up a football or a baseball and we had a lot of fun, yes.

KD: As you got older, how often did you actually go into the city to Manhattan? Did you do anything in the city?

LD: Well, I went to high school in the city.

KD: Okay.

LD: I went to the public schools for k to eight. Actually, I didn't go to kindergarten, I went [from] first to eighth to public schools, four different public schools I guess, but then when I graduated from grammar school, my parents wanted me to go to parochial school. So, I went to La Salle Academy in New York City. It was located real downtown [in the Lower East Side], Second Avenue and Second Street, in a very Jewish and Italian neighborhood. [There were] a lot of Jewish theaters. I would take the Long Island Railroad and subway to get to school, and it was an interesting neighborhood. The school itself was, I think it was, the oldest Catholic school in the city, built in like 1848, something like that, and it was very small. [Editor's Note: In 1848, De La Salle Christian Brothers founded a school that later became La Salle Academy, a private, all-boys Catholic school in Manhattan. The Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Catholic religious order dedicated to education. I think there were only four hundred students in the school. Actually, I went there for three years, and the school was taught by Christian Brothers. During my third year, I thought I had a vocation. So, my fourth year, I went to a seminary up in a place called Barrytown, New York. It was on the Hudson River, not too far from Poughkeepsie I think. I went there for my senior year, and I guess then I decided that really wasn't my calling. So, I graduated from there, and then I went back home. Then, after that, I came home from high school, and I didn't really have a plan, but fortunately my mother did. [laughter] So, she said, "You're going to go to Queens College," which was part of the City of New York University system, CUNY, and she said, "You're going to go there." So, I said, "Okay." So, I went out and put an application in, and at that time, first of all, the good news was it was free for New York City residents and the bad news was you had to take tests for three days to get in. So, I managed to pass everything, and that's where I went. I went to Queens College and got my degree from Queens.

SI: What …

LD: That was a commuting college, by the way.

SI: Okay.

LD: Yes, it was commuting. There were no residences there. It was a nice school. It was in Flushing. I took a bus to get there, and it was an open campus. There was maybe four or five old Spanish-type buildings, I don't know what it was previously before it became a college, and it had a nice quadrangle there in the center. It was a really a nice setup.

SI: Going back to high school and maybe even earlier …

LD: Yes.

SI: What were your favorite subjects in school?

LD: I would say languages. I took French for about five years between high school and college, and I enjoyed it. In fact, at one point in time, I thought I was going to be a French teacher and I took education courses in Queens, but I wasn't too keen on the teaching methods that were being introduced at that time, so I changed my curriculum to accounting …

SI: Okay.

LD: Which I enjoyed very much. Once I got into that, I liked working with numbers. Anyway, that was my career choice for a curriculum.

SI: During this whole period, World War II was going on.

LD: Right.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about the early years of the war? What do you remember about Pearl Harbor?

LD: Well, the thing I remember about Pearl Harbor, first of all, is we had been visiting our relatives in New Jersey, and we drove up to our house. Some kids came to the car and said we had just been attacked at Pearl Harbor. So, that was kind of a rude of awakening right there. This was '41, so I was what, eleven years old, I guess. We kept up with the news and everything, but it was kind of remote for a young person until we got older, of course. Billy was in the Army. Uncle Ed got drafted. Joe and Jim were too old, but Harry was in the Merchant Marine. He used to sail tankers across, and he got torpedoed once. He had an interesting life. Matty got drafted; Eddie got drafted. My grandmother, parents of children that were in the service used to put a flag up with the stars in it, the blue stars, so she put the flags up. She had a couple of flags up, because she put flags for her sons and her grandsons, because my cousin Jim [was in the service], Gene was in the Navy and Tommy was in the Coast Guard, so she had a couple of flags up there with all kinds of stars. She was very proud of all her offspring being in the service. My memories of World War II were not very vivid. I read the papers and things like that. Afterwards, as I was talking to Kyle yesterday, reading histories of World War II, you get more into it, learn more about it ....

SI: On the home front, do you remember things like civil defense drills and that sort of thing?

LD: We had air raid drills. We had the sirens going off at the firehouse, which was right around the corner practically, and we'd do whatever we had to do. I forget even what we had to do, but we had the siren and I guess we went into the house and stayed in the house, or if we were in school, we stayed under the desk or something like that. I guess where we were we were so far away from all of the activities, except maybe for the [German] submarines that were off the coast, but even that, it was not a threat to the people ... We were fortunate to be in the United States with two oceans between us and all the activity.

KD: Were there any rules at night?

LD: Yes.

KD: Did you have to close the curtains?

KD: I had to close the curtains at night, definitely. I guess probably the most people remember about World War II, my generation, anyway, were the rationing ... You couldn't buy shoes, and you could only get so much meat and so much butter and eggs. I remember we used to save, if you had any bacon fat or anything like that, you used to bring it to the butcher shop and get some credit, get some rationing coupons. For whatever you brought back, you got some rationing coupons for more meat or something like that. Everybody collected that. That was a big deal.

SI: Do you remember as a teenager collecting scrap metal?

LD: I don't remember actually doing that.

SI: Okay.

LD: I'm sure some people did, but I don't remember doing that, no.

SI: You were involved in sports. Were there any other activities, like Boy Scouts, that you were involved in?

LD: I was in the Boy Scouts for about a year or two, but, actually, the cost of the uniforms kind of precluded going into that ... No, I can't really say that I was really involved in organized sports. One year the group of football players that I was with, we went into a Kiwanis league, and we played a few games. That was really, at that time, semi-organized. It's not like it is today, where everything [has] rules and all kinds of things like that. Otherwise, it was what you'd call disorganized sports. You'd wake the guys up. You'd say, "You want to play football?" "Yes, okay, I'll be there in fifteen minutes," or whatever. So, everybody'd show up. Sometimes, you'd play with ten guys; sometimes, you were lucky to have eleven guys. You'd play both ways, both sides of the ball [offense and defense], and it was all for fun. Nobody was really anxious to run up the score or anything like that. It was just a lot of fun. It was the good old days. I think it was a lot easier in those days than it is now for the kids. [Now], you're not allowed to win. [laughter]

SI: Did you play sports when you were at La Salle?

LD: No, no. Being in the city, they only had track and baseball and basketball ... I guess if I lived in the city, I'd be more interested, but since I lived in Queens, it took me an hour and a half to get home and hour and a half to get there. So, by the time the school day was over, I was ready to go home and hit the books or whatever. The school was famous for basketball. A couple of our players went to the National Basketball League, NBA, and baseball, they had some good players in baseball, and track, they were very good in track.

SI: I am curious. Back then, were all your teachers Brothers, or was there a mixture?

LD: We had a couple of lay teachers, right, and I have to say that the school was very strict ... We had at least one teacher that, if you didn't have the answer to his oral question, you got smacked. I remember this guy, he was the geometry teacher, I think Mr. Falcone, and the class was not toeing the line, I guess you'd say. So, he stood up everybody in the class, and I guess there was probably twenty-five of us, stood up. He just went down the aisle and smacked every one of us. [laughter]

SI: Wow.

LD: I mean, he didn't knock you down, but you remembered it. The other thing is, we had a funny way of having lunch in La Salle. You did not sit down. You went into the dining room or the lunch cafeteria, whatever it was, and you'd grab your tray. You went down the line and got your food, and then you went to a table and you stood up. You ate standing up, and not only are you standing up, but you're constantly moving, because as one person left, you had to move down to make room for the next person that was coming in ... So, that was lunch, and then after lunch, maybe you had fifteen or twenty minutes. So, you went into what was really the basketball court, and the basketball court was priceless. I mean, that was the gem of the school, so it was covered with canvas. If you happened to walk in and trip on the canvas and disturb the canvas, whatever Brother was there in charge came over and gave you a whack. [laughter] The good old days. I have to say that the curriculum was good, and the teachers were very, very good. I came out of there knowing quite a bit. I was pretty satisfied with the education I got there.

SI: When you went to Barrytown, did you live there?

LD: Oh, yes, there was boarding. Yes, I was boarding. It was a regular high school. It was four years of high school, and that, again, was very small, as you can imagine, very small. I doubt there was 150 students in the four years there. A majority of them were from Brooklyn and Manhattan, some from Queens, and some from Upstate New York. There, again, it was books, religion and athletics ... The teachers were good. The only thing I regretted is that they did not have a math teacher. My senior year, now, I should be getting trigonometry and some solid geometry, and they didn't have a math teacher for those subjects. So, I had a lot of free time, more than the other students. Religion, of course, as you could imagine, was a big part of the day. We went to mass in the morning, and you had religion during your meals. There were quotations and readings and things like that, and then in the afternoon, there was usually games. We'd play football or baseball or whatever, and then in the evening, there would be more religious instruction, things like that. It was good. It was a good year. It was a good experience, but it wasn't for me, because after graduation, then they went actually into a real seminary for two years and then college after that. It really was a rough curriculum for those guys. In the high school, most of the teachers were Brothers. Two or three were lay teachers.

SI: Were you still at La Salle when the war ended?

LD: No, I graduated from Barrytown in ‘47.

SI: Okay. Do you remember anything about V-J Day or V-E Day? Do those days when Japan and Germany surrendered stand out in your memory?

LD: No, I think we were just happy that it was all over, and people were coming home. Otherwise, no, I can’t say that there was any real celebrations where we lived anyway ...

SI: Excuse me.

LD: Sure.

SI: Your grandmother had many offspring in the ...

LD: In the military.

SI: In the military.

LD: Yes.

SI: Did they all survive?

LD: Yes.

SI: Wow.

LD: Fortunately, they all survived.

SI: Tell us a little bit more about Queens College. Do you think your education in parochial schools prepared you well for college?

LD: Oh, yes, definitely. I think that’s how I passed the entrance exams to get into Queens because of the education I got at La Salle. Queens College was a commuting college, okay, and they had a very good curriculum. You could, if you wanted to take, say, engineering, you took two years of pre-engineering in Queens, and then you went to CCNY, City College, to finish the last two years. It [Queens College] was basically liberal arts, okay, so they had education, languages, history, literature, English, those kind of courses and curriculums. I started out, I wanted to be an engineer, I really did, but I just did not have the math to do it. That’s when I switched to languages and education, and I did that for about a year. Then, I changed again to accounting, and that’s what I finished up with in accounting. I have to say, one thing about Queens College during the time I was there, which was like 1948 to 1951, I guess, it was post war, and there was this Cold War thing going on. We did have a large element of Communists at Queens College, and they liked to pass out the literature and make speeches and things like that. You tried to ignore that. They were very sincere in their feelings, and they tried to convince everybody that the Russians were the good guys and we were the bad guys. You’d just have to

ignore that kind of stuff, I guess. [Editor's Note: From 1946 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States and Soviet Union competed for global influence, military dominance and technological superiority in the Cold War.]

SI: Would they give talks on soapboxes?

LD: Oh, yes, oh, yes, sure. Like I said, it was an open campus, and there were four or five buildings around and a lot of walkways and paths to walk around. The quadrangle was quite big, so they could set up and talk. The people either liked it or they didn't. I think most people ignored it, but they were pretty intense.

SI: You were there during the GI Bill period. Were a lot of your classmates veterans?

LD: I don't recall that.

SI: Okay.

LD: I don't recall that. Being a free college, I don't think that they needed the financial support of the GI Bill to go to Queens ... as opposed to the pay colleges, for-profit colleges.

SI: Did you just go to school full-time or did you work outside school?

LD: I worked part-time. I worked part-time. I think I started working when I was twelve years old, selling magazines and selling newspapers, and I worked in a local theater as an usher. I always wanted to have some pocket money, I guess, was really the initiative there. So, then, when I was going to college though, I got some part-time work in a department store in New York City. I used to go to school, and then I'd go into New York and work, basically, stock work, minimum wage, if there was a minimum wage in those days. Then, during the Christmas season, if I was still working there, they'd put me in sales, and so I worked there quite a few years really. In fact, even after I got out of the Army and I was working full-time, I went back to Sterns and did some part-time work around Christmastime for some extra Christmas money ... That was a long time ago.

SI: Do any of your professors or courses stand out in your memory from college?

LD: I would say the French teacher I had, I forget his name, but he was very good and he was very French. He made everything very interesting. At that point, it was a literature course, so we were reading French novels and things like that. It was really, really good. Our economics teacher, Will Withers, he was always good for an A, very laid back guy. [laughter] I took about three economic courses, I guess. Those were the two that really stood out, those two guys. They were good. They kept everything interesting. [Editor's Note: William Withers served as an economics professor at Queens College from 1937 to 1974.]

SI: Once you settled into your accounting major, did you have a plan for what you wanted to do in your career or an idea of what you might want to do?

LD: Yes, well, when you studied accounting, I guess you really had two paths. One was you would become a public accountant, and the other, you go into industry ... I figured I would go into industry.

SI: Wow.

LD: So, that was really what I was headed for. Of course, what happened was Korea started in 1950, right, and I was in my junior year, I guess, beginning of my senior year, I guess. I was supposed to graduate in 1951, okay. I was short one course. I got my draft notice in April of '51. I went down to the draft board, and I said, "I'd like to finish school." They said, "How long is that going to take?" So, I said, "I should be finished, I've got to take the one course in the summer, I should be finished in August." So, they said, "Okay, you've got a deferment until August." So, I took that last course, and I think I took my comprehensive exam to get my degree. I think a week later I was on a bus [laughter] going to New York to get indoctrinated, inducted, inducted, I guess that was. So, that was in August '51, and war was still going on pretty hot and heavy at that time.

SI: Were you apprehensive about going into the service?

LD: Probably a little bit, but I guess I felt it was my duty. It was something you have to do. So, I think at first we went to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, and that was a very interesting experience. [It was] my first time with a bunch of guys I didn't know. After your physical you got on a bus and you got there and they give you your clothes and whatever and they give you a twenty dollar bill. They called it a "flying twenty." I went to bed, and I put the twenty under my pillow and woke up in the morning. It was gone. [laughter] So, then I realized this is how it's going to be. [laughter] Boy, you better nail everything down, or otherwise you're going to be naked ... I guess we spent a week or two in Kilmer, and then we went down to Fort Dix. Anyway, I don't know whether you want to get into this part of my life or not, but the next couple of years was …

SI: The military.

LD: Basically the military.

SI: Do you have any questions about the pre-military period?

KD: What made you decide to go into accounting and not continue doing French and education?

LD: Like I said, I wasn't too crazy about the education curriculum, the way they were structuring the teaching of students. They were going more into this open room, less structured, and I didn't really agree with that. I don't know who it was, but somebody suggested, "Well, why don't you look into accounting?" and I did. I think I was really adapted for that, because, like I said, I liked to work with numbers and everything was logical and everything worked, everything was precise and it just fit my attitude, I guess.

KD: Did you continue reading French or practicing at all?

LD: No, I didn't. I didn't. I got to use it a couple of times in my job. I got to go overseas in my job, because we had an office in Paris. So, I got to use it, and when we traveled in France, I got to use it a little bit.

KD: That is good.

LD: Yes, oh, yes.

SI: I am curious about something. All the relatives that you had that served in World War II, did they ever talk about their experiences?

LD: Never, never, no. Like I said, Billy was in Europe for the whole campaign. Harry was in the Merchant Marine going back and forth on those tankers. My uncle Ed, I know he was at Okinawa, the landings in Okinawa. He never talked about it. No, they never talked about it, no. [Editor's Note: The Battle of Okinawa took place from April 1 to June 22, 1945 between American and Japanese forces for control of the island of Okinawa, located 340 miles from mainland Japan.]

SI: As you were going in the service, nobody told you anything about what to expect.

LD: No. [laughter]

SI: Did anyone talk about military life?

LD: No, no, they didn't, no.

SI: Okay.

LD: You're on your own; you wing it.

KD: You said that Bill went to Korea, too, right?

LD: Yes, because he was a career soldier. I forget when he actually retired from the Army, but Korea was over, of course, by that time. I was home, so it was after '53. [He retired in the] late '50s probably. He passed suddenly, too.

KD: Did he go to Korea around the same time as you?

LD: Oh, no, before me.

KD: Before you.

LD: Actually, I didn't get to Korea. I got as far as Japan, which will come out when we talk about what I did in my military career. [laughter]

SI: We can always jump back to that period. Since we got up to Fort Dix, how long was your training at Fort Dix?

LD: Well, I was in Fort Dix practically eight months I guess. I got there probably, say, [in] the beginning of September. I went to Kilmer, and I was there two weeks in August. I guess it was September I got to Dix. So, I did sixteen weeks of basic training, which I would say it was long and it was arduous, but I don't think it really trained us a lot for what we would have found out in Korea. A lot of the cadre, the people that were giving you instructions, had come back from Korea and were given stripes just for being there. [Editor's Note: Mr. Downey is using the term stripes to refer to promotions in rank. For example, the insignia of an Army corporal (E4) has two stripes. Upon promotion to sergeant (E5), the insignia has three stripes.] They didn't really know a lot, and they were trying to teach recruits certain things, how to handle weapons and things like that, and they weren't really very good instructors. It was sixteen weeks. We got a lot of information. [We] learned how to use every weapon they made, just in case we had to. [laughter] I finished basic, and they said, "Do you want to take the exam for OCS, Officer Candidate School?" So, I said, "Yes, I'll do that." I figured it might be better than being in the trenches or something, I don't know. Anyway, I took the exams, and I passed. At the time, when you passed the exam, they said, "Okay, you have three choices of branches that you can opt for, but one of them had to be a combat branch," okay. So, everybody, they would put in [for] transportation, medical, ordnance, engineers and artillery. [laughter] So, I put down finance corps and quartermaster or something and artillery, like everybody else. As it turned out, ninety-nine out of one hundred, of course, went to the infantry school in Fort Benning [in Georgia], and mine, [my] selection, was just being held up and held up and held up. They said, "Well, why don't you go to leadership school?" It's ten weeks or whatever it was. I said, "Okay, I've got nothing else to do. I might as well do that." So, then I went to leadership school, and I was helping, actually, at that time, training the people who were coming off the bus with drilling and things like that, so that was good. Then, I was advised that I was selected to go to the finance school, and this was really a plum assignment, really, because practically nobody got that job. I think one of the reasons I got it was because I had a reference from my uncle Bill, who was the career solider, so I think that might have helped, but I don't know. So, anyway, in April, I guess it was, I got assigned to, before you went to the actual finance school, you had to go to Fort Riley [in Kansas] and do the six months OCS training, which is a school. It was a school learning Army organization and things like that, plus a lot of drilling and calisthenics and exercising and stuff like that. So, I went out there. I guess it was April, and in June, we were, our company, I guess it was, went out to the rifle range to do target shooting, okay. The way it was structured was half the company would be firing and the other half would be in the pits doing the targets. While I was in the pits doing the targets, I fell, and as it turned out, I hurt my ankle. Now, we had to march about two miles to get to this place, so I went up to whoever was in charge. I said, "Look, I can hardly walk on this." He said, "Suck it up," and he said, "You can go to the sick bay when we get back." So, we finished the training out there, and then we marched back. It was really painful. [laughter] So, we got back there. I didn't even clean my weapon. I put it away, and I went down to the sick bay. They did the x-rays, and I had a broken

ankle. So, they set it and put this huge cast on. It was almost up to my knee, and they put me in the hospital. I was in the hospital two months I guess. Altogether, I was out of the school for two months. I had some leave, so I could go home to Bayside for two weeks I think it was, one or two weeks. This was interesting, too, because I don't really know how I swung it. I didn't have any money for the train fare, so I went out to the Red Cross and [they] said, "Sorry, we can't help you out." I needed like fifty bucks for a round trip train fare to get back to New York. I don't know where I got the money. Maybe somebody wired it to me from home or something like that. So, anyway, I went home for the two weeks, and I went back. They took the cast off, and they said, "Okay, you're good to go." So, I'm back to the CO [commanding officer], and I said, "I'm ready, back to join the class." He said, "No, you can't join the class." He said, "You've got to start all over again." So, now, this is August. I've already been in for a year. I'm only supposed to be in for two. If I start over again, it's six months there and then a couple more months in the other school. Then, you had to sign up for two or three years, and I said, "Well, I don't really think I want to make a career out of this, so I think I'll take my chances and just drop out." Well, they were really upset about that, because they had this slot open for me at the finance school. So, they were not happy, but they said, "Okay, it's your choice. Okay, you're good." So, they assigned me to the permanent outfit at Fort Riley, which was the Fifth Army, and they gave me a job taking care of the athletic equipment. I would check out the gloves and the footballs and the basketballs, and I'd put the lines down for the baseball fields and things like that. Anyway, I knew that wasn't going to last, okay. In November, so this was like three months later, they said, "Okay, you've got orders to go to the Far East," okay, so that meant Korea. I said, "Okay." What are you going to do? I don't know whether I went home. I think I went home, and then I flew from home to Seattle to Fort Lewis, where everybody was getting ready to get on the ships to go overseas. I think I was there for a few days, and they put us on the ship. It was a very small ship, and it was packed to the rafters. Of course, all the GIs were down below in the pits of the ship. [Editor's Note: GI refers to American military personnel.] I remember we hit a terrific storm, and everybody, even the sailors were sick, I mean, everybody was nauseous. So, anyway, we got to Tokyo, [Japan]. It was a long trip. It took a couple extra days because of the storm that we hit. We got to Tokyo, and they put us up for the night. Then, the following day, they had all these GIs lined up in a courtyard, and there was maybe three hundred guys there. The guy in charge, he had a lot of rosters, and each was in alphabetical order. He would start off and say, "Okay, as your name is called, go down to the supply room, draw a weapon and hop on a bus and go zero in your weapon." He goes through one roster and then goes through another roster, and the troops are dwindling now. Okay, so now we're down to maybe a dozen guys, me included. "Okay, so the following guys, go back to the barracks. You're going to stay here tonight. Tomorrow, you'll be on the train, and you're going to go to Mount Fuji and you're going to be assigned to the 24th Infantry Division." I said, "Well, this can't be too bad. At least I'm not going to Korea tomorrow." So, Mount Fuji is famous in Japan [and] all over the world, I guess. The picture of Fuji is very familiar to everybody. There were three camps. There was upper camp, middle camp, lower camp, all 24th Division, and the 24th Division had been in Korea. They got hit pretty badly, so they were brought back to Japan to rehabilitate, to bring in more [troops], to bring it up to strength again. So, that's what I was part of, bringing this unit up to strength. I landed in Japan on my birthday, December 19th, 1952, I guess it was, '52, right, December '52. We got to the camp, and there was more training. I had different assignments there. I was a truck driver for a while. I was a

radioman for a while, different needs. It was winter, and somebody got the bright idea that maybe we should make these guys ski troops. So, everybody got a pair of skis and a ski pole, and they taught us how to ski. There were a lot of slopes, of course, on the mountain and a lot snow, and it was cold, very, very cold. I think the whole idea was kind of counterproductive, because when you're skiing, if you don't fall right, you're going to break something and a lot of guys did that. What they did for training, they had these little tracked vehicles called Alligators, and they would put a tow rope in back of it. Everybody would grab the rope and get towed up to the starting point, and then you'd ski down. Well, the first couple of times it was a lot of fun, something new. The instruction was pretty good, they had some good instructors, but then they got serious because you had to wear your full pack and carry your weapon. Now, your balance was a little bit different, and that's when the accidents started to happen. They did this for a while, and then I think they realized it just wasn't going to work. It certainly wouldn't work in Korea. These pretty green troops over there trying to ski and fight at the same time just wasn't going to work. So, we went back to regular training, weapons training and bivouacking and hiking, a lot of hiking. So, fortunately, actually before I got overseas, Eisenhower was elected, and one of his promises was he was going to end the war in Korea. During the early part of 1953, although there was still fighting going on, truce was being talked up Now, we're in the spring and we're getting into the summer, and it was really serious. I guess it was in July that they actually signed the truce agreement, which was, at the time, that the division was going to go back to Korea, and the rumor was they were going to go back to Korea to guard prisoners anyway. Then, this was my time to go home, so that was basically my career. The thing that was in the middle of my career, though, was the fact that I got married, and I don't know whether you want to get into this or not. [Editor's Note: Dwight D. Eisenhower served as the U.S. president from 1953 to 1961. The Korean War ended with the signing of the armistice on July 27, 1953.]

SI: Yes, sure.

LD: Anyway, when I had the broken ankle and I went home for that leave, I had already been going with Jane, and we were engaged. She said, "Well, I want to get married," so I said, "Okay." So, I went back then, and I got this assignment as the recreation manager. Jane came out with her mother, and we got married in Junction City, Kansas. Then, when I got my orders to go overseas, actually, that's right, we drove home to get her settled with her parents, and then I flew to Seattle. I didn't realize it at the time, but when I left in November, Jane was pregnant. Before I came home from Japan, I had a telegram that my daughter Deborah was born, July 8th. Anyway, I was home when she was a month old, so that was a surprise. I got home, no place to live, no job, a family. [laughter] The only thing I had in my favor was I had a college degree. I had a job in two weeks and ready to go.

SI: Tell us how you met your wife.

LD: [laughter] I was in the public school playground with a couple guys playing stickball, and she was walking her dog, who somehow got loose. The dog ran over to me, so that was how I met Jane. [laughter] We used to go to, the local church had a dance on Sunday nights, St. Kevin's Church had a dance on Sunday nights, so we use to go there and dance. [We] went to

the movies, things like that. ... This probably was, I was in college, I guess I was a sophomore in college, so it must have been like 1949, something like that. We've been married now sixty-one years.

SI: To go back to your time in Japan, can you tell us about the relationships you formed with the men you served with or if you got friendly with them at all?

LD: Well, there was a couple of guys that I got quite friendly with. We used to go on leave together and go and see different things in Japan, go down to Tokyo, go down to Yokohama. It was kind of a mixed bag because we had the veterans that came back from Korea, a very small corps of veterans, and then there was Ohio National Guard, a big influx of National Guardsmen from Ohio. Some of them were black, okay, and some of them had rank. They were sergeants and corporals and things like that. Then, there were the few guys like me, which were odds and ends of guys, short timers and things like that, so there weren't too many of us. Then, the next thing that happened was they brought in a bunch of draftees from Tennessee, and that's when the trouble started because they did not want to serve with blacks. There were a lot of arguments and fights, especially when they went downtown. The local village was a small bus ride downtown, and there wasn't much to do there except shop and get a couple of beers or something like that. They did not get along at all So, I met a couple of guys that were about my age. They were not from New York. One was from Chicago, one was from California, and we use to hang out together pretty much, but no lasting relationships. I wouldn't say that. There was one guy. There was one guy named Dick Swift, and I looked him up when we got out. He lived in Florida, New York, and they had a farm I think it was. Otherwise, no, there was no other people after that.

SI: This conflict between the Tennesseans and the Ohioans, were there fist fights …

LD: Oh, yes.

SI: Or naming calling?

LD: Oh, no, yes.

SI: Yes.

LD: When they got downtown, they would get into it, yes, and the MPs were always busy down there. It was too bad, because everyone was on the same side, but this was the '50s and the southerners were just not use to dealing or associating with blacks and especially taking orders from a black sergeant, holy mackerel, boy. Of course, it was the Army's fault, because the Army was integrated at that time and they should have been a little bit more informative or instructional to these people from the South, saying, "Look, this is what's going to happen. You're going to meet these people and you're going to have to work with them." I don't think they got that kind of indoctrination, and so that's what led to the problem. It's a shame. [Editor's Note: President Harry Truman desegregated the United States armed forces on July 26, 1948 when he issued Executive Order 9981, which states: "It is hereby declared to be the policy

of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."

SI: During your time in the service, did you see any other examples of bad race relations?

LD: No, no.

SI: Just that.

LD: See, where we were, we were pretty isolated on the mountain. We were, I don't even think we had a whole battalion. I think we had only two or three companies on that particular post. So, you're pretty isolated and you're just with this one core group of people all the time …

SI: Did you have a lot of interaction with the Japanese?

LD: Not too much, no.

SI: Okay.

LD: When we went downtown, we had interaction, because they were local people. These were really locals and they had shops and things like that and little restaurants maybe. They knew a little bit of English. They tried to teach us some Japanese. The PA [public address] system was always on in the camp. "Today we're going to learn these words," and they would learn those words [laughter] A lot of people didn't pay attention. So there wasn't a lot of interaction. You'd go to a store, you buy something and then say goodbye and that's it. So, no friendships or anything developed, and of course, this was right after [World War II]. This is 1953. The war was over in '45. I think there was still relationships--were not really very solid ...

SI: You said that you went to Tokyo on leave.

LD: A couple of times, I went down to Tokyo, did some shopping, looking around, and then I think we went to Yokohama once. We went down there to pick up some new trucks or something and drove them back.

SI: Did any impressions stick out of seeing Japan?

LD: It was interesting, the architecture, all these flimsy buildings with the sliding doors, and everything looked like it would just [snaps fingers] go up like that in flames in a minute and eating, eating sitting down. You're squatting down at a table, a little table, or something like that. It was interesting. We enjoyed it, yes. It was a big change.

SI: Were you able to correspond with your family regularly?

LD: Oh, yes. Jane and I, she kept me posted on the baby that was coming and everything and what was going on in the family. I tried to write once a week. Jane was better at writing and communicating than me, but I kept informed.

KD: When you were on the mountain, did you talk to any of the Korean War veterans, or did they stick to themselves?

LD: They did stick to themselves. They were very clannish, yes, and I think that they were apprehensive about a bunch of these green guys [and] going back with them to Korea if it was still going on.

KD: They never talked about anything.

LD: No, no. Like I said, the 24th Division got hit pretty hard, and I don't know whether they were there when it started or they happened to be there, sent over there when the Chinese came across. It really started it over again, because it was pretty all winding down before the Chinese came in. [Editor's Note: From 1910 to 1945, Korea was a Japanese colony. The U.S. and Soviet Union divided Korea along the thirty-eighth parallel for the purposes of rebuilding after World War II. Cold War tensions cemented this division into the creation of North Korea and South Korea. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and invaded South Korea, rapidly overrunning the southern part of the peninsula. After U.S. President Harry Truman authorized the use of American ground troops, the 24th Infantry Division and three other divisions stationed in Japan were rushed to South Korea to counter the attack. On July 4, a lightly-armed, undermanned forward unit of the 24th Infantry Division, known as Task Force Smith for its commanding officer Lt. Col. Charles Smith, fought a delaying action against a vastly superior North Korean tank unit. Task Force Smith suffered thirty-percent casualties, and its actions allowed for reinforcements to defend the crucial port city of Pusan. In September-October 1950, U.S. forces launched an amphibious assault on Inchon, liberated Seoul, and invaded North Korea. The next month, Chinese forces crossed the Yalu River into North Korea and attacked U.S. and U.N. forces, causing them to retreat south. The 24th Infantry Division engaged in seven campaigns in Korea, before returning to Japan in February 1952. The war became bogged down in stalemate until an armistice was signed in July 1953.

KD: What was your reaction to hearing about the Chinese getting involved?

LD: It was very dismal. [laughter] I figured this was going to go on for a long time.

SI: In the division, the leadership, the second lieutenants and first lieutenants, were they all new?

LD: Some of them were new, but some of them were experienced.

SI: Okay.

LD: Some of them were veterans, yes. Some of them were veterans. There wasn't a lot of interaction with the officers.

SI: Okay.

LD: Yes. I mean, I saw the CO a couple of times, and he gave me a promotion to corporal. That's when he made me, he said, "You're going to be the communications sergeant for this company now," and whatever, which was kind of a promotion. I can't say that I really learned a lot about radios. He was a good guy, but he wanted me to join up, renew, and I said, "No, I don't think so" ...

SI: How long did you work in communications?

LD: Well, I was there [in Japan] for approximately eight months, [so] I guess probably four months. Like I said, I was a truck driver for a while, because I just wanted to just get out of the walking part of it if I could. [laughter]

SI: What would you do when you were in the communications section?

LD: Basically, [I was] setting up the signals and the code words and things, so we can stay in touch with the battalion and the companies, the companies that were in the battalion. So, it was like a network of communication people. Each company had their own communications person, and we were headquarters company, so we had communications with our companies, plus the battalion headquarters. It was fun. I'm sure the equipment is much better now than it was then though.

SI: Yes.

LD: Everything was wire. [laughter]

SI: Does anything else stand out about your time overseas before we get back to the States?

LD: Not really. Like I said the two years was broken almost equally in three parts. Eight months in Dix, almost eight months in Fort Riley and then the eight months in Japan, so the way it was segmented it was like no continuity. It was like if somebody had stayed with one group for two years, like a lot of the people that I went to basic training with, if I had just stayed and did nothing after basic training, did not take the test for OCS, that whole group of people went to Germany, and they were together basically for two years. So, that would have been a whole different experience for me.

SI: You said you came back home and reunited with your family.

LD: Right.

SI: You were able to get a job fairly quickly, it sounds like.

LD: Yes, I went down to the U.S. Employment Service. I saw their thing in the paper, I guess it was or whatever. So, I went down, and I had two interviews. I had an interview with U.S. Steel, and they were looking for an economist. Of course, my major really was economics. Accounting was like sub-curriculum to that. So, they offered me a job as an economist. Then, I went to Foster Wheeler, which was [an] engineering construction company, and they offered me a job as an internal auditor, auditor trainee actually. So, I thought that was more interesting. I couldn't see just working with statistics all day long, so I didn't take the Steel job. I went to Foster Wheeler, and I stayed with them for thirty-four years, over thirty-four years, which most people don't do nowadays. [Editor's Note: Founded in 1927, Foster Wheeler is a global corporation that specializes in engineering, construction and power equipment.

SI: Yes. [laughter]

KD: Where were they located?

LD: Well, when I started with them in 1953, we were located in Downtown New York, where they eventually built the original World Trade Center. We were at 165 Broadway, and that building was later demolished with a lot of buildings around it to build the Trade Center. We were there from '53 to '57. Then, we moved uptown to 53rd Street and 5th Avenue. We opened a new building up there, 666 5th Avenue, and it was a drastic change from Downtown, because Downtown you could walk to all kinds of diners and shops, and there was a lot to do. Even if you had a short lunch hour, there was a lot to do, things to see and buy and whatever. You get uptown, this is Midtown Manhattan now, there was nothing, so you had to scout out restaurants. We weren't making a lot of money, so lunch had to be very economical. So, we had to scout around to find a place where we could get sandwich and a Coke or something like that, and they were hard to find. Right around the corner from our building was the 21 Club so you could imagine what kind of neighborhood we were in. So, we were there from '57 to '62, and that's when we moved to New Jersey. The company moved to Livingston. They bought some property, and they built a big building, a couple of out buildings. At this time, we had moved from Queens. We had bought our first house out on Long Island, out in Commack near Smithtown. We moved there in '59, and that's when the company decided to move in '62. They asked me to go, so they paid our moving fees and helped us find a house, so it was a good deal. I was very happy with that, and I think it added years to my life, because now we found a house in New Jersey that was five miles from the office. I was living on the Long Island Expressway when we were out on Long Island for three years, so it was a good deal for me. A New Yorker would always say, "The last place I would ever live is New Jersey." [laugher] Everything on the other side of the Hudson River is New Jersey. I found it quite nice, because we lived in Chatham, which was west of Newark and [laughter] Jersey City. So, it was a really nice area, and like I said, it was a short commute to the office and it worked out very good.

SI: Did you use GI Bill benefits for anything?

LD: When we were still in New York, I thought I would still try to get involved in engineering, because Foster Wheeler was an engineering company and the engineers, they ran everything.

Accountants were like second-class citizens, and every engineer wanted to be an accountant anyway. They wanted to pull all the numbers up. So, anyway, I said, "Well, maybe I'll try this engineering again." So, I went to CCNY in New York, New York City, and took two drafting courses. Now, I was starting to travel at work so I was away a lot. I finished the two courses, and I called it quits. It would have been a long slog to get a degree in engineering. So, I did use the GI Bill for that, yes. They paid for those courses. [Editor's Note: The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill, provided veterans with benefits such as education assistance, business loans and low-cost mortgages.]

SI: Did you use it for your home?

LD: Pardon?

SI: Did you use the GI Bill for your mortgage?

LD: I used it for the house, yes, for the house in Commack. It helped us get a decent interest rate on the loan, and, yes, that worked out. Of course, we only had that loan for the three years, because then we sold the house, which we were fortunate to do, in '62, yes, in the summer of '62. Unfortunately, Republic Aviation, which had a very big workforce out on Long Island, they closed up, so it threw out a lot of people out of work. A lot of homes were for sale, but we were lucky to sell our house to somebody. We didn't make any money on it, but we didn't lose any money. That was the end of our GI Bill benefits, yes, because we just got a regular loan for the house in New Jersey.

SI: Did you ever consider staying in the Reserves?

LD: No. You were automatically in the Reserves, when you got out, for a period of years, and then finally I got a notice that I was discharged from that, too, but it was inactive.

SI: Inactive.

LD: Inactive, yes.

SI: You told us about the company and how it moved around. What about your personal career? What did you go through in those thirty-five years?

LD: Well, oh, boy, it seems like yesterday. Like I said, I started out as they called it auditor trainee program, and what we were doing we were auditing the books in the home office and subsidiaries. The most interesting part was auditing at the job sites where we were building these refineries and steam plants and power plants, because you'd go out maybe for a week or two to Texas or Louisiana or Kansas or someplace, places I had never seen before. .. It was interesting work, and you'd meet a lot of interesting people. I'll tell you, on job sites, they're a different breed. A lot of them were permanent Foster Wheeler people that would go from contract to contract, and they were pretty good guys. You'd get to know them after a while, because you'd see them at various locations. So, then, I was a trainee for a while, and then I was

an auditor. Then, a few years later, I went out of auditing and I went into, they made me a budget supervisor for the company, so I was budget supervisor for about a year or two. Then, I went back as the manager of the auditing department, which was good. All of these titles don't bring a lot of money. They're very low wages, very low wages. So, I was audit manager, and then they did a big reorganization. I forget another job that I was in, still in accounting, like a controller or assistant controller or something like that. Yes, that's right. I was an assistant controller, and they wanted, this is 1969, okay, they wanted somebody to be the auditor overseas. First, they said, "Would you like to be based in Italy?" So, I went over to Italy with an American guy that was already over there in a different position, and the idea was to meet the people in the Italian office, Milan office, and look into housing for my family. Now, we had six kids, okay, and David was handicapped, so that was a little extra ingredient. So, we were looking at different apartments, but they were very, very expensive in Milan. So, I said I don't think I could swing it with the salary, even with there was an uplift. For going overseas, they give you a percentage uplift. I said I don't think I'd be able to afford to live in Milan with my family, so they said okay. So, that was like in the summer of '69, so then they said, "How would you like to be based in England?" So, I said, "That sounds better. At least we talk a common language." So, I went over to England. I met a couple of people over there. They took me around, and we found a house outside of London. It was a good commute, but it was a nice house and it would fit everybody. It was a little tight, right, little tight in Marry Mead, and so we said yes, we would go. So, we packed up, and it was like January 2nd, 1970, the Downey bunch hopped on a plane. Do you remember? [Editor's Note: Mr. Downey directs the question at his oldest son, Lawrence "Bud" Downey, who is present at the interview.] We got to Kennedy Airport, and I didn't realize it but my uncle Jim, who lived in New Jersey, had organized a room for us. It was his family and our family, and we had a couple of drinks or something like that and they put us on the plane. It was a complete surprise. It was a really good send off. So, we got there, and I guess it was strange for everybody. We got to Heathrow Airport, and there were two cars necessary to take us all up to this place where we were going to live. Jane said, "Where the heck are we going?" [laughter] because we were out in the boonies. I mean, it was a village called Russells Water, and it consisted of maybe half a dozen houses, small meeting house, church house, and three pubs. Our house was a nice house. It was the newest house, I think. All of the other houses were quite old with the thatched roof and everything, really, really nice, but we had a modern house. It was two floors, practically no heat, and it was way up on a hill and it was a single lane road to get up to this place. I had looked into some of the schools, but not enough probably, because Deborah was in high school, Buddy and Mike were in high upper grades. You weren't in high school yet, were you?

Bud Downey: Seventh grade, eighth grade.

LD: Eighth grade, seventh, eighth grade. Beth was in the next grade down, and then Joanne was like in kindergarten. David needed a special school. So, there, we get to the place, get to the house, unpack and everything, and I left Jane there. We had a car, the company gave us a car, and drive on the left-hand side of the road. I left Jane there with the car and the kids, and I had to go to Spain. So, Jane was really unhappy about this, because she had to learn how to drive on the left-hand side of the road and take the kids to three or four different schools. So, that didn't go over too big, but actually, she was really good. She took it well, and she learned

fast and she did very well. I guess we lived in the house for two years, and then we moved down into the town of Henley for the last two years. That was a little bit better.

BD: That was a nice house.

LD: Debbie went to the American School, high school, in London, which meant she had to get a ride down to the train station and then take the train in. You and Michael went to Gillott's School first, right?

BD: Yes, we went to Gillot's.

LD: That was what they call a grammar school, which was like a good school, a good public school, yes. Beth went to a boarding school, and Joanne went to a kindergarten. We still hadn't found a place for David yet. So, that was two years, I guess, and then when you graduated, after that …

BD: We went to Divine Mercy College.

LD: They went to a Polish school, Buddy and Mike. That was ...

BD: That was an experience.

LD: [laughter] I don't think they cared for that too much.

BD: No.

LD: A lot of Polish was spoken. [laughter]

SI: Wow.

LD: It was a Catholic school.

BD: It was a Catholic school. It was run by Polish priests.

LD: Yes. Then when they finished that, then they then went to the American School in London, too, yes. Beth stayed at Cranford House. She wanted to be in boarding school so bad, and she came out British. [laughter] The hardest part was finding a place for David to go. David was handicapped, as I said, and it wasn't easy to find a place for him, because he needed total care. We eventually did, and he went to a couple of places that took care of him pretty good and he got a ride back and forth, which was good.

SI: Were there any cultural issues adapting to life in Great Britain?

LD: Well, I can't say that we had any difficulties. A lot of people, Americans, that went to work with American companies in Europe, were very clannish and they all stayed together like in one

community, see, and we didn't do that. We stayed with the English people, and we made a lot of good friends over there in both places that we lived. I think you guys made some friends, too.

BD: Oh, a lot of friends, yes.

LD: So, I mean, it was a good experience for everybody. Like I said, we made friends. The kids, I think, got a good education. They did well when they came out. came back to the States, which was we were there just about almost four years, maybe two months shy of four years. We never became British, but it was just about the right time to come home.

SI: During that time, the United States was embroiled in the Vietnam War. Were you aware of any anti-American sentiment being directed towards you because of that?

LD: Not really, no.

SI: Okay.

LD: I don't think the subject was brought up very much …

SI: Okay.

LD: We followed it in the newspapers and things like that. It was not a good time, but, no, I can't remember anybody ever saying anything or bringing up the topic …

SI: Okay.

LD: Which was good.

SI: How often would you be sent elsewhere in Europe for jobs?

LD: Almost every month. We had two subsidiaries in Spain, we had two in Italy, we had one in France. Of course, we had three or four locations in England. One of our subsidiaries had a subsidiary in Holland, and our English office had a branch and a couple of jobs going in Australia, so I hit them all ...

SI: You had to go to Australia, too.

LD: Yes. Twice, I went to Australia, yes, and that was educational.

BD: You went to Kuwait, too, right?

LD: Well, that was after I came back.

BD: Oh, okay.

LD: I think that was after I came back. I'm not sure now. Yes, I went to Kuwait a couple of times. Yes, I guess it was while I was there. We were trying to form a partnership with some Kuwaitis in Kuwait, so I went there twice to set up accounting systems for them. I went to Saudi Arabia, I went to Turkey, I went to Lebanon, all the good spots. [laughter] When you look back on it, it was really interesting to be able to see all of these places. Otherwise, I'd never get there. Maybe some places even you wouldn't want to go …

SI: Yes. [laughter]

LD: It was good. It did leave Jane alone a lot and put a lot of burden on her for raising the kids, which she did a splendid job. So, anyway, to continue my career at Foster Wheeler, I can say this four years, one of the benefits was we were able to save some money, yes, because of taxes. We didn't have to pay taxes in the States, and we didn't have to pay taxes in England either at that time. I think they do now. So, we were able to save some money, and we came back and came back to Green Village, right, in New Jersey, which was our second home in New Jersey. We stayed there. It was a good experience, like I said, for everybody. Everybody got something out of it. Then, I continued my career. I moved up a little bit further and became controller of the main subsidiary of Foster Wheeler, and then in 1981, I was elected treasurer. I stayed treasurer until '87 when I retired. So, I retired early. I think I was fifty-eight when I retired, and we came to Florida. I think we're doing good in Florida. Jane wasn't too crazy about it, and it does get very hot ...

BD: …

KD: Going back to England …

LD: Yes.

KD: When you were not working, what did you do for entertainment?

LD: We traveled.

KD: You traveled.

LD: We went …

KD: What were your favorite locations?

LD: We went to, the first couple of times, we went to England, down to Cornwall, that coast down there, Cornwall and Devon and we would rent a place down there, right. We would do a lot of sightseeing, and I remember somebody saying, "If I see one more Roman ruin, I'm going to quit." [laughter] Then, we went to Europe. We went to France a couple of times, right. We went to a campgrounds in France.

BD: The famous Yugoslavia trip.

LD: We went to Yugoslavia. We took a long trip. We went from London, and we drove all across northern France, through Switzerland and Austria, down to Italy, went to Venice, right, Venice.

BD: Venice.

LD: Then, we went to …

BD: Trieste.

LD: Trieste and to Yugoslavia. We had pretty much planned out exactly where we were going to stay and how long we were going to be on the road. It was Jane and I and Buddy and Mike and my nephew Ron, and Deborah wasn't with us. Deborah had gone back to America In fact, she was married then.

BD: She was married then.

LD: She had gotten married in England, right, so she went back to the States. I think Joanne stayed with somebody, and David was in respite ...

BD: Beth was with us then.

LD: [What]?

BD: Beth was with us.

LD: I'm sorry. Beth was with us, too, yes. We're in this Volkswagen bus, okay, which converted to a camper, and we had a tent with us, right. We had a big tent with us. So, this was a camping vacation. So, we hit all of these spots in France and Switzerland, Austria, and Venice. I guess we camped outside of Venice, took the bus in and saw the sights and whatever. Then, we went to Trieste, and we went to this campgrounds that Jane had found in *The Sunday Times* in London. So, we check in. We give them our passports, and we're driving. They told us where to go for where our campsite was. We're driving in, and we see this guy walking down the road with a kid and he had no clothes on. It was a nudist camp [laughter] We didn't know that. [laughter] Shock. [laughter]

BD: I could (picture that song on the way in?).

LD: Did you? So, we just made a U-turn, and we were going back and picked up our passports. [laughter] It was funny when you look back on it. It was really funny. We found another place to camp, and we stayed a couple nights I guess. It wasn't very nice. The camp was okay, but it was supposed to be by the water so you can go bathing, swimming and whatever, but it was not a very good beach. So, we stayed there, and then we still had time left, because we weren't going to stay in Yugoslavia that long. We had an extra week or so I guess, so we went back to the

campgrounds that we had gone to previously in southern France, Lake Chalaine or something like that, lake …

KD: Champlain?

LD: No, not Champlain, something. Anyway, [it was a] French name. It was nice, but when you're used to American camping, [and] we have pretty good campsites. Things are kind of rustic. You go to a European campsite, well, everybody is cheek to jowl. People put up little fences and things like that for their little property, and you have a bakery and you have a Laundromat and you have hot showers and you have all these amenities. We're not used to those. It was good, of course, but you're right next to your neighbor. It was good. It was a nice lake. We had a good time. Even if there were French people there, it was still nice.

SI: Did you go to any other Communist countries besides Yugoslavia while you were in Europe?

LD: I can't say so. No, I think those were basically where we went, yes. I can't remember going any place else. Oh, sorry, we went to Spain. Yes, we took a vacation in Spain. Did you go with us?

BD: Yes, Alicante or something.

LD: Yes, Alicante. You and David …

BD: Yes, Mikey.

LD: And Michael. Was Beth with us?

BD: I think so.

LD: Beth, yes.

BD: I'm not one hundred percent sure, but I think so.

LD: Yes, that's right. We went to Spain.

BD: Right on the water.

LD: That was two weeks' vacation right on the water. That was nice. Yes, well you got vacation every year, so you wanted to go someplace where you haven't been before.

BD: Ireland.

LD: So, each of the four years, we did manage to get away.

KD: You went to Ireland, too.

LD: We went to Ireland. Oh, yes, I can't forget that. The first year we were there, my brother came over. Philip, my brother Philip, came over with his wife, his mother-in-law and at least two of his kids, and we decided we were going to go to Normandy, or Brittany, Brittany, Brittany, Brittany [region in France]. So, I had the Volkswagen, and he drove the company car. There were thirteen of us in these two cars, and the only reservations we had were on the ferry going over and on the ferry coming back, from England to France. Oh, Deborah was with us and her boyfriend Jack.

BD: Jack.

LD: Jack was with us. So, we hit the first place, and they found room for us, thirteen people, different rooms. So, then, we went on to the next place, and it was a nice village. It looked like a nice accommodation, made room for us. I think they kicked a couple people out to fit us in. So, we checked in, and then we all went downtown for dinner, okay. We had a long dinner, because Europeans don't like to eat in a rush. They like to take their time. So, we spread it out and spread it out. We went back to the place, and it was all locked up for the night. All the doors were locked, dark. So, Jack went in through the bathroom window and opened the door and let us all in. So, the following morning the proprietor came over and said, "I'm sorry, guys, but you have to leave." [laughter] I was talking French at this time, my little bit of French that I knew, and I pleaded with him. He said, "Okay, you can stay one more night," but he said, "You guys have to be quiet, because last night you woke everybody up." He said, "This is a vacation resort. All these people are from Paris. They want their rest. They go to bed early and they get up early." So, I said, "Okay, we will be very quiet tonight." [laughter] So, we stayed an extra day. We did a lot of touring around. It was an interesting area. Brittany is a really interesting area, and then we moved on. I forget where else we went, but we did some traveling. Then, we went back to the U.K. on the ferry. We made our ferry back.

BD: We made the ferry.

LD: Of course, they all still talk about that vacation. I mean, it was fun. Then, later on, we took a tour of Ireland.

BD: Ireland.

LD: We hopped in the car and went, and we just drove around all over the place. I think we took a ferry from Wales, right, to southern Ireland and drove around all these various towns and cities and stuff. We went to Dublin, and then we did the west coast, all the beaches, beautiful beaches over there. Then, we went up to Belfast, and that was trouble going on in Northern Ireland. There were soldiers and pillboxes and sandbags all over the place and machine guns, and we had the American flag on the back of our car, on the Volkswagen bus. So, we took the ferry from Belfast to Scotland, and Jane had made a reservation at a castle in Scotland. [Editor's Note: In 1921, twenty-six southern counties in Ireland became independent from the United Kingdom.

The six northern counties of Northern Ireland remain part of the U.K. From the 1960s until 1998, periodic unrest and violence plagued relations between Northern Ireland and the U.K.]

BD: Loch.

LD: Was it that?

BD: Loch, yes.

LD: We didn't know what it was going to be like. We thought maybe it was just going to be like a hotel converted from an old castle, but it was a real castle and we were the only people there. A man and his wife ran it, and I think we only stayed the one night, yes. We checked in, and they made us dinner. They built a big fire and got the kids out of the way, so we could sit down and talk and enjoy the place. You had to walk up these spiral stone steps to get up to your bedroom and the wet sheets. [laughter] It was quite an experience, and we were just lucky that Jane found that place. It was an experience. So, I could say we did have a good time over there.

KD: Did you ever go to West Germany for business …

LD: No.

KD: Or anything like that?

LD: No, no, no, no, I never got to Germany.

SI: What would you say were the biggest challenges of your career in terms of your job and your work?

LD: I think the travel was.

SI: Yes.

LD: A lot of times, I got an assignment to go check into something and not really knowing what was going on. When I was in Lebanon, I was finishing up my trip, actually, because I had been to Kuwait, and I stopped in at the Lebanon sales office This was just before the Palestinians destroyed Beirut. [Editor's Note: In 1975, Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing government broke down. Civil war erupted in Beirut between Christian Maronites, on one side, and various Muslim groups, augmented by Lebanon's large Palestinian refugee population, on the other side. The war resulted in about 120,000 casualties, as well as an exodus of approximately one million people. Although the war ended in 1991, periodic conflicts have persisted since.] I was getting ready to come home actually, and I got a telegram from my boss and said, "I want you to go to this place in Turkey." We were building a steel mill, and he said, "I want you to look into such-and-such." So, I said, "I've got to change my ticket and passport and all that good stuff to get a visa to get into Turkey." It was interesting. I looked into what they were looking at, and I found out what was going on. Those are the kind of things sometimes you don't know what you're

going to get into, and you have different personalities you're dealing with all the time. I would say that was the most challenging part, because at the time I was working with Foster Wheeler, most of the people that were there were career Foster Wheeler people. So, you knew them, and you knew how they worked and what they were about. Each job assignment became a little challenge to find out what was expected of you and how you're going to approach the job.

SI: What would be a typical problem that you would face on an assignment?

LD: Well, a lot of it was not numbers but checking procedures to see if the people were following the policies that were laid down for their various departments. So, there, you'd find people would like to bend the rules a little bit, take short cuts and things like that. Then, you'd have some words, try to convince them that the policy that was set down was the right way to do it, or sometimes maybe it wasn't. Then, you would work out a different path to follow so that made it interesting, too.

SI: When you would go to these places overseas, was it mostly locals who worked for Foster Wheeler?

LD: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

SI: Okay.

LD: Yes. In the Paris office, the first time I ever went there, there was a French general manager, right. Later on, they had an American go over there. In England, see, we had two different companies in England. One did the refineries and chemical plants, and the other did the power plants. The power plant company, the CEO was, actually, I think he was Scottish, but the CEO in the petro-chemical company was an American. In Spain, it was an American. In Italy, it was an Italian. So, it was a mixed bag, depending upon how they wanted to run it and who was going to be more familiar and get the work. The whole exercise is to get jobs, get the contracts. That's the way it works, some Americans in charge and some locals. Of course, the regular employees were all local, local people, yes.

SI: When you were going to these different countries, would you have to learn local laws …

LD: Well …

SI: That the company would have to follow?

LD: I didn't have to learn them, because they were well explained to me, because my job was to see if they were following the …

SI: The company's regulations.

LD: Corporate procedures and they were pretty well laid down in black and white. They were pretty easy to follow, and they were easy for these people to adapt to whatever their disciplines

were before. The accounting rules that we laid down or the procedures we laid down were easy to follow, and they did it. Local laws basically, it was taxes, or every country had different taxes and different pension systems and things like that. So, you'd get acquainted how the accounting for those was done in each country, so you had to learn that, which was pretty simple.

SI: Do you have any other questions?

KD: When you came back to the States, did you move back to Chatham?

LD: Well, no, we had lived in Green Village from '66 …

KD: Okay.

LD: To the time we went overseas, so we came back to Green Village.

KD: The same house?

LD: The same house, yes, which was basically our favorite house, I think, that we ever had. We were in there from '66 to '87, I guess, when we retired. It was a nice, quiet neighborhood in New Jersey, I guess, east of here, yes, east and south, yes. It was a nice area, Chatham, Chatham area. [Editor's Note: Green Village is located partly in Harding Township and partly in Chatham Township.]

KD: Chatham, yes.

BD: Chatham Township.

SI: Were you able to get into any local activities or community activities?

LD: No, unfortunately not. There were two things going. One was, of course, my work, all the traveling, okay. The second thing was our son David. He took up a lot of our time, and we couldn't do a lot of things that we would have liked to have done, like traveling and things like that. So, that was basically why I didn't get too active. I joined the Knights of Columbus, but I think that's about it. I don't think I joined any other organizations. I can't remember. They didn't stick in my mind, anyway, that I might have gotten involved in.

KD: Did you travel overseas while you were living in the States?

LD: Oh, yes, sure, oh, yes.

KD: Did you …

LD: When I came back from England, I didn't go away as often, but I still had to go away once in a while.

KD: Did you go away frequently?

LD: No, they cut back quite a bit, because I was kind of in a different assignment.

SI: After you retired in 1987, did you start another career, or did you retire fully?

LD: I retired fully. I took up sailing and golf, which I could do once a week. [laughter] See, the biggest challenge we had when we went to Florida, everybody was married. Buddy, Beth, Deb and Michael, the four guys were married. Joanne was finished with school. She came to Florida, too, but she lived with her girlfriend in a different town and had her own job to do and everything. So, it was Jane and I and David and our biggest challenge was to find something for David. It took about two years before I actually found a place for him that he could go on a daily basis and be with people like himself and do something. It was a tough slog to get him settled. I'm trying to remember. The first couple years that he was in this facility, I had to drive him in the morning and pick him up in the afternoon, and it was a good twenty miles each way. So, that takes up a good part of your day. Then, when we moved to the second house, which was on Albee Road, the county had a SCAT bus system, and they used to pick him up and bring him home. That was the good news. The bad news was he had to be out in his wheelchair [laughter] at six-thirty in the morning to get on the bus, and he was home about two-thirty. The driver was a terrific guy. He had a tough job, because he had maybe half a dozen handicapped kids in wheelchairs and whatever and he had to get them on the bus and off the bus. He had a lot of patience this guy. Fred, his name was. So, that worked out pretty good. It gave Jane and I a little more free time to do things, but there were the illnesses in-between, which kind of interrupted the continuity of the schooling. It wasn't schooling really. It was like a facility where they did things, with their hands if they could. David was so restricted. There was not too much he could do, but he was sorting things out, putting them in different piles and stuff like that. He had a paycheck for it. [laughter] It was good. He felt like he was doing something, and it was good. It was good for him. They have good people up there, too, with a lot of patience. Of course, this was a facility where they maybe had a hundred kids and not all kids, so adults as well with various developmental problems. So, they had a tough job. David went there, I guess, until 1998. He, for years, all he wanted to do was get out. [laughter] He said, "All my brothers and sisters are gone." He said, "I want to be out, too." So, we found some place, or I don't know, maybe they found us, I don't know, it was a woman that ran a facility in Port Charlotte, actually, which was another good ride down. She had a facility like a day care, where students would come in, and then she found a house, where David and another young man could live with twenty-four-hour care because David really couldn't do anything for himself. He had two positions in life, wheelchair or bed. They found this house in a community, and they would pick him up in the morning, take him to the day care center. They would do things there, whatever, and then go back to the house and stay there at night. Like I said, there were two shifts. I guess one woman would stay overnight, and then somebody would stay during the mornings or whatever ... He was there for three years until he passed away.

KD: Going back, you also had a place in New York State as well. How did that come about?

LD: Yes, we did.

KD: How did that come about?

LD: Yes, we did. I guess it was in 1975 we thought we would try to find a retirement place, because we had been thinking about retiring. We found this farmhouse up near Massena, New York, way up It was just a few miles from the St. Lawrence River. Anyway, we found this place, and it was pretty well derelict. It was an old house. It was well over a hundred years old, brick home. As you drove around the county, St. Lawrence County, you'd see a lot of houses very similar to it, so it was common architecture. It was a brick facility, two floors with a wood shed attached to it. This particular layout had a big barn in the back and couple of other out buildings. So, we bought it in '75, like I said, and we did a lot of work on it. We fixed up the interior. We did some work on the exterior, and we spent a lot of summers up there before we retired. We did have it rented out for a couple of years, yes, did have it rented out for a couple of years. Pretty soon, we realized that the winters get so cold up there that you would get cabin fever. I mean, you just wouldn't go out in the wintertime. So, we decided, "Okay, we'll use it for a summer place for a while, and then we'll sell it," which is what we did. When we moved to Florida, we sold our New Jersey home and we sold our New York [home]. No, we didn't sell it right away, did we? No, we kept it. We were Snowbirds. [Editor's Note: A Snowbird is a nickname for a person that spends the winter in a warm climate.]

KD: Yes.

LD: We were Snowbirds for a little while.

KD: The house was around for awhile.

LD: That's right; we were Snowbirds for a while. We went up there for the summers. Yes, I forgot that ... It was a nice place. It had sixty acres. We had a lot of grass to mow, and we rented out one of the fields to a neighbor farmer to get hay and whatever. It was good.

KD: He had some animals.

LD: It was nice area, friendly people, very nice people up there. Pardon?

KD: You had some animals.

LD: Yes. Whenever we'd get up there, we'd get a couple of goats, and I made a chicken coop. I raised chickens for the summer, [laughter] got more eggs than we could possibly eat so we were giving away eggs all over the place. We did that for about eight years, I guess. Then, we sold it.

SI: Is there any part of your life that we should talk about or that we skipped over?

KD: There are one or two stories that I have heard, but I did not get all the information. Did you have dinner with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger? I heard just a gist about Henry Kissinger and a dinner event.

LD: I don't remember that, no.

KD: No, okay.

LD: I'm not saying it didn't happen.

KD: Yes.

LD: If we had a lot of drinks that night, [laughter] I might have met him, but, no, I don't remember.

KD: Okay, I was just curious. Phil said at the reunion to mention something about you in Japan in a boat.

LD: In a boat?

KD: In a boat. [He said] something about Japan and a funny story.

LD: The only memorable thing about the boat was how everybody got sick, because the storm that we hit was really outrageous.

KD: Was it a typhoon?

LD: [What]?

KD: Was it a typhoon?

LD: Well, I don't know what they would call it, but the waves were coming up over the deck of the ship, and this was a pretty good-sized ship …

KD: Yes.

LD: It was really rough, and like I said, we were down in the bowels of the boat

KD: Yes.

LD: It wasn't very fun. I've got to say that I didn't mind the two years that I did in the Army. I think I got a lot out of it.

SI: Did you ever join any veterans groups?

LD: Well, belatedly, I joined the American Legion down in Florida, but up to that point, I never did, no. I guess I'm really not a joiner. I don't know whether I'm anti-social or what but just

never did, never joined. I really could have joined the American Legion a long time ago, maybe met a lot of friends in New Jersey but I never did.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record?

LD: No, I think that we covered everything, my work, my Army, which this, I'm sure, is not very interesting. [laughter]

SI: No, it was very interesting. Usually, I do not meet people who have traveled all over the world.

LD: Well, that was one of the good things about that job. I got to see a lot. Our family got to get to Europe and see a lot that they never would have seen, at least not free. [laughter]

SI: Are there any stories that you recall that you think we should add?

BD: No, I think Dad pretty much covered it all.

SI: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate all your time today.

LD: You're welcome.

SI: Thank you, again, for participating.

LD: Great.

SI: Okay.

LD: It was fun.

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

Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 2/5/2015
Reviewed by Mohammad Athar 3/11/2015