RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WALTER ENGLISH

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Peter Asch: This begins an interview with Mr. Walter English in Atco, New Jersey, on December 7, 2005, with Peter Asch and …

John Miller: … John Miller. Mr. English, could you please tell us, for the record, when and where you were born?

Walter English: I was born on September 24, 1928, in North Wildwood, New Jersey. My father was, well, at that time, … the superintendent of schools in North Wildwood. He had previously been a principal at Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey. Let's see; he had gone to school at Bucknell University and had recently graduated from Columbia University, the graduate school. My mother was Irene English, from Somerset, Pennsylvania, Berlin, Pennsylvania, near Somerset, and, at that time, they were living in North Wildwood and had recently … rented a house in North Wildwood.

PA: How did your parents meet?

WE: They met up at Penn State. They were both going to school there and they happened to meet. … They eventually got married and moved down to South Jersey, to do teaching jobs.

PA: Your father went to school for teaching and education. What was your mother's focus in school?

WE: Well, she was learning to be a teacher. She had gone to college in Indiana University, in Pennsylvania, and, also, Penn State, took some courses, and then, later on, she went to Glassboro. It was Glassboro State College at that time. [Editor's Note: Glassboro State College later changed its name to Rowan College (1992) and Rowan University (1997).]

PA: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

WE: Yes, I have two brothers. I have an older brother, who is two years older than I am, and I have a younger brother, who's two years younger than I am.

PA: What was your childhood like, growing up with two brothers in South Jersey?

WE: Well, the first thing I remember is being in North Wildwood and … being in the rental house there. … We were near the North Wildwood Lighthouse and we used to watch the lighthouse light going around [laughter] at night, when we were going to sleep. Unfortunately, my father died when I was young. I was only about four years old. So, then, things were changed and we moved to Dennisville, New Jersey, in Cape May County, and my mother went back to Glassboro, to finish her schooling, so that she could be a teacher. She'd had two years of college, but she needed another year to qualify, at that time, to be a teacher, and so, she did that, and then, she taught in the Eldora School, for a long time after that. [Editor's Note: The Eldora School is located in Eldora, along Route 47 in Northern Cape May County, part of Dennis Township Schools (Dennisville, New Jersey).]

JM: You were raised primarily by your mother.

WE: Yes, I was with my mother all the time.

JM: Was there any other family in the area?

WE: Not in the area. Both the families were from up in Pennsylvania. My father was from up in Jersey Shore, [Pennsylvania], up near Williamsport, and my mother was from out near Somerset. So, the rest of the relatives were out in Pennsylvania, and we would go and see them in the summer, but we didn't really have them around.

PA: What elementary school did you attend?

WE: … Well, the kindergarten was down in South Dennis, and then, after that, I went to the Eldora School, … first through the fourth grade, and the fourth to the eighth grades were in Dennisville. That's the way it was set up at that time.

JM: You said your mother worked in Eldora.

WE: Yes, she was my teacher for the first through the fourth grades.

PA: Was that an interesting experience for you?

WE: Yes, it was. [laughter] Yes, that was quite an experience. It worked out fine. We didn't have any problems. …

JM: Did your brothers also attend the same school?

WE: My older brother did. He went to Eldora School, and my younger brother, since my mother was going to school at Glassboro and things, he stayed with our grandmother in Jersey Shore for a year or so. So, he wasn't with us the whole time, but he did go later on. He went to Eldora School, and then, to Dennisville. Then, all three of us went to Middle Township High School, in Cape May Courthouse.

JM: Did you have any ideas about what you wanted to do when you grew up?

WE: No, I don't think so. … In high school, I was getting interested in science and chemistry, so, I started working on that kind of an idea, and then, when I graduated from high school, in 1946, I was able to go to Rutgers and major in chemistry.

PA: Did your mother stress education, since she had such a high education?

WE: Yes, yes. … Of course, my father died while I was young, but my mother still stressed education and the importance of it and wanted us, all three of us, to continue on into college, and we all did, yes.

PA: Had your older brother gone to Rutgers as well?

WE: No, he went to Monmouth Junior College, in North Jersey, and my younger brother went to Trenton State Teachers College in Trenton, in Ewing. … My younger brother graduated. My older brother went for two years, and then, he got busy working, … was working with the Potomac Edison Electric Company. [Note: The Potomac Edison Electric Company served Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.] So, he took some courses, but didn't finish college.

JM: You entered high school in the early 1940s.

WE: Yes, in 1942. It was right after Pearl Harbor, [December 7, 1941].

JM: Do you remember anything about Pearl Harbor and the time surrounding it?

WE: I remember the day that it happened. We heard the announcement on the radio and we were all wondering what was going on and what would happen and, of course, we immediately got involved in the war effort and being involved with the war. My older brother went into the Navy at the age of eighteen, since he graduated from high school in 1944. … I went in from Rutgers, because I had taken the ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] program, in 1950, when the Korean War started. [Editor's Note: The Korean War started on June 25, 1950.] I was called up in the summer of 1950 to be in the Army and go to Fort Dix.

PA: How were you involved in the war effort at home?

WE: Well, we basically did whatever we could, the war bonds, the stamps and collecting scrap metals, rubber things, papers, things like that, and then, … also, when I was in high school, I was, like, an air raid warden. We did the spotting … down in Dennisville. We would go down there. If a plane came over, we were to call it in, and the location and the direction, and so forth. So, I did that for awhile.

PA: Being along the shore, were there any blackouts in the area?

WE: Yes, during the war, there were blackouts. We were supposed to keep the windows covered and not show a lot of lights, and, also, the car lights were covered. … We had the restriction to go thirty-five miles an hour in the cars, because of the gasoline and the rubber shortages for tires.

PA: Were people accepting of these changes to daily life?

WE: Oh, yes, yes. They were all accepting of it and they wanted to do everything they could to help the war effort, and then, we followed the things that were happening in the war the whole time, in the paper and on the newscasts. That was before there was much of any television, [laughter] and we did follow it in the paper and on the radio.

JM: Do you feel sentiments towards the war changed significantly after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

WE: Well, yes. Before Pearl Harbor, I remember, there was more of a feeling that we wanted to stay out of the war, but it had already started in Europe. … Soon as Pearl Harbor happened, then, everybody wanted to get in and into the war and do what they could to win the war.

PA: Were you aware of what was going on Europe before the attack at Pearl Harbor?

WE: Well, I would follow it pretty closely in the paper, knew what was going on and, well, where they were fighting and what was happening. … When the Germans invaded Poland, it was big news and it was in all the papers. [Editor's Note: Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.]

JM: Was your neighborhood ethnically diverse? Were you living among significant populations of immigrants?

WE: Not so much immigrants. At that time, it was before there were many migrant workers and things like that. There were a few around, but not many. We were, I guess you would say now, integrated, because we … went to school with the black people and lived near them, and so forth, and didn't think anything of it. … Of course, especially in high school, … down at Cape May Courthouse, there were black communities near there, so that they went to high school with us the whole time.

JM: There were never any problems.

WE: No, no problems at all. No, they were just accepted as being other people that were part of the high school and things that were going on.

PA: Do you remember any going away parties or sendoffs as young men from your community were leaving for war?

WE: No, I don't remember sendoffs. … Of course, we knew and it was a small community. So, we knew when people were going and we would hear that they were going, but I don't remember any big parties or sendoffs. They would just go on and go and be involved in doing what they were supposed to. My brother was also involved in the shipyard up at Dorchester. Before he graduated from high school, for a couple years, he would help out up there, in the summer. … They were building minesweepers, because they would make them out of wood, and then, they could use them to do the minesweeping in the Delaware Bay and in the ocean.

JM: Were you involved in any sports or extracurricular activities in high school?

WE: Oh, well, extracurricular, I was in the high school band. I played the trombone. Sports were limited, because we had to ride the bus from Eldora down to Cape May Courthouse and we couldn't stay to do the practices required. I did do some cross-country running in my senior year at high school and did some track, in the half-mile and the mile.

JM: What were the sentiments around the school and around the neighborhood when World War II ended?

WE: Well, it was a big celebration when we had V-E Day, [May 8, 1945], the end of the war in Europe, and then, V-J Day, [August 14, 1945], the end of the war in Japan. … Everybody was celebrating and we were glad that the wars, war, had ended, was ending. We had followed it closely up until then. … My older brother was in the Pacific by that time. He went in in 1944, and then, in 1945, went over to the South Pacific and later moved into the island of Guam. He was stationed in Guam when the war ended and he stayed there for awhile. He didn't get home until 1946.

JM: Were you able to stay in contact with your brother once he was shipped out?

WE: Well, we would contact him some. We would write back and forth, in a limited way, and then, … occasionally, he would be able to call, but it was rather limited contact.

PA: Were you concerned about being drafted while you were in high school?

WE: Well, the war was going well and I guess my concern was whether I would be involved in it before it was over or not. Not that I … would care either way, but I almost went into the Navy at the end of my high school [years], but, then, the war ended, so, I didn't go. … That was 1946. I was able to arrange to go to Rutgers, so, I did that.

JM: Were you interested in any other universities upon graduation from high school?

WE: Not really. I looked around a little bit, but it mostly was Rutgers, because I found out I could get a State Scholarship, based on my high school academics, and that would enable me to be able to go to Rutgers. … So, I just concentrated mainly on going to Rutgers and doing the work there.

JM: Did anybody else that you knew from high school apply to Rutgers?

WE: I don't remember anyone at that time. There were others, later, that went to Rutgers. I don't remember any from our class. At that time, it was a small high school. There were only about forty of us graduating from that year, in 1946.

JM: Were many from your graduating class planning on attending college?

WE: Well, it was mixed. About half of them did, I think; they wanted to, anyway, but some were able to and some weren't able to go, or didn't want to go. They wanted to get started on working and doing other jobs.

JM: Did you have to work while you were in high school?

WE: … Mother remarried and I had a stepfather who owned a dairy in Eldora. So, we, well, were busy working on the dairy. It was a small dairy that we had about thirty cows that we milked, and then, we delivered, he delivered, the milk, every day, to Delmont and Dennisville and South Dennis and around. So, it was a small operation, but it kept us busy. We raised hay

and grain on the farm, he had a small farm, and then, took care of the cows and the dairy operation. So, I was busy working on that. I didn't really have time to do much of anything else.

PA: You moved out with your mother to your stepfather's farm.

WE: Yes. When she remarried, we moved there. It was 1939, I think it was, and we lived there with them in Eldora.

JM: Were you excited to be going to Rutgers University?

WE: Yes. It was quite an experience to go to a big university like that and I found it to be quite a change when I got up there. It was a lot different than going to school in Cape May County. It worked out all right, though. It's a good place to go.

JM: Did you visit the campus before you attended?

WE: Yes, yes. We visited a couple times with my mother and we looked around and made the applications and got accepted. … At that time, in 1946, a lot of the veterans were coming out and they had preference over some things, so that we had to … rent a room up on College Avenue. We couldn't get into any of the dormitories or anything like that, … but that worked out all right.

PA: Do you remember where the room was?

WE: I don't remember the address. It was right on College Avenue, up near the old gymnasium, across from the Commons. It was just a small room that another friend, a neighbor of ours, … from Dennisville that … was going to Rutgers [shared]. He was a veteran, but he was going to Rutgers. So, he and I roomed together in a room there, on that street.

PA: Was there a divide between college age students and the veterans? How were the interactions between the two groups?

WE: I didn't find it any problem. … I guess the ones that weren't veterans had a lot of respect for the veterans, because of what they'd been through. … Then, well, you know, they kind of went their way and we went ours on a lot of things, but it wasn't any problem. When I went to Rutgers, they were still doing freshman hazing and dink caps and things like that, but, when the veterans got there, in 1946, they said, "Forget it," you know. [laughter] So, everybody did. One good thing, Dean [Earl Reed] Silvers was there and he pressed the idea that we were all to be friendly. So, whenever we'd see somebody on campus, we'd go by and say, "Hello," and that was very nice. It made us feel welcome there and feel good about the other students.

PA: Veterans often talk about wanting to just go through school and get out. Did that studious attitude transfer onto the nonveteran students?

WE: Yes, I think it did transfer to us, too. The veterans were very focused on … getting the education done and getting out of there, and I think that passed on to us. A lot of the classes

were rather competitive. The people in the class were very competitive on getting a good grade and doing the work successfully, and that passed on to us.

PA: Did you go to football games or interact with the social life?

WE: Not too much with the social life. I did go to some of the football games and I was able to get some student jobs there, in the refreshment stands or things like that, [laughter] or ushering, things like that, but I did like to go to the football games and go to the pep rallies. At that time, they were right across the street from where we were on College Avenue, in back of the old gymnasium. One of the big thrills was, Rutgers beat Princeton the first year, [laughter] because they had veterans there playing on the football team, I think, was the main reason, but they did have a pretty good football team the whole time I was there at Rutgers.

JM: While you were at Rutgers, was Greek life a large aspect of the University?

WE: Yes, it was a big part of the University. I wasn't involved in it, because, well, mainly, I couldn't have afforded that kind of thing, but I knew some other students that were involved in the fraternities and we knew about the fraternities and things like that. … That was just part of college life, as far as I was concerned.

PA: Were you a part of ROTC while you were at the University?

WE: Yes. That was one of the things. … Well, I think I was required to take it for the first two years, at that time, and then, when I did take it the first two years, I kind of liked it, so, I wanted to stay in for the four years. … Every Tuesday, we'd go over to Buccleuch Park and do the marches and drills and things, and then, when I got into the third and fourth years, I was a cadet, student officer and would lead some of the drills and things like that. So, it was a very good experience. …

PA: Were there a lot of veterans involved in ROTC as well?

WE: Not too many of them wanted to do ROTC. They wanted to be done with the military, but there were other students there and most of them were required to take it. So, the first two years that they were required to take it, … they had quite a few students that were taking the ROTC program.

JM: Did a lot of students stay in ROTC for four years, like yourself?

WE: Well, it was mixed. Some did the two years and stopped and some did the four years. … I think we got paid for one or two days a month, at that time. So, it was a little incentive to make some extra money, and I was kind of interested in the military, so, I didn't mind staying in it.

PA: Were you thinking about pursuing the military as a career?

WE: Well, I was unsure at that time. When I went to Rutgers, I majored in chemistry and science, and then, in the second year, I changed to education, with the thought that I would be a

high school teacher. … I think, by the time I graduated, I was undecided just to what I would do, whether I would try to stay in the military or be a teacher or do something else.

PA: Had the campus at this point begun integrating? Was there a more diverse population?

WE: Well, the whole time I was there, it was very diverse. There were all kinds of mixed races and people and ages, and there wasn't any problem at that time.

PA: Do you feel that helped your overall education, that there was such a mix of ages and people?

WE: Yes, I think it was good. They had a good group of students there and a good university, good education.

JM: Who was the President of the University while you were there?

WE: Gee, I'm not sure now. Mason Gross, … well, I think he came right after that. I don't remember. [laughter] I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: Robert C. Clothier was President of Rutgers University during this period.]

JM: Did you have any favorite professors or faculty members?

WE: Not particularly. There were several that were all good. … I'd move around and take different courses, and so, I'd be involved with quite a number of different professors. … I took some agriculture courses, too, because I was still [interested in and] had a background in dairy and farming.

PA: At this point, Rutgers was much larger than it was before the war. Was there a close relationship between the professors and students?

WE: Yes. It was a pretty big student population, so that we didn't really have close ties with the professors, at least at that time. We did have some, you know, … contacts, but not real close ties. A lot of the classes were large lecture classes, [that] type of thing, because they were trying to accommodate as many students as possible and expand at the same time and find more professors to do that.

JM: Did any of the students in ROTC originally think that there would be another war or conflict in coming years?

WE: Well, I think we felt that there wouldn't really be a large conflict, but it was always a possibility, with the way things were going, the Cold War and the blockade of Berlin, [the Soviet Union's blockade of street and railroad access to West Berlin from June 24, 1948 to May 11, 1949], and things like that, but it wasn't really much of a concern, because the Korean War started all of a sudden. We didn't have, … really, much of an inkling that it would start.

JM: When did you enlist?

WE: Well, I graduated in June of 1950, and then, well, it was really May of 1950. Then, in June, the Korean War started, so, I was involved right away. When you graduated ROTC, you would get a Reserve commission. So, I got notified in, must have been August, that I was to be called up and serve on active duty, so that I had to report to Fort Dix in September of 1950.

PA: What were your plans for after graduation, before the Korean War started?

WE: Well, I was looking around for a teaching position at that time. I wanted to teach high school chemistry and that kind of thing, science. I had some leads, so, I hadn't really settled on any particular job. I'd been involved in Scouting for a number of years before that, so, I was considering becoming a full-time, professional Scout leader on the Scouting staff. … I was following that as a possibility, but, then, when the war started, everything else stopped, [laughter] so that I, you know, just went on and prepared to report to Fort Dix and go on from there.

JM: Did your mother have any feelings about you enlisting?

WE: No, I don't [think so]. She accepted it all right, and, you know, it was one of those things that you couldn't do anything about. … Because I had the ROTC background, I would have been called up anyway. So, there wasn't a problem.

PA: What were your personal feelings?

WE: [laughter] Oh, I guess, I didn't mind going. It was kind of an adventure to go to Fort Dix and be involved there with the Army. In the Summer of 1949, we, the ROTC cadets, went to Fort Meade, for, it's really our basic training, and so, I had a taste of it there and I didn't mind that. So, I knew Fort Dix, what Fort Dix would be like. … At Fort Dix, I was assigned to one of the basic training companies and I was [to] be a company training officer. At that time, they were still … taking draftees, so that draftees would come in and we would give them basic training for eight weeks, and then, they would move on to advanced basic training. So, I found that rather interesting and I didn't mind doing that.

PA: How well did the ROTC prepare you for Army life?

WE: I found that it did pretty good, because you had the four years of classroom work, and then, the drills every week and things like that, and then, the summer camp. So, I think I was pretty well prepared. Then, after I was at Fort Dix for awhile, I went to further training in Fort Benning, Georgia. It was advanced company officers' training, they called it, and that prepared me even more. It was a review of everything that we had done and [it] gave us additional training in things that we needed. That was good, and then, I went back to Fort Dix and did more basic training of draftees there.

PA: Can you describe how it was to be training men who were your age or older?

WE: Well, most of them were younger, at that time. They were draftees. Some were older and some were younger. Mostly, they were always [younger]. I was twenty-one, twenty-two, then, and they were eighteen, nineteen, twenty, most of them. But, [the] thing that was a little upsetting was that the Korean War was going on then. In 1950 and '51, it was pretty bad, and we would finish training them and they would go on to advanced training, and then, we knew that, as soon as the advanced training, the other eight weeks, was done, they would go over to Korea, most of them. Some of them went to Europe, but most of them went to Korea.

JM: You said you went to Fort Benning in Georgia.

WE: Yes.

JM: Had you ever traveled outside of New Jersey and Pennsylvania?

WE: Well, yes. Well, we'd gone to Pennsylvania quite a bit, because of our relatives up there, but we had also traveled down to Florida before that. So, it was, you know, a change, to be away for awhile, but I didn't mind it. It was all right to be in Georgia, and then, come back up to Fort Dix.

JM: When you began training, were you with men who were also from New Jersey or was it a mixed group of soldiers?

WE: It was a mixed group. Well, they were draftees, so, most of them were from New Jersey, but there were some from New York and some from other places around the country. … They hadn't really been assigned to a unit, other than basic training yet, so that they were a mixed group, and then, they went on to other things after the basic.

JM: What kind of things did you do in officer training at Fort Benning?

WE: Well, it was pretty much a review of what we had done in the ROTC program before that and in our training at Fort Meade, in the summer camp. We'd go through the military history, compass use, map reading, things like that, and then, the weapons, different weapons, all the different weapons. We were able to use and to fire them, and then, the military formations and the tactics to be used. [It] was company tactics training, ways to use a platoon or a company in combat.

PA: Did it prepare you for the leadership aspects of being an officer and managing men?

WE: Yes, that was part of it. Part of the training was leadership and managing the people that you had to command in a platoon or a company, so that you're able to do that then.

JM: When you enlisted, did any of your friends enlist with you?

WE: No, it was just an individual thing. It was the Summer of 1950, so, I was basically off and doing [things]. I was really at a Scout camp up in North Jersey [laughter] when they notified me that I was being activated. So, it was an individual thing, at that time. Some of the other people

around did go into the Army, but most of them went a little bit later than that. They were drafted or went in.

PA: Can you talk a little bit about your Scouting experience and if that helped you at all, either as a youth or as an adult leader, with the Army?

WE: Well, I found it was good. As a youth, we went to the Scout troop in Dennisville and I went through the different ranks of Scouting and got to be an Eagle Scout and I think that that was a good background. [There were] things there that I was able to use in the Army, things that I knew from Scouting that were useful. That was also, partially, leadership training, because the older Scouts would be leaders for the younger boys.

PA: During your leadership and management training in the Army, was race touched on at all?

WE: Not much. It wasn't really a problem. Early in 1950 was when President Truman integrated the Army units. … At Fort Dix, before that, they had been separated, but, … by the time I got there in 1950, they were integrated and the trainees, the draftees, were integrated in units, so that it wasn't really a problem. In the Army, you just did what you had to do, [laughter] and there wasn't any chance for it to be a problem. [Editor's Note: In July 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, ending segregation in the Armed Forces. Special Regulations No. 600-629-1, issued on January 16, 1950, reinforced this policy within the US Army.]

PA: Were there any African-Americans in your Officer Candidate School class?

WE: Yes, there were. Well, it wasn't OCS; it was advanced company officer training. There were other officers from the other units, and we also had officers from the 40th California Division and the 45th Oklahoma Division that were there getting some of their training, because they were being activated as divisions, so that we were working with them during the training in Fort Benning, and all of the units were integrated at that time.

JM: Once you began training, were you still able to keep aware of things that were going on in Europe, politically, as far as what was going on in Berlin and the rise and spread of communism?

WE: Yes. We would still follow the news in the papers and on the radio, and, of course, we were following the Korean War, because we would be involved in that shortly. People at Fort Benning knew that most of us would be in Korea very soon.

PA: What about people going through the advanced officer training? Was it mostly World War II veterans or ROTC and Reserve officers?

WE: Oh, it was about half and half, I think. A lot of the ones from the National Guard units were World War II veterans, and then, the ones from the other Reserves and the other units were not veterans. They had gotten involved in it after the war was over.

PA: How did that mix affect the training?

WE: Well, I think it was good, because the ones who had been in World War II gave us some pointers and things and gave us a feeling that we could learn to do the things that needed to be done.

JM: You said that most of you knew that you would be going to Korea. How did you feel about that?

WE: Well, I guess, a little apprehensive. You don't really want to go into an area like that, but I felt that it was going to be coming, was just a matter of when, when it would happen. This was in '50-'51. The winter there was very heavy fighting, and then, when I came back to Fort Dix, in the Spring of '51, of course, there was still fighting, … but I was assigned, again, to continue giving basic training to draftees. … It was still a question of when I would be taken from Fort Dix and sent on over to Korea. It's one of those things [laughter] that's going to happen, it's just [that] you don't know when.

JM: What kind of things were you being taught about the Koreans and the Chinese?

WE: Well, not too much. We were following it some, and then, following the course of the fighting over there. That was when they had the Inchon landing, and then, attacked up into North Korea, … but, then, they were driven back again and, later, in the beginning of 1951. So, we were following that and we knew it was heavy fighting there, that it would be not an easy task.

PA: Did you feel prepared from your training?

WE: Yes, I felt adequately trained. … If I had to go, I was ready to go and get involved in the fighting.

PA: What was your opinion on the Inchon landing and MacArthur as a commanding general?

WE: Well, I think that was a rather startling move and daring. He had some opposition in the Army even, but it turned out to be a good thing, that they were able to get away from the stalemate that they had in the southern part of Korea and have some success in fighting back. MacArthur, as far as I was concerned, he was all right, although a lot of people didn't like him or were opposed to him, but I thought he was all right, yes. … Well, he left Korea before I went over there, but I thought he did all right, what he did there.

PA: Did you have any feelings about his removal?

WE: Well, at the time, [laughter] I wasn't very happy about it, because I thought he should have stayed and kept on leading the Army and fighting there, but I guess things that had happened were too much, that he had to be removed, [I] kind of accept that, that it had to be done.

JM: Did you feel that you were going to be fighting a people or an ideology, fighting against communism?

WE: Well, I guess, basically, against communism, but, at the time when I went, in the beginning …

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PA: This continues an interview with Mr. Walter English. You were cut off by the tape.

WE: Yes, okay. As I was saying, when I went to go on over to Korea, in the beginning of 1952, the Chinese had become involved at that point and were doing a lot of the fighting, so that I regarded it as a battle against communism, against keeping the Chinese and the North Koreans from taking over South Korea. … After I got there, it was even more evident to me that it was important, because the South Korean people were, basically, not able to withstand the invasion, and, mostly, they were just poor farmers and they deserved a chance to be able to farm their land and live there, so that that was my feeling, that it was necessary to drive the communists back.

PA: Can you describe your journey from Fort Dix to Korea?

WE: … At the end of 1951, I was at Fort Dix and I got orders to report to Far East Command, which was Korea. It was really Japan, but it was for Korea, and then, I had to report to Seattle, Washington, in February of 1952. So, I had some time off before that, and then, I made my way from New Jersey to Seattle, Washington, and, [from] there, went on, by plane, from Seattle up to Anchorage, [Alaska], and from Anchorage over to Japan, and then, in Japan, I was given more training. I was with other officers that were being sent to Korea. We were given more training in chemical/biological warfare, and then, we were sent from there into Sasebo, Japan, and across to Pusan, Korea. In Pusan, we were assigned to units that were already in Korea and traveled, by train, from Pusan up through Taegu and Seoul, up to where our units would be. I was assigned to the 45th Oklahoma National Guard Division.

PA: This whole journey was as a single replacement officer. You were not with a unit or anyone you had trained with at Fort Dix.

WE: Right. It was single officers who were traveling as a group, but we were all different single officers assigned to different places.

PA: Was there a fear that the communists were going to use chemical and biological warfare?

WE: Well, I think they were afraid that the communists, the Chinese particularly, might use it, but, fortunately, they never did while we were there, but there was some additional training, so [that] if they did use it, we would know what to do, and this was shortly after the atomic weapons thing, so, we had radiological training also, with that.

PA: From your training, did it appear the United States was prepared to use biological weapons in response or was it just defensive?

WE: I think it was more defensive at that time. I don't know that we even had much capability of using it, but it was defensive. We wanted to know what to do if the Chinese or the North Koreans did use some; we would know how to handle it and what actions to take.

JM: What did you expect to find when you arrived in Korea? Did you have any picture in your head?

WE: No, not really. [laughter] At that time, they were pretty much stalemated along, … pretty much, where the present Demilitarized Zone is. So, it was sort of trench warfare, and we went from Pusan up through Seoul and on up to Wejonbu. … The 45th Division was up [there], assigned to the Ch'orwon Valley, which was … one of the main invasion routes from the North. So, I didn't really know, expect, what to get [in]to there, but I was assigned to the 179th Regiment in the 45th Division, in the First Battalion. So, I went up to where Company A was and they were up [at] what was called, at that time, the "Iron Triangle," [a North Korean stronghold, made up of Ch'orwon, Pyonggang and Kumhwa, used as a staging ground for attacks into South Korea], facing the Chinese along the frontlines, the military zone. … I was assigned and I was a platoon leader in the Second Platoon there, in Company A, and we were assigned a sector that we would have bunkers in and be guarding and watching for the Chinese, because, at that time, we'd have patrols. We would go out and patrol and attack them and they would go out and patrol and attack us, and that continued for quite awhile.

PA: Was this the kind of combat you had trained for or did you train more for a broad, sweeping type of combat?

WE: Well, I guess we were trained, pretty much, for all types. Before that, mostly, combat action had been broad, sweeping type of things, but we were trained so that we could handle the small unit actions. The thing that we kept hearing about the Chinese was that they would swarm all over and overrun the positions and we're kind of watchful for that. [laughter] We had artillery strikes plotted, so that if we saw them coming, we could call in for the artillery to start shooting and knock them down before they would get too many around us, and that did work quite a bit. We had good artillery support. We were up mostly on hills, in trenches, with bunkers scattered along, and we would stay there and be on watch. … At night was the main concern, because we didn't know, from night to night, if we would still be there the next morning, because that was when most of the action was, at night, in the dark, and then, well … [laughter]

PA: Was the night action usually mass attacks or was it more small infiltration patrols?

WE: Mostly, it was the smaller infiltration patrols or localized attacks. They might attack the one hill with, you know, a couple hundred men, or something like that, and we would do similar kind of things. We knew where they were, over on "T-Bone Hill," [a hill in the Ch'orwon Valley shaped like a T-bone steak], across the little valley. So, we would go over there sometimes and attack them, or we would be instructed that we should do that, [laughter] and keep them off balance, or know exactly where they were.

JM: You were assigned as a platoon commander.

WE: Platoon leader, yes.

JM: Platoon leader. Had the troops that you were leading already been there for sometime?

WE: Most of them had, yes. I was assigned to the 45th Division and they had been activated, well, earlier, in 1951. They had been over in Japan for awhile, in 1951, and then, in the beginning of 1952, they moved into Korea, the 45th Division and the 40th Division.

JM: Was it easy for you to become acclimated to this new group of men?

WE: Well, there was no problem. … In Korea, you were glad to see anybody that could carry a rifle, [laughter] and, you know, they were all very accepting of … having me as the platoon leader and commanding them, giving them orders and instructions and doing what needed to be done.

PA: How did this kind of warfare influence the morale of the men?

WE: Well, it was hard on them, just being there and being away from home and all. … At that time, it was winter, so, it was cold and uncomfortable and, of course, nerve-wracking, but I think, basically, the morale was as good as could be expected, with those kind of conditions. They were a good group of men and they had been through a lot of training. Fortunately, … in the 45th Division, being a National Guard division, we had a lot of the upper officers, in the battalion and regiment, [who] had been in combat in Italy with the 45th Division in World War II. So, they knew what they were doing. [Editor's Note: The 45th Division saw combat in Sicily, Italy, Southern France and Germany in World War II.] We had confidence in the upper command, the upper leadership, so, that helped. Some of the other units had problems with upper officers that didn't know, really, how to handle combat, but the 45th Division did have good leaders.

JM: Were there any problems in supplying the troops? Were the supply lines clear, to get up into the hills?

WE: Well, of course, getting things up into the hills was a problem in itself, because they were very steep and, you know, [you] go through one hill and there was another one. [laughter] You'd keep going and there's more hills there. We did get supplies, if supplies were available. At times, it was a little slow getting them up where we needed them, but they basically were available. Of course, we always wanted more, especially artillery and things like that, [laughter] but they were available.

PA: How accessible was a hot meal to a man sitting in a bunker on the line?

WE: Well, when I first got there, it was pretty accessible. We would have a kitchen set up right in back of the line and we would take turns going back there and getting a meal. Later on, when we moved to another location, they would have the food brought to us, on the line. So, basically, we did get hot meals, most of the time, not always, but most of the time. It wasn't always great food, [laughter] but we did get it.

JM: What do you feel your objective was in Korea?

WE: Well, when I was there, the objective was basically to withstand the Communist Chinese advance and keep them from advancing further into … South Korea, because we had pretty much given up on driving back into North Korea and winning in that way. I think it was effective, in that we did stop the advance, kept them from taking over South Korea.

PA: As a platoon leader, what was a typical day of duty? What would that consist of?

WE: Well, on the frontline, it was involved mostly at night. At night, we would be what we'd call "fifty-fifty," half the people on alert and half the people sleeping, and then, we would switch, and then, be on alert during the night. If there was any shooting going on around the area or if they had any idea that anybody was approaching, then, we would go to a hundred percent alert and everybody would go to their positions, all along the main line of resistance, the trench. … If we went there, we would usually have to stay for at least a couple of hours and make sure things were quieting down. The worst time was usually in the morning, early mornings, when the communists would attack, often times, and we would be especially alert then. During the day, we would try to take turns getting some sleep, because sleep was often a problem, and we would also go along and do the regular things that had to be done, checking the bunkers and getting ammunition up and things like that.

PA: Were there other officers on the line with you to share responsibilities or did you have the sole responsibility for your platoon?

WE: Well, for my platoon, I was the only officer, but, of course, we had company officers who were overseeing us. Usually, a company commander and a company [officer], called an executive officer, was the assistant company commander, and they would, you know, come by and check on us, [from] time to time. We depended mostly on the sergeants and the corporals, and so forth, and they did a very good job. … We had a sergeant as a squad leader for each squad and they would take charge of the squad and see that they were doing what they should do, and then, keep them ready to fight. … We also had some weapons people assigned, that, if we needed a mortar or a mortar round or something like that, we could get it. We depended a lot on the sergeants and corporals, and so forth, and they did a good job.

JM: Were there ever any problems with men wanting to desert while in Korea?

WE: No, no. We didn't have any problem with that. No, there wasn't any problem. They didn't like being there and they didn't like it, but, [laughter] you know, they … wanted to stick it out and see it through, do what they had to do.

JM: Were your men in contact with the South Korean civilians or was there a separation between the Army and the civilians?

WE: There was a separation. Civilians weren't allowed up where we were, on the main line of resistance, in the trenches. There were some that they brought up as laborers, to help do things,

to bring things up to us, but they weren't allowed to stay. The civilians, like you see in the *M*A*S*H* programs [television shows], we didn't see at all, unless we were going back on rest-and-reserve, or something like that.

PA: Did you interact with the ROKs [South Korean (Republic of Korea) soldiers] at all?

WE: Not at that time. Later on, I was assigned over more on the eastern part of the peninsula, over near the "Punch Bowl" [a punchbowl shaped depression amidst the Taebaek-Sanmaek Mountains] on "Heartbreak Ridge," [the site of a series of battles in the Taebaek-Sanmaek Mountains, near Ch'orwon] and there were some. I did see some ROK units over there, and, in fact, for a time there, I was helping to train some of the MP units for the ROK, … over on the eastern part of Korea.

PA: What was your opinion of them as soldiers?

WE: … At the time I got there, … we were mostly US soldiers, but, shortly after, we were assigned what they called KMAGs, [Korean Military Advisory Group], Korean military, soldiers, and they were assigned right with us, in the companies and squads, and so forth, and they were to pretty much buddy up with the American soldiers and follow what they were doing, so that that did work out pretty well, because we were pretty much under strength. We didn't have as many men as we were supposed to have in each unit, so that using the Korean soldiers did help.

JM: Was there a communication problem between the soldiers, because of the language gap?

WE: The language was somewhat of a problem, although we did have some interpreters available. Yes, sometimes, it was a bit of a problem, but we could generally make them understand what needed to be done and what we needed to convey to them.

PA: Did you fight alongside any United Nations soldiers?

WE: Well, at one time, there was a Turkish unit next to us and they were very good, Turkish battalion, I think it was. That was up near the T-Bone Hill area, in the "Alligator Jaws," [an area in the Ch'orwon Valley so named because of its V-shape]. … Sometimes, I would see some of the others, but not too much.

PA: Did you ever see the Turkish in an active attack? There are a lot of stories about the ferocity of their attacks.

WE: Well, there's stories. We heard the stories about them, with their knives and so on, but we weren't really that close to them. They were some distance away, so, we couldn't see what they were doing, but they were effective and they held their area. [laughter]

PA: Were there a lot of intelligence gathering patrols where you had to take prisoners?

WE: That was part of it. They wanted us to take prisoners, if possible, and, sometimes, we were able to do that; not my unit particularly, but other units nearby were able to take prisoners. … So, we were watching for that. If we could, we would do that.

JM: Did you have any chance to learn anything about South Korean culture while you were there?

WE: Not much, no. When I was over on the eastern part, … I got to see more of the civilians that were there, but I didn't really get into the culture very much. They had their temples and things that I would see, but I didn't really get to learn much about it.

JM: Was there any downtime? Were you able to be removed from the line for a time?

WE: Well, yes, there was some, but not much, didn't seem to be much. In June, … I was assigned to an area near "Old Baldy," [a hill in the Ch'orwon Valley named for the lack of vegetation from shelling], and that was where I … got wounded, so that after I was wounded, then, there was some time in the hospital, in Japan and Osaka, and coming back to the unit after that, after I was released from the hospital. … Our unit was assigned over near Old Baldy and we did some attacks there in June of 1952, really, the beginning of the fighting for that area. That was part of the Ch'orwon Valley, and then, I was leading a platoon up on Old Baldy and we really took the top of the hill and we were there, and then, we came under machine gun fire and I was wounded in the shoulder. So, after I was wounded, I went back to the battalion aid station, which was in back of the main line of resistance, and was evacuated to the 8055th MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] unit, which was there near Wejonbu, and it's similar to what you see in *M*A*S*H*, [the television series]. We didn't have all the joking around that they did, but it was similar, … a MASH unit, to what they show on that. They were pretty much only in tents, but I was there in the MASH, and then, I was evacuated back to … Seoul, and then, flown to Japan, was in the hospital in Japan for awhile, in Osaka, for about a month or so.

JM: When you were wounded, did someone take your place as platoon leader?

WE: Well, yes, we have a chain of command. … Immediately, there was a sergeant with us, so, he took over the platoon, and then, I think there was another officer nearby that they moved over, to help him take charge of the platoon, yes.

PA: After you were wounded, you did not return to the same unit.

WE: No, I returned to the same unit, but it was awhile, because I was evacuated and went to Seoul, and then, over to Japan, and then, back through Pusan and back through Seoul, and then, back to the same unit. At that time, they were over, the division was over, near the Punch Bowl, more on the eastern part of Korea. So, I rejoined them when they were there.

JM: Were you able to resume your position as platoon leader?

WE: Yes, yes, I was platoon leader, and then, after I'd been there awhile, I was made the company executive officer, which was kind of an assistant company commander.

PA: You were doing this all as a second lieutenant, I assume.

WE: Well, no, by June, I had found out that I had been promoted to first lieutenant, just that they had never let me know [laughter] about it for awhile, so that I was a first lieutenant for most of the time I was there.

JM: Were you able to find out what was happening in the United States while you were in Korea?

WE: It was pretty limited. We would get some mail at times and know from that and we would hear, you know, stories and things, but it was rather limited. … Near the end of '52, that was when they were having the Presidential election. So, we would hear some things about that, and Eisenhower did come to Korea while I was still there, you know, that we … felt good about that.

PA: Were the soldiers happy to see a former general elected President? Was that a morale boost?

WE: Yes. I think most of them were happy and it was good for morale that he did get elected. We thought that he would, because he was popular with the military, and their feeling was that, with him as President, that he would end the war as soon as possible, that he would find some way to end it, in one way or another.

JM: Did you know anything about Senator McCarthy while you were in Korea?

WE: Not at that time. That was really after I had gotten back, in 1953, I started hearing more about him and the things that were going on. I came back in 1953, in the end of February, and then, I was assigned to Fort Dix again. So, I went back there and was a company commander at Fort Dix, still giving basic training. [laughter]

PA: A lot has been written about the United States' replacement policies. Do you feel that affected the efficiency of your unit, the fact that you were turning men over so rapidly?

WE: Well, I think our main problem was that we didn't have enough men, a lot of the times. We had less than we were supposed to have, to be, like, a regular platoon or a regular company, so that we were under strength. We did have some of the Korean soldiers with us and that helped, but that seemed to be the main problem. … Replacements would come in and we'd be glad to see them and they would take their place, and then, carry on very well. They all did a good job.

JM: The Korean War is sometimes referred to as the "Forgotten War." If there is any message that you would want people to know, what would it be?

WE: Well, I don't know. I think … it's gotten to be a little more recognized more recently, because of the fifty-year anniversary and things like that, but I remember, when I came back, the feeling was that we were coming back, but nobody even knew we were coming back, and there wasn't any reception or anything like that. So, that was kind of disappointing, but, well, I don't

know. I think … people are getting a little more recognition for the Korean War veterans now, and that's good. … We've got the awards from the state and from Camden County and we had a ceremony at Fort Dix for the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the war and things like that. So, I think there is more recognition now than there had been.

JM: Did you become close friends with any of the men that you served with?

WE: Not particularly, because, of course, at the time you're there, you're friendly with them, but, then, they move on or you move on and things change. … You lose being in touch with them and, once you get back home, then, things are different, so that you don't really get in touch with them. Of course, when you're there, you're close friends with the people that you're working with and are in the same units.

JM: You came back to the United States in 1954.

WE: '53.

JM: 1953, and you went back to Fort Dix.

WE: Yes, I went back to Fort Dix and gave more basic training there. I was a company commander then, at Fort Dix.

JM: How long did you plan on staying at Fort Dix and training men?

WE: [laughter] Well, I was undecided whether I wanted to stay in the Army or not, and in '53 and '54 was when they started cutting back the officers in the Army and they were forced to leave the Army or go into helicopter training and become warrant officers. So, I wasn't really enthused about that. So, in 1954, I decided that I would go ahead and get out of the Army. … They gave us that option at that time, that, if you wanted to get out, you could. So, I did that. It was in March of 1954.

PA: We spoke a little bit about MacArthur, but what was your overall opinion of the Army leadership, Ridgeway and men like that?

WE: Well, I thought, basically, it was good. You know, when I was in Korea, it was Ridgeway. … Ridgeway was the commander most of the time when I was there and he did a good job. I can't remember the name of the other general, no. [laughter] [Editor's Note: General Matthew Ridgeway was commander of the Eighth Army in Korea and later succeeded MacArthur as commander of UN Forces in Korea. He was succeeded in that post by General Mark Clark.]

PA: Do you know the circumstances of the 45th moving from one side of Korea to the Punch Bowl area?

WE: Well, when I was with them in June of 1952, we were in the Ch'orwan area and that's when we had the fighting around Old Baldy and all that. … Then, at the end of June or beginning of July, they were replaced by the Seventh Division, so that they went back into reserve in what

they called a blocking position, [a defensive position denying access to an area or given direction], a little further back of the line. … From there, then, they moved over to the Punch Bowl area. So, I wasn't with them then, but that's what they did. … Then, in the Punch Bowl area, they were back on the frontlines. It was a little bit different there. The lines were very close there and, of course, it was still on the hills and there were bigger hills over on that side, on the eastern side of Korea, … still trench lines and bunkers, and so forth.

PA: At that point, were you aware that you were really fighting a holding action while the negotiations were going on?

WE: Yes. By that time, I think we pretty much resolved that we would try to hold the lines that we had and not do much moving one way or the other. The emphasis was a lot on being able to hold the lines and withstand any advance by the Chinese or the North Koreans.

PA: Were the North Koreans and Chinese still trying to advance at that point, or had they also resolved to just hold until the negotiations had completed?

WE: No, they would still do their attacks. In fact, Christmas of 1952, … I was back right behind the line, in a blocking area, and we were called up to go the front, because the North Koreans had attacked one of the outposts and overrun it. So, we had to do that. We went up there and regained the outpost, and then, went back to the blocking position where we were. They were still active and, you know, they would shoot at us, we would shoot at them. We would call on artillery to knock out their positions and, being over near the eastern front, we had naval artillery that we could use. They've got ten-inch naval shells. … I didn't use them, but we even had the battleships out there in the Sea of Japan. It wasn't the [USS] *New Jersey* [(BB-62)], but I think the [USS] *Wisconsin*, [(BB-64)], was the one that was out there. We didn't use them, but some of the other units did use the battleship shells to knock out some of the positions. It was still back and forth. We would patrol and raid their positions and they would patrol and raid ours, and go back and forth, but we knew pretty much that it was a stalemate, that it was a matter of holding where we were.

JM: What was Christmas like in Korea?

WE: Oh, it was pretty bleak, [laughter] because it was cold and snowing, of course. … We, well, you know, all tried to be nice to each other, but it was a bad feeling, being that far away from home and having Christmas and not being able to see other people.

PA: Were you properly equipped for the weather? Had the Army given you the proper weapons and clothing?

WE: Yes. I always felt that we did all right. We had what they called "thermos boots," which had a vacuum layer, so that you could wear those if it got extremely cold and you had to go out in the weather. With those, it was better. They were a little hard to walk in, because they were bulky and heavy, but we did have some protection there, and we had … the winter sleeping bags and things like that that we could use. No, I felt we had adequate [supplies]. It wasn't great, but it was adequate.

PA: Given the conditions, did the soldiers have breakdowns from being on the lines?

WE: Well, some did, more during combat when we were over by Old Baldy. There were three days there that we were pretty much without sleep and without much food. … Some of the soldiers did get what they called the "two-thousand-yard stare" and just be kind of in a trance and not reactive to things, which was really, battle fatigue is what it was.

PA: As an officer, had you been trained in how to handle such cases?

WE: Well, we had some training, but about all you could do was try to get somebody like that back off the line and get some attention for them. In fact, my platoon sergeant really got overcome by it. He got [post-traumatic] stress disorder, yes, and he had to be evacuated back to Japan and be in the hospital there.

PA: Were a lot of the battle fatigue cases able to return to the lines, your sergeant in particular?

WE: Well, we had what they called rotation, and so, a lot of them had been there for nearly a year and they were close to the time when they would go home anyway. So, if they went back near the end of 1952, most of them didn't return. We'd have to get somebody else to replace them. I think most of the battle fatigue ones didn't return. They had more problems, that they couldn't take it anymore.

PA: Were the soldiers understanding of such cases?

WE: Yes, yes, they were understanding. They were going through the same thing. They had a lot of stress and fatigue, and so forth, that they were understanding about it.

JM: In hindsight, do you feel that US involvement in Korea was necessary and beneficial?

WE: In hindsight, yes, I think it was necessary and I think it was beneficial, that it had to be done, that it was necessary to stand up to communism and say that it had to stop there, that they couldn't take over these other peaceful countries and places, and farmers that didn't really want to have a communist [regime] come in and take over.

JM: Did you feel that the Cold War would escalate into a military action?

WE: Well, I think it really got close to it several times and I was afraid that it might, at some point, be escalating. … With several countries having the nuclear capability, I think it was a possibility that it could escalate and be very large again. Fortunately, it didn't, but it was a possibility that it could be a problem.

JM: Did you find it ironic, when you returned to the United States, that you were fighting communism in Korea and, now, Senator McCarthy was charging people with communism in the United States?

WE: [laughter] Well, to me, it seemed that he got carried away with it, but it seemed to me that some of the things he said were right, that there were some people in the United States who were sympathizing with the communists. … I think it was right, that it had to be pointed out that they should be dealt with. He got overly zealous with it, I think, at times, but I think it needed to be done.

JM: How, if in any way, do you think Korea has shaped our foreign policies today? Do you see any effects of that conflict presently?

WE: Well, of course, Korea's still divided, but we have a strong South Korea that is able to stand up to whatever needs to be done there and still has our support. I think it was part of the message of the Cold War, that we would stop any advances and keep the communists from expanding beyond the limits that we had set.

PA: When you came back and were discharged, did you enter the Reserves or did you completely cut your military service?

WE: No, I came back, but I wasn't discharged. I stayed in the Army. I went to Camp Kilmer, and then, to Fort Dix again. I was assigned to Fort Dix, because, at that time, I was undecided if I wanted to continue staying in the Army or not. I came back because I had enough rotation points to come back, and then, … well, I was still in the Reserves, but I was on active duty and assigned to Fort Dix, as a first lieutenant. It was later on in 1954 that it became apparent that they were going to reduce the size of the Army again and force officers to leave that didn't want to leave. So, at that time, I felt it was just as well to get out of the Army and do something else, go into school teaching or something like that.

PA: When were you discharged, and at what rank?

WE: I was a first lieutenant. I was discharged at Fort Dix in; it was the end of February of 1954. … Well, I really moved to Moorestown, [New Jersey], at that point, because we were married and my wife lived in Moorestown. She had grown up in Moorestown and we got an apartment in Moorestown and lived there.

PA: When had you met your wife?

WE: I met her while I was at Fort Dix, through friends, other people that we knew from Moorestown, who [I] happened to meet while down in Eldora, the person from Moorestown that I met there. … Then, when I was in Fort Dix, I came over to Moorestown to visit with that person, and then, she introduced me to my wife. So, then, we started going together and we were engaged when I went to Korea and, after I came back, in 1953, then, we were married, and then, we lived at Fort Dix for awhile, and then, in 1954, when I was discharged, I went back to Moorestown.

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

PA: This continues an interview with Mr. Walter English in Atco, New Jersey, on December 7, 2005. You were saying you had met your wife and you were married. Were you in good correspondence with her while over in Korea?

WE: Yes, it was, well, not always a lot, but we kept in touch and we would send letters back and forth … while I was in Korea, and we were engaged before I left, so that we kept in touch, and then, after I came back, in 1953, we arranged to get married. We got married at the end of June in 1953.

PA: Were you married at Fort Dix?

WE: No, in Moorestown. That's where her family was and there were other friends that we knew.

JM: What did you want to do? You said you wanted to possibly pursue teaching.

WE: Yes. I was arranging to do some teaching. I wanted to get into teaching high school, but, at the time I was discharged, in February, March of 1954, … there weren't any teaching openings in high school. So, I did find an opening in the fifth grade class in the Mount Laurel schools. So, I did that for about a year-and-a-half, and then, after that, I moved, went into Camden for a year and taught seventh and eighth grade science classes in Camden, for a year.

JM: Were there any big changes for you coming back to civilian life? Was there anything that you appreciated even more now that you had been in Korea?

WE: Well, yes, you're glad to get back, you're glad to get back in the United States again, … was good to get back and be around people here again, and, of course, to get home and get to see my wife. [laughter]

JM: Did teaching become a career for you?

WE: Well, not really. [laughter] I taught for about two years there, in the elementary, and then, into the junior high, and then, there was an opportunity in Moorestown to do some work there with a company that did heavy equipment things. I did that for a little while, and then, I found out that Campbell Soup Company had an opening. So, I applied for that and got that, and I worked for thirty-six years after that at Campbell Soup Company, in research and technology in there, in Camden.

JM: What did your wife do?

WE: Oh, well, when we were first married, she just stayed at home, but, then, when we moved back to Moorestown, she got a job as a secretary in a lumberyard, … doing secretarial and office work, and then, after that, she worked for Sears and Roebuck for awhile, in the office there. … Later on, she took practical nurse's training and did some work in the nursing home in Riverton and did … quite a bit of nursing. … Then, recently, when I retired, in 1993, she retired also. She just stopped doing the nursing thing and she's been retired since then.

PA: Did you have any children?

WE: Yes, we have three children. We have two girls and a boy. The older daughter is forty-nine. She lives in Florida, near Melbourne. My son … was born in '60, so, he'd be forty-five now. He works for a real estate [firm], Weichert Real Estate, and he lives in, near Woodstown. Then, our younger daughter lives up near Boston and she's forty-three, and she does work with different catering [firms] and things like that up there, and they're all married. We have three grandchildren. Our son has the three grandchildren, … two girls and a boy.

PA: When your kids were growing up, did you get them involved in Scouting? Did you continue your involvement in Scouts?

WE: Yes, they were all involved in Scouting. My son is an Eagle Scout. We did Scouting in Moorestown, in the Boy Scout troop there, and he got his Eagle Scout there. My older daughter was involved [with] Girl Scouts and got her First Class Pin. My younger daughter was in Scouting for a couple of years, and then, she dropped out, but I think she learned from it anyway. She enjoyed it.

JM: Are you involved with any veterans' organizations?

WE: Well, I get the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] and American Legion magazines and I'm a member of the VFW, though I'm not really active, and I'm a member of the American Legion post in Moorestown. I'm not really active, though. I don't go to the meetings.

PA: You had mentioned you had received the New Jersey awards.

WE: Yes. … The New Jersey Award for Military Service, and then, Camden County gave us the Korean Service Medal, and then, the Korean country sent a medal that they were … presenting to veterans of the Korean War.

PA: You received all these around the time of the fiftieth anniversary.

WE: Yes, it was right around the fiftieth anniversary was when they were doing that.

JM: How do you feel your military service has affected your life? Has it been a positive force?

WE: Yes, I think it was positive. … Overall, in balance, I think it was good. There's things that could have been better, [laughter] but, overall, I think it was good. It was a good influence, a good background for later life, and I think it helped when I was working in Campbell's Soup. It gave me some background there to rely on.

PA: Do you feel that things like Scouts and ROTC are important for personal development?

WE: Yes, I think they are all good, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the ROTC program. Some people aren't too enthused about them, but I think it is good. … For those that are interested in it

and want to do it and can benefit from it, I think it's good, all of those things. … The military service, basically, is good, depending on where you're assigned and what you're doing, but I think it could do some of the people good to be in the Army for a couple of years.

JM: Have you traveled back to Korea?

WE: No, I wouldn't want to do that. [laughter]

JM: Have you been to Rutgers since graduating?

WE: Yes. Our older daughter went to Rutgers, went to Cook College, and graduated with a food technology degree. So, we went up several times when she was there and we've been back at other times to visit Rutgers. My son went to Thiel College, out in Western Pennsylvania, but he only went for one year. He went on and started working. [laughter] So, he had enough of college life.

JM: Do you think that students going to school now should attend ROTC for two years, as you had to?

WE: I think they should. I think it would be good for them. I don't know that it should be required for everyone, the way it was when I went, but I think it should at least be an option, that they can do it if they want to or feel that they can benefit from it, that they should. … I think it was really a good thing to take the four years and get a Reserve commission, because there were a lot of people in the Army that would look up to the officers and follow what they said.

PA: Are you involved in Rutgers alumni affairs at all? Did you attend your fiftieth reunion or anything?

WE: No, I'm not really actively involved. I get the literature, and so forth, and I keep kind of in touch with it, but I'm not actively involved.

PA: Do you keep in touch with anyone you went to school with?

WE: No, no, not really. They've kind of been moved away, [laughter] don't keep in touch with them.

JM: Do you talk to your grandchildren about your time at Rutgers or your time overseas?

WE: They're a little young yet, but I do talk to them about it. I mentioned Rutgers and they know I went to Rutgers, and they know I was in the Army, and so forth. … I talked to them some about that, so that they know about it. They're a little young yet to really get into much depth about it. The oldest one has just turned twelve, and then, the other girl is nine and the boy is going to be seven. So, they're a little young yet to understand what goes on, but they know that I have a military background and, … if there's something going on, … like the Fourth of July parade or a Veteran's Day parade, or something like that, that I would be involved in it. …

On the Fourth of July, we go down with them to Woodstown and follow the parade, so that they know what it's about.

PA: Is there anything else you want to leave on the record?

WE: No, I think you covered it pretty well, yes. Let's see, yes, I think we've covered pretty much everything, yes.

PA: Thank you very much for sitting down with us today.

WE: Okay.

PA: This concludes an interview with Mr. Walter English in Atco, New Jersey, on December 7, 2005.

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

Reviewed by Jeffrey Wisniewski 11/19/08
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/2/08
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 12/3/08
Reviewed by Walter English 1/3/09