RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES ESSIG

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

KURT PIEHLER
and
SCOTT CERESNAK

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
NOVEMBER 17, 1997

TRANSCRIPT BY

SCOTT CERESNAK

Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with James Essig on November 17, 1997 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and …

Scott Ceresnak: Scott Ceresnak.

KP: I think I will let Scott start off the questioning.

SC: Where are your parents from?

James Essig: Well, my parents settled in, mostly, ... Morris County, in Dover, New Jersey. They came originally from Pennsylvania Dutch country in Pennsylvania, the Reading area. My father and mother are from that area. My father then moved over to Easton, Pennsylvania, and, when I was about five or six years old, we moved over to Wharton, New Jersey, and two or three years later, to Dover. So, we were
mainly in the Morris County area.

SC: Their parents are from Germany?

JE: Well, my father's father and my mother's parents were born in this country. Two of my great-grandfathers fought in the Civil War. There is one buried over there. I went to the grave over in Pennsylvania. My ancestors were mostly from Germany. My mother's side was [from] Alsace-Lorraine, that area, and, also, there's a Welsh name there, somebody from Wales. So, we have a mixture, but, mostly German.

SC: How did your parents meet?

JE: How did they meet? Oh, my goodness. I don't know the full history. They both lived in Reading, at the time. My mother was working in a hosiery mill there, and, also, in a bakery, and, I think, Dad was working for a utility company, but, how they actually met, as a matter-of-fact, I don't know. I should know this sort of thing. I'm the oldest of eight children, so, this is something I should have looked into, but, I didn't.

KP: Your father worked for a utility company?

JE: Yeah, he worked for a utility, and then, he transferred with the company over to Easton, Pennsylvania, and then, over to New Jersey, the New Jersey Power and Light Company, which was out in Dover, the headquarters. He was there all his life, with that company.

KP: What did he do for the company?

JE: Dad did a variety of things. ... I know he did some routine clerical work, but, he was out in the field quite a bit. He knew every road in Morris County and the surrounding counties. One thing he investigated was theft of electricity. This is one of the things I found rather interesting, but, he did a variety of things for the company. Some of them might have been marketing related, a variety of activities. On the side, for as long as I remember, he also was an insurance

agent. So, this, incidentally, comes down in the family. My grandfather, his father, was a full-time agent for Metropolitan Life, all of his life. My dad was an agent mainly in the casualty area, and then, of course, I worked with Prudential in its headquarters for twenty-eight years.

KP: There seems to be some continuity in your family with insurance.

JE: There seems to be, yes, indeed. [all laugh]

SC: Did your mother ever work?

JE: Yes, she worked before she was married. She had, as I say, ... worked in a hosiery mill in Reading. She also worked in a bakery place and she had a couple of other, sort of routine, type jobs. She did not work when she was raising a family. She had eight children and she stayed at home for that process.

KP: It sounds like your father always had employment. Is that true?

JE: Yes, yes, he did. We had real money crunches at times and, sometimes, he would borrow money from my savings account. I always got it back. There were intervals where there was some difficulty, financially. Our allowances had to be trimmed, and so forth, during those years, but, he had employment. He did have a job. He was not unemployed. On that score, we were very fortunate.

KP: It sounds like you had money, but, you did not have a lot of it.

JE: That was it exactly. With the eight kids, and we started out in rental homes, and then, ... we bought a large, old house up in the hills in Dover, and did some major remodeling over the years, and raised all of us right there, eight children. It was a struggle. He was busy working on the job, and then, also, he had his calls to make on the insurance side. That was really how we survived.

KP: The insurance was really crucial to making enough to get by?

JE: It was, I would say, yes, for the family.

KP: Did you have a job in high school?

JE: Yes, I did. Looking back now, I spent quite a few years in a men's retail haberdashery store, a small store in Dover, Hartman and Shorter was the name. It no longer exists. They are both deceased. Two very nice older gentleman ran the store. I sold all sorts of clothing, men's clothing. I measured people for suits even. I did some tailoring work, built up some time in the back doing cuffs and other things.

KP: How old were you when you started doing this?

JE: Oh, goodness. I'm trying to think now. It was all through high school, probably at the beginning of high school, I guess.

KP: So, you started at the bottom and worked your way up?

JE: Right, I did. I was also very active. I had more than one job. I sold and delivered the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Ladies Home Journal*, both Curtis Publications. I guess I sold a couple hundred of them every week. I traveled on my bike for miles in neighboring towns, and so forth. I won several major contests, bicycles, trips to the 1939 World's Fair, things of this sort. So, I was busy selling. I sold other things, too.

KP: Did you help your parents out with anything?

JE: No, just loans. Occasionally, people would make gifts to some of the kids, and so forth, and we each had a little bank account, and my dad would occasionally borrow some money. He always repaid, no question about it, but, I never really helped to support the family. Of course, the big expenses came later, with weddings and with college, particularly. ... Of course, at Rutgers, I had State Scholarship, which made it possible, really, for me to get here.

KP: I actually grew up in Wharton. Some people consider Dover the local center. Could you talk a little bit about the Dover you grew up in?

JE: I attended, in Dover, a parochial school right on the border of Dover and Wharton, St. Mary's. There's a parish still there and I think it still exists.

KP: Yeah, it does.

JE: Okay, I was there, and then, ... we were living in Wharton, at the time, up in the northern part of Wharton, I guess what is now near Route 15. We used to actually walk to school, down to St. Mary's, all the way, a couple of miles, and then, back. I'm just trying to remember now. I went to Wharton High School after my primary school. Wharton High School no longer exists, but, it was right near the center of the town of Wharton, which is just north-west of Dover. I went through there. In fact, we made our move to Dover, where, in my senior year, I got permission to finish out my year in Wharton, since we were no longer residents of that town. So, that was very nice. The towns were, well, Dover was small stores, one after another. There ... was one "medium-sized" department store, you had a drug store on the corner, you had the haberdashery, you had other stores. I think the power company had a main office right on the street, and so forth. I guess there are still some towns like this, where you have that. Today, it's the shopping centers, and, of course, we didn't have those sort of things in those days. Wharton was even smaller, just a short stretch of Main Street, and residential construction, and residential houses, and so forth. I don't remember anything that makes it stand out, except that people who visited Lake Hopatcong, and the nearby resort areas, used to come into Dover, and that area, to do their shopping on weekends.

KP: Where did most people work in Dover when you grew up? Did they work in Dover or did

they work in Wharton, because I know that Wharton did have some industries?

JE: I don't remember that specifically. There were some people we knew, some neighbors, worked in Picatinny Arsenal, which was not very far, about four or five miles, very close, and that was an area for employment for some of my neighbors. I'm just trying to remember. ... I think there were, even then, ... some commuters, some people we knew, who commuted into New York City, because the Lackawana Railroad ran a line, and the end of the regular line was in Dover. So, people would get on the train in Dover, it went right to Hoboken, and then, you'd take a ferry across to New York City. So, some people were doing that even in that period, long ago.

SC: Did you ever visit Lake Hopatcong?

JE: Oh, yes, I'm a real fan of fishing, and one thing that my dad did was, he used to take the family up to a couple spots for swimming on Lake Hopatcong, and we'd go swimming, and he actually took me fishing a couple of times. We fished from the shore and I thoroughly enjoyed that. In more recent years, even after we moved out of the area, I would make trips up there and go ice fishing in the wintertime. This fishing, my dad was not a great fisherman, but, he introduced us to all sorts of things, and I, of course, have two sons and four daughters, and the two boys have become avid fishermen. [laughs] One is a marine biologist for the federal government. The other is a chemist. They're both still very active in fishing. So, that was one attraction toward the lake. I think that was one of my favorite spots, up there. I could fish from the shore and, occasionally, take a boat out. Later on, I acquired a small boat. I haven't done it in the last couple of years.

KP: I do not know how you would find the time.

JE: That's the problem. [laughs]

KP: Were you ever a Boy Scout?

JE: Yes, yes. I was very active in scouting and my dad was a scoutmaster, and, also, served on the troop committee. I became an Eagle Scout. I had to satisfy certain requirements to do that, of course. I spent a lot of time with bird study, identifying some forty birds in the field, and so forth, camping so many nights under canvas, which I did, making some long bike trips to spots where I could finish that procedure. ... I finally became an Eagle Scout. Another brother became an Eagle Scout, also.

KP: Who sponsored your troop?

JE: I'm really a little vague on this. It might have been our church, it might have been a church troop, but, I'm really a little hesitant. I don't quite remember the details on that now.

KP: Your parents, what was their political affiliation? Did they vote?

JE: They voted, but, as I recall, they voted regularly, but, they weren't persistent in any one party. They voted for who they thought was the best at the time and they were rather independent at the time, I would say.

KP: Did they vote for Roosevelt in either 1932 or 1936?

JE: I don't know, I really don't know. ... There wasn't any major political debates in the household during that period. To be very frank, I just can't remember.

KP: Did they listen to Father Coughlin at all?

JE: Yeah, I remember that. I remember that radio program. They listened to that, occasionally. I don't know if they were faithful listeners to it, but, we did, occasionally, hear that. Yes, indeed.

SC: How active were you in the church?

JE: In those days, you know, I was just a child, a teenager, and participated along with my other associates, but, not terribly active with the church. My father, and my mother, they were both very active. My father was president of the Holy Name Society, and then, in some other activities, he was active, helped out at Bingo. They had Bingo even way back then. [laughs] I myself have been more active in more recent years. I'm what is known as a lector and I do readings from the Old and New Testament at our services, our Masses, on Sunday. We have a regular schedule for that and I was elected to the Parish Council, a leadership group in the Church. In overall management, I've sat in on finance meetings with the pastor and lent whatever expertise I could. [laughs] So, I've been moderately active with the time I have to devote to it.

KP: Were you involved in the CYO?

JE: Yes, we had such a group at St. Mary's. They had a hall, a church hall, I don't know, years back. It was used for religious services, but, at this point, it was used as a basketball court. I used to play. There were some games there [that] I really enjoyed. So, we had CYO, making use of that facility. There were other activities. I don't know how close it was related to CYO, but, the grounds up at St. Mary's were very spacious and we had some games. They took us back into the woods and the hillside and that was nice. That part was very nice.

KP: My stepfather actually grew up in the twenties and thirties and it was not always that easy to be a Catholic. He has memories as a little boy of people burning a cross. He still remembers not being able to get some jobs because he was a Catholic. Do you have any memories of that, of any incidents when you were growing up?

JE: No, no, I really don't. I've had jobs. The religion wasn't a handicap as a youngster, as a young man, as a teenager, selling, and so forth, and it was not a handicap at all, as ... I recall, in my situation. No, I really had no great problems. There was always, in those days, the pattern where the churches were kept apart. The Catholics stayed apart from the various Protestant denominations. You didn't participate and, even coming to Rutgers, we had chapel services and

things, and this was a little bit of a problem, at the time.

KP: Really, the chapel?

JE: Yeah, the requirements. That was, of course, diminished, or reduced, in later years. My daughter actually was married in the Rutgers chapel, so, I'm not [against it.] [laughs]

KP: Did you attend chapel when you were here at Rutgers?

JE: Not regularly, only major events for the class, and so forth. There was a Catholic Church across the street here. I used to participate there.

KP: It is still there.

JE: Right, it's still there, yeah. So, that was it. I was, in terms of religious things, ... active in the Newman Club on campus. That was a very interesting thing, a social life, and a combination of your religious background and social life. I found that excellent.

KP: You went to parochial school, I think, initially, in an era when mostly nuns did the teaching?

JE: That's right.

KP: Do you have any memories, particularly since you went to public high school, of your early education?

JE: As far as the education part, I think they were all very conscientious. That was excellent. Some of the nuns, though, were, I think, a little too strict, a little, almost outrageous. They had, what we feared most of all, a "spanking machine." They had it in the area where the huge dictionary was, in the stand. They'd remove that, and set that up, so they could put a child in there, we were told, for paddling.

KP: Which must have put a lot of fear in you?

JE: There was fear, there was fear. There were one or two of the older nuns who were tyrants, really. They really were. They really were rough. Others I remember still very fondly. So, it's a mixture of people. In general, I would say they were good years.

KP: How good was your schooling? Particularly, how well prepared where you for public high schools?

JE: I think very well. They say we were a little ahead of the kids who went through the lower grades in the public system. We seemed to be a little ahead. At an early age, one thing I look back now very fondly, when I was just starting school as a matter-of-fact, I had some problems speaking, and so forth, and my dad took me to someone for special work on speaking, and

presenting things, and I remember that. As a reward for sitting through this hour, or hour and a half, I'd get to play a violin, or something, for a little while. This is something I remember very fondly. My parents took a very personal [interest] in me, in the kids, in our abilities. That all went in [as] part of the basic education, good support at home. I think the school system was good, basically. There were problems with some of the people, no question. [laughs]

KP: What was it like going to a public high school, compared to parochial school, particularly since everyone in the parochial school was Catholic?

JE: I didn't find any real problems with adjusting, really. I became interested in what others were doing, and their backgrounds, too, and we hit it off very nicely. I really don't remember anything distinct about making that transition from there to the public school. We had a mixture, some teachers were Catholic, some were not. We had a couple of tyrants as teachers, too. In general, it was fine. Both experiences were excellent, as far as I'm concerned.

KP: It sounds like your father had high expectations for you and your brothers and sisters.

JE: Yes, I think they did all along. I always wanted to go to college. I took sort of a pre-college course in high school that was supposed to prepare us for college. I guess, very early in the high school years, I was looking forward to going to college. Then, of course, as I moved along in the upper levels and grades, I began to look into where I might go. One of the difficulties, of course, then, and I guess even now, when you have a large family, there were eight children, the family didn't have the money to send me to one of the more prestigious Ivy League schools. Rutgers University was very well respected, and so, early on, I looked into this sort of thing. I was fortunate enough to obtain a State Scholarship, so, that made it possible to make that swing.

KP: Did you want to go to Princeton or another Ivy League school? Was that a goal of yours?

JE: No, no, I had no special desire for Catholic college or for an Ivy League at that point, no. I think I looked into this at the graduate school level. My graduate school work was with some top flight schools.

KP: This was how you really felt growing up?

JE: Growing up, Rutgers, The State College, and I was really looking forward to this.

SC: Did most of your class in high school end up going to college?

JE: I don't remember. You know, I really don't know the answer to that. I'd say it's probably a smaller percentage of college than you would find today. That was my general reaction. Several of them did go on, and they did very well, but, I don't know that it was most, actually.

SC: What activities did you participate in in high school?

JE: Yeah, I was busy and have been busy all my life. ... In high school, outside activities, I was

working in the men's clothing store and I was involved in various sales activities. My goodness, it was not just the magazine route that I had when I was younger, but, at times, I was selling seeds, I was selling magazine subscriptions, I was doing all sorts of things on the outside sales end, and winning some awards on that. I'm trying to think, in high school, we were a small high school, and, in sports, my activity was high jumping. I was active with the track team. Then, I had the male lead in the senior play, which I enjoyed very much. So, I worked with that. There were probably a number of other activities.

KP: Did you take up dance at all?

JE: That I took up a little later. I really got enthusiastic about dancing. I guess, on the dancing side, it probably started when I went to college. I had dates, and we danced, and in the years during college and graduate school. I went one summer to study at the University of Wisconsin. I took courses which were acceptable here at Rutgers. There, I took, in summer, some real, formal dance courses and had instructors who were top flight. I remember some of the fast waltzes we were doing and it was just wonderful. So, I did a lot of that sort of thing. My wife and I don't do a great deal of dancing, but, we did get into square dancing, in more recent years, and we were presidents of a Square Dance Club, and we've danced all over. Dancing is, I think, a wonderful activity, and I didn't do much of it as a youngster.

KP: Did you travel much before coming to Rutgers? Did you take any family vacations or anything?

JE: Very little, really. We went back to the area of our roots, which was over in Pennsylvania Dutch country, over in, what is it? South-eastern Pennsylvania, Reading and areas near, in fact, over into the Amish country, and so forth. We did a lot of those weekend trips, that sort of thing. There was nothing out of the country, and, no, I don't even think I went to the Midwest. I did a lot later on, but, not in those early years. It was a matter of loading all of the kids in the car and going somewhere.

KP: So, it was really where the car could go?

JE: Where the car could go, that's right. It was limited.

KP: You mentioned one of the prizes you won was a trip to the World's Fair.

JE: Right.

KP: Did you go to the 1939 World's Fair?

JE: Yes, yes, I did. I thoroughly enjoyed that. I went with my dad and, I guess, one of my brothers or sisters. That was fabulous. I thoroughly enjoyed that, very, very much.

KP: Any memories of anything that impressed you at the World's Fair? Any memories of the world of the future?

JE: I have to think about this. I did always enjoy the foreign exhibits. There were some various countries and it was very interesting what was going on around the world. This opened up the world to me and to others. That I found fascinating. There were probably, I can think back, but, I can't at the moment, ... some highlights of the World's Fair that we thoroughly enjoyed.

KP: Did you go to the movies at all?

JE: We used to like the Saturday serials. We'd occasionally go to the local theaters on Saturdays, and the Westerns, and this sort of thing. This was of great appeal in those days. We obviously didn't have TV, and we listened on the radio to some shows, but, that was the big outlet, the local theater. There were two, actually, in Dover, at the time.

SC: When you came to Rutgers, you were initially interested in medicine. What got you interested in medicine?

JE: Yeah, that's interesting. One of my interests in high school was meteorology. I formed a high school weather bureau. We used to take measurements every day and we would post our forecast for students. There was a lot of interest in it. My dad was interested in his kids, and their careers, and he took me to the headquarters of the New York Weather Bureau in New York City. We went up into one of the buildings in the lower end of Manhattan and I actually talked to somebody there. He told me what you have to do to get into this, and so forth, and the need for science courses. So, I came to Rutgers very heavy in the first year in science, partly with the idea of meteorology. I had that in mind. So, we had what? the math, the chemistry, the physics, and various other activities, mostly science courses, in the beginning at Rutgers. This was at that time, 1943, the summer of 1943, when I began at Rutgers. There was no program for meteorology. There was a premed program and that's what I was involved with, initially. So, I took those courses, and I thought, "Well, maybe, maybe, this is something I would like to follow up on someday." So, I did. I might point out another reason I became interested, ... and sort of left meteorology behind, and began to think about medicine is that, during the war, I had a first aid course with the Red Cross.

KP: This was at Rutgers?

JE: No, no, this was at home. This was something else I did as a high school student. I took training and I qualified for a couple of their courses. So, I served in Civilian Defense, [which] we had at that time. I did what I could. In the Boy Scouts, of course, we had one of the merit badges in first aid, so, I qualified myself in that. So, I had a little bit of background, and came here, and sort of thought, maybe, that wouldn't be a bad idea. I was thinking about it seriously. I hadn't really confirmed that I wanted to be a doctor, at that point, but, this was a possibility. That changed course a little bit when I got in the Army. I'll have to tell you about that.

KP: Yeah, just backing up a little bit, you were actually in high school when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

JE: Yes, yes.

KP: Do you have memories about where you were?

JE: Yes, I do. I was with a friend of mine. I was visiting his house. It was about a mile from where I lived. We walked, of course, in those days. I was walking back with him from his house to my house and we had just heard on the radio [about] Pearl Harbor being attacked. This was, as I recall, if I'm correct on this, I think it was a Sunday afternoon. This was a horror story and this was all we talked about. It was a shock. As a young person, I heard it when it first happened, and then, of course, [that] was the beginning of everything.

KP: Had you thought much about the war before Pearl Harbor? Were you following it before the bombing?

JE: Not really, not really, no. I was aware of the reports we'd had about the Nazis, and what Hitler was doing, and things of that sort, but, I didn't follow this all that closely. It seemed remote for me at that time.

KP: How did the war change things in Dover, particularly since Picatinny Arsenal is right there?

JE: Yeah, right. ... I really don't know. I had my experience before the war, and then, I came back, and I was discharged to Dover. I came to the family in Dover, but, I was only there for, it wasn't too long a period, and I'm off to school, and I'm living down here, and so forth, and other areas.

KP: It sounds like you have memories of air raid drills in late 1941, 1942, and 1943, before coming to Rutgers.

JE: I believe, yes, in high school, we had drills. We had some drills, I remember that. As far as living at home, everything went on as usual, and I don't remember anything in the town of that sort, but, at the high school, yes.

KP: What about scrap drives?

JE: Yes, yes, that went on. We had regular scrap drives and I got involved in helping out in that when I was in high school. We collected metals, mostly. That was part of the scene.

KP: What about bond drives? Do you remember any bond drives?

JE: Somewhere along there, I'm not sure where, but, I remember the drives, and I remember the posters, "I need you," and, "Buy Bonds,", and so forth. We did buy some savings bonds, even then, yes.

KP: You came to Rutgers in the summer of 1943. One of the legacies of the war was that the curriculum had changed, I think, in September. When you started college, how long did you

think you would be able to stay in school? How long did you hope to stay in school?

JE: What shaped my planning was an exam that was given to the seniors in high school and it was an exam to qualify us for Army Specialized Training Program, or Navy V-12 Program. It was a written exam, pretty comprehensive, and not everybody passed this. Well, I passed it, and so, I had the option of enlisting in the Army or in the Navy, and then, after basic training, going on to school, paid for by the services. I started at Rutgers with that in mind. As a matter-of-fact, I think it was in the fall I enlisted. I may have that paper here somewhere, but, I enlisted in 1943, in the Army. I had no background. I may have, if I had known better, ... picked the Navy. They seemed to have gone a little further on this program, but, I was influenced here at Rutgers by the troops marching from class to class in uniform, and going to classes, and getting credits, and all taken care of. I said, "Well, this is not bad," and finances were a problem. So, I enlisted. Then, I was called up, but, I got deferred until January of 1944, so I could finish a semester here at Rutgers. I went into service and I was immediately sent to basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. I went through infantry basic. It was pretty harsh, the whole works, the whole long period, and then, at the end of that, I was with another bunch of young, pre-college guys, very bright, young high-schoolers in my group. We were all sent to an infantry division getting ready to be sent overseas. They needed replacements.

KP: Now, you were supposed to be in the ASTP.

JE: That's right. I enlisted for that purpose. I went through basic, and I was supposed to be sent by the Army to college, and then, put in my time in the Army, in the service, but, I never got a chance.

KP: Were you disappointed, because you could have picked the Navy?

JE: I was at that point. I said, "Why didn't I do the Navy?" because I heard of others in V-12 who had gone on to school and became officers in the Navy.

KP: Were you, at that time, angry at the Army, because you had gone to school and been given this promise?

JE: I was. I was angry. What could I do? I accepted it, but, I was quite annoyed. In fact, when anyone asked me, "How did I get into this area or that area?" and that's how I got in. I enlisted on a pretext, really. … Apparently, the casualties were accumulating, and I was shipped off to Fort Bragg, where the 100th Infantry Division finished maneuvers and was planning to go overseas. I [was] with a bunch of others. It's a sad thing, because, later on, when I went as a medic to take care of wounded, I'd see an area, and there were lying around all young people, college kids-type, that I would have been in school with. This was awful. I felt really angry about this. I was really let down on this part.

KP: Before talking about your military experience, when you came here in the summer, what was your first session like? At Rutgers, it is very hot in the summer and this was before they had air conditioning.

JE: That's right, that's right. Well, I was here and I, initially, lived in Winants Hall. I lived upstairs in Winants Hall. I climbed up several stairways, and then, I worked in the base floor of Winants Hall. I worked in a cafeteria there and had a sort of a bus-boy job. That's how I started at Rutgers, living there, and working in Winants, and then, of course, walking to the various classes, which were mostly in this area here. I had a class in Old Queens, a classroom there, I took a class there. It was good. I found it challenging, very exciting, the classes, and it was what I was looking forward to. On that score, I was very pleased. There was not much doing. In summer, there were no major dances or anything, or major social activities. I got to know a couple of girls off campus that I would go visit, occasionally, and then, of course, across the way was the New Jersey College for Women, Douglass College. In summer, but, mostly in later fall, I got involved in activities, and some dates, and so forth, to the extent that I had time.

KP: Was there any sort of class hazing? Did the sophomores try to haze you as a freshman?

JE: I didn't encounter it, no. In fact, I joined a fraternity. I don't remember if it was right then or, maybe, it was later I joined. Some of them are known for hazing, but, I don't know. We were a more mature group. This was war time, and we didn't go for a lot of those gigs, and so forth.

KP: What about the fact that you were on an accelerated track and science is not the easiest of programs?

JE: That's right. It was tough, it was tough. I really had to work, I had to study. I started in Winants. I don't remember when I moved out of Winants. The dates are just not to clear in my mind. At one point, I had the option of moving into the fraternity house and living there, but, I didn't think I could get my studies done there, very frankly. So, I had a room in a private place nearby, here on campus, and I lived that way. I worked hard.

SC: What were your favorite classes?

---------- END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE----------

JE: Philosophy, with Houston Peterson. Courses in speech, debating, with Reagger, and Potter, and a couple of other professors who I became quite friendly with. That area always fascinated me. I'm just trying to remember. I enjoyed the whole area. I think those areas, in particular, stood out. Later on, I became interested in some work that was taught by Max Gideonse. It was international economics. That sort of got me steered off into another direction, career wise, some of that training. I guess the favorite classes were not in the science area, frankly. I started that way, very interested in it. Maybe it was a matter of, "What can I do?" I was idealistic, I guess, at the time. I thought about a medical career, and, sure, I can help people, I can be of assistance to them, and this appealed, but, maybe, we've got to have more people who are trained to make decisions that prevent wars. I sort of began to look at the more broader areas here at Rutgers and I switched away from completely premed. Then, it was a case of where do I go? History was a possibility. I did take, immediately starting at Rutgers after the war, ... a test, an all day exam, and they found that I would be suited for a business type course, with social sciences built in.

This is the direction that I've taken.

KP: But, going into the war, you were sort of leaning to the premed?

JE: As a premed, right. Well, basically, if I can tell you a little about how I got into medicine in the war, I went in, I was an infantry trainee, I was a private. I had shot "expert" with rifle and carbine. I had done very well, and thought, "Here I am, gonna be a sniper." It just seemed to me, I've always had the desire to help people, and stemming back to my experiences just before the war in Civilian Defense, and so forth, and the training I had in first aid, this appealed. Maybe ... I can do something to help people. After my training in Fort Benning, I was assigned to Fort Bragg. At that point, we were getting ready to go overseas. I enlisted the help of the Red Cross, because I had taken the courses, I had done the work with them, and I played up the point that I was premed. I got switched over, amazingly, to the medics. Now, this is not a safer job by any means. It was more risky than the actual infantry. I knew it was risky. I didn't realize even then how risky it was going to be. I knew it was going to be a tough job, but, as I say, I had no way of knowing what was coming ahead, but, at any rate, with their help, letter writing, and so forth, I was switched to the Medical Detachment of the 397th Infantry Regiment. I remember, there I got some on the job training, gave injections. One burly sergeant offered his arm, gave me a vial with distilled water, and I gave him the injection. I did things like this, I learned on the job, and then, of course, there were sick calls. Of course, the poor soldiers didn't know who was taking care of them and the training that I didn't have. It worked at that time. I became officially a medic at that point.

KP: Backing up a little, what prompted you to enter the Red Cross course?

JE: I think it was, in part, wanting to do something during the war period there, help out, and my Boy Scout experience. You get into scouts, and the idea is to help others, and first aid was part of the training that I had as a scout. This appealed to me. That's perhaps why I took the course and got into that area.

KP: You mentioned Civilian Defense. Were you involved in Civilian Defense at all or did it just stop at the Red Cross?

JE: I was, I'm just thinking now. I was. I did not participate as today, with local volunteer ambulances, and so forth.

KP: So, you were never a plane-spotter?

JE: No, I was not. We had people in the neighborhood who were, and so forth, but, I was not, no. I was prepared and, if needed, I had the training, the Red Cross training. We may have had some affairs where we were called out and did do things, but, I don't remember a great deal of that today.

KP: You mentioned the ASTP. What did you and your folks think of ASTP? On campus, they were somewhat respected.

JE: I think my attitude was, I respected them, they were in service, and I thought, "Gee, this is a great thing. These fellas will ultimately finish here, they will put in their time, many of them will apply, and become officers, and put their required amount of time in the service." I think it was a matter of basic respect. I also thought it was a good deal, as far as getting an education, when your finances are very tight, and when you probably would have been drafted anyway. So, this made sense to me. The ASTP on campus was fortunate in having achieved this. That was really, basically, my feeling on the subject.

KP: Do you remember Dean Metzger?

JE: Not very closely. Oh, boy. The name, yes, rings a bell, but, really, I did not [know him].

KP: So, you did not know him?

JE: No, no.

KP: What was it like to be a civilian in wartime? You were not a civilian very long.

JE: That's right.

KP: But, still, in this area you had Camp Kilmer and you had ASTP on campus. By the time you got to college, you had started to get to that draft age. Did you feel any pressure to get into the ASTP?

JE: Yes, I really did. I thought the draft process would come if I didn't do something. That's why the ASTP program seemed to be a wonderful way to achieve, to make my contribution, and, at the same time, advance my education. There were certain advantages. ... I started right in with ROTC training here on campus in the beginning. I found some of that very interesting, and so forth. Not that I was that enthused, but, I did it. The uniform was helpful in getting home. I hitched rides up to my home in Dover wearing my ROTC uniform and I got transportation. [laughs]

KP: So, people would stop for your ROTC uniform?

JE: That's right. I confessed that I'm not in the service, but, I was preparing.

SC: While at Rutgers, how did you hear about the war? Was it through the radio, the *Targum*? How did you hear about what was going on?

JE: I guess it's just the things you mentioned. Basically, I had no close contacts here who were in the service. Later, a fellow student went into combat in Europe and we corresponded until he was killed. He was one of those killed. It was basically radio, that was it.

KP: Your friend that was killed, what was his name?

JE: His name, I was just looking at him in the yearbook, I have his picture right here, Charlie Coleman. He lived down in Western Jersey, one of the towns there. He was Class of 1949. He and I were active in some things together, Newman Club, and I remember making a speech at one of the meetings, entering his name for presidency of the unit. I think he did move on to that level. He would write, occasionally. He was wounded in the fighting, sometime in 1944 in France, and he died around the end of the year, 1944, from his wounds.

KP: Do you still have the letters he sent?

JE: I probably do, in the correspondence. I've got stuff filed away, but, ... I have a couple of letters from him, yes. That was my contact. Some of that was after I had gone into service and some letters came to my home up in Dover.

KP: Any thoughts about wartime Rutgers? I guess one of the things people have told us was that Rutgers, at least for civilians, was getting smaller and smaller. In fact, you could get involved in anything. You could play football if you could almost walk. Could you, maybe, talk a little bit about that, the Rutgers that was a very small school, smaller before the war, but, even smaller, in terms of civilians?

JE: Yeah, it was small. Anything I set out to do, it seemed I was able to get into. In fact, when I started out, I didn't intend to play football. I was no great football star, but, I started as a football manager, handing out uniforms and things of that sort. That job was wide open for me. I could have gone on there. Jobs were available on campus. This was one thing that was fairly easy. As I say, I worked in the cafeteria, initially. Later on, I worked in the library. I put in some years in the library, in Voorhees. I was mainly at the charge out desk, and some students would come in looking for a book, and I'd tell them where to go, and give them advice. It was either here, right across the street, right here at the old library, or, at the one further up on College Avenue. It was just opening, it was a branch, a temporary reading facility.

KP: Oh, for the ASTP students?

JE: It was for everybody. That was part of Rutgers, a branch of the library. It was up north. That was, I believe, after I came back from the war and that's where I worked, mainly. Students would come in there and take books. This was not the military, it was the general college library. It was a temporary building. It was up there where the dining hall is, up there. So, I worked there. I found there were all sorts of opportunities. You could get close to faculty members and this was an attraction to me. The big thing was, it was not what you expected going to college, all the big social life. We just weren't set up at that time. I'm just trying to remember. Basically, that's all I really have to say on that point. I don't know what I was expecting, frankly.

SC: How was your experience on the track team and the cross-country team? You were the captain, right?

JE: Yeah, cross-country.

SC: Did you high jump?

JE: No, that was high school. It was just a matter of lack of other competitors in that area. My strength was always in running and in the distance. I ran the mile and the two-mile on the track team. I applied for that and I ran in quite a few events, on and off campus. I thoroughly enjoyed that, particularly the two mile. It was really my race. I was active there, and that was in the spring, mainly, and then, in the fall, of course, the cross-country season was on, and I really enjoyed that. We used to run quite a bit in Buccleuch Park up here in New Brunswick. I learned some of the tactics. There is a psychology there. If you're going up a hill, you go up fast, and you get to the top, and you take off before they can see you accelerate, so the people following you, you can discourage them. You learn to pace yourself. I ran five miles, normally, but, there were some races we participated in that were ten miles, over in New York. They weren't the New York Marathons, but, they were lengthy runs. And then, I ran a couple of races, I remember one, over in Pennsylvania. It was a junior college, was it Cedar Crest? I think it was Cedar Crest, on the campus there. That was a five-mile where there must have been about thirty schools and colleges participating, and I placed second, tied for second, in one of those runs. So, I did all right. Somewhere along the way, I'd broken some Rutgers record in cross-country, somewhere. I enjoyed that. You had to pace yourself, you had to gauge it, then, use a little bit of psychology, and decide when to really open up, and what you can do. I thoroughly enjoyed that. It was a good group of fellow runners, too. We got along very well. So, I became captain of the team. So, that was a very pleasant activity. I enjoyed that.

KP: You were allowed to finish out a semester, but, you did have to report for what, initially, you thought would be a brief interruption for basic training. Did they tell you when you would go for ASTP?

JE: No, they never did. I guess this decision was made later on. I don't know what the procedure was, but, basically, everybody had the same idea. We were all there for our basic and there were a number of others, pre-ASTP people. As I say, many of these people that I met there I found dead and wounded on the battlefield later. They never got to college.

KP: You mentioned that you had done very well with the rifle. Have you ever had any experience before the war?

JE: Never.

KP: You had never gone hunting or anything?

JE: No, no. I learned in basic and I shot "expert."

KP: Is there a reason to account for this? Do you know why? It is interesting you picked up on it so quickly.

JE: Yeah, I don't know. I guess, at that time, my eyes were better than they are today, the

eyesight. [laughs] I had good training and this sort of thing. Carbine is a smaller version and both of these I did well. I can't account for why. I followed the instructions, and so forth. We also had training in machine guns, and mortars, and other things. But, in fact, I enjoyed to shoot at target practice. I enjoyed that. I didn't find that disagreeable.

KP: What did you not like about basic training?

JE: Oh, boy. [laughs] I guess the discipline, and the long hours, and the sweat, and the crawling under live machine gun fire, and these sorts of things. I remember one experience in basic training and I was not wedded to the Army, at this point. My friend and I went chasing butterflies at one point when we were on maneuvers. We were out in the field, and ... we go after a couple of species, and the unit moved out. There we were, a few miles from the camp. They came and rounded us up, brought us back. We did latrine duty for the next month or so. [laughs] But, basic training was rough, and it still is. I guess it necessarily has to be. I had the opportunity, just a few months ago, we had a reunion of my World War II infantry division, down in Charlotte, North Carolina. Then, we went on a day trip that was scheduled for us to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. We took buses down there. My division had some of its early starting point there, so, they opened the place for us. We were honored guests. In the one part of the time, we stood by while trainees were going through the sort of things that we did. It just was startling to me to find young women, girls, very attractive young girls, just out of high school, beginning college age, in fatigues, and they were with the fellas, and they were climbing up a thirty foot wall, up on a high platform there, and then, repelling down on the other side. There were a couple that noted, "I'm scared about this," before they started out. We got to talk with them, and eat with them, and we saw them in some of their actual training. So, it was impressive. I think it has to be rugged, it has to be. You have to get a sense of what you're going into and I think we did get that in the basic training.

KP: Do you have any memories of your drill sergeants?

JE: I remember them. They were stern, but, they were not the harsh type that you hear written about sometimes. I still recall a couple of them and I admired them more than anything. They were good, good people.

KP: You had not traveled much before the war.

JE: No, that's right.

KP: What was this like, your first experience of really being away from home, when home is really far away?

JE: I didn't have the opportunity to become homesick. We were too busy. We were on the move constantly. I took it as an opportunity to see other parts of the world. For example, I went overseas on a pretty big ship that had been converted to a troop carrier. We left from Camp Kilmer, and somewhere over in Jersey, somewhere, we got on board, and we landed in Marseilles, France. That was my first experience of Europe and we had an air-raid warning as

we were disembarking. They had huge netting over the side of this high ship. We had climbed down this netting to some landing boats down below to take us into the harbor. The place had been taken already, we were not fighting there, but, there was an air-raid in the area. Then, we marched ten miles at night through the village streets and we camped in pup tents. Well, even there, there was a period of about seven or eight days until everything was in, supplies, and I didn't have much activity as a medic, at that point. A friend of mine and I got permission to go into town and we visited the cathedral there, the church up on the mountain. We did things like that. The pastor took us around, we saw some of the sites. I did this all, though, mainly after the war, but, during the war, that was one of the first sites foreign. So, that's where it started.

KP: What did you think of the South? Not that you saw very much of it in basic training, but, did you ever get a pass to get off the base?

JE: Yes, I did. We had, let me see, I think, in Fort Benning, it was very limited, the passes. There was, maybe, just a local place. As I recall, the fellow soldiers would visit bars, and so forth, when they're off, but, I don't remember too much about visiting around down in Fort Benning. I'd make a point to try and get to a church. There weren't as many Catholic churches down in that area as up here. Then, when I was stationed at Fort Bragg, I went to western North Carolina and we had some interesting trips there. Sometimes, it would be like a several hours trip on a bus, we'd be tired coming back, and we'd sleep in the luggage racks. So, I had all sorts of experiences. [laughs] But, I took advantage of the opportunities for travel. I did this, particularly, after the war.

KP: You mentioned that after your basic training ended, instead of going back to college, you were sent out to Fort Bragg.

JE: Right.

KP: How long were you at Fort Bragg, before you were transferred to the medical unit?

JE: I'm trying to recollect now. I believe it happened shortly after I arrived at Fort Bragg, after infantry basic training. It was probably somewhere between April and May and we left for overseas in early October. It was in that period that I made the transition. Probably early in that period, I realized that was what I wanted to do. I'd rather do that than just be shooting the rifle off, and so forth. I felt better about being a medic. I was not asking for any favors or trying to stay out of combat. It was something I felt better about, making my contribution that way rather than the other way. Anyway, from that period, it was in that period, probably early in that period, that I made the transition to the medical detachment.

KP: It sounds like you were very reluctant to have to kill someone. Is that correct?

JE: Yes, I think that's it. That's basically it. I would have killed in combat if I had been ordered. If I had to stand there and shoot, I would have done it, but, my preference, if I could do this other activity, I felt better about it. That was it. It was just my training. Starting out, trying to help people, in my early training, with Boy Scouts, with first-aid, this was in line with my own

background.

SC: So, the only training you received was on the job training?

JE: It was on the job training. Most of the medics went through a program of, I don't know, maybe a year, or something, rather detailed training, in this. I picked it up just on the job. As I say, a sergeant offering me his arm for shots, I remember that distinctly, and other activities, similar. You learn. One of the things you had to learn, and this was new to me in those days, the Army was trying to prevent venereal disease, and so, we had to instruct soldiers, and hand out the items, condoms and things, to prevent problems. This is something, you know, we didn't have training in that in those days. [laughs] I'm learning fast, you know. We'd hear from soldiers when they came back about their weekend experiences, and so forth. Our whole objective was keeping them from getting a venereal disease.

KP: Did you have to do short arm inspections?

JE: I don't remember that, very frankly, myself, no. I didn't get involved very much in that, even on duty. We had, in Europe, ... to deliver three or four babies. …But, usually, the older medics, they felt I was too young for that sort of activity. [laughs] At age eighteen or nineteen, you can go out and get killed and all, but, you're too young for that sort of thing.

KP: Could you, maybe, talk a little more about your on the job training, because it was a while before you were actually deployed in combat. So, how were you learning things, and you also have a voyage over, so, could you talk about some of the things you learned, before you were in combat?

JE: Well, I'm trying to think. We didn't necessarily attend classes, and sessions, and so forth, but, obviously, a good part of a combat medic's job is to stop bleeding. So, I had some training in digital pressure and other things of that sort. So, the medics there would demonstrate it, since they would spend time with me. I'd get individualized training in some of this, and then, on putting on certain types of bandages and gauzes. New things would be coming in in this area and I'd have someone assigned to help me, work with me, on some of this new stuff. … Some of it I knew before, I'd had some training. It was basic, and then, of course, I had to learn. I was given stuff to read on some of the drugs we were administering, some of the pain-killers, and so forth.

KP: Which is somewhat remarkable, because, now, under normal circumstances, physicians are very cautious about having anyone prescribe or use drugs.

JE: That's right.

KP: You were given these drugs then.

JE: I was given them, that's right, to use if there was a requirement, yes, right. There were some cases, extreme pain, to give something of that sort. I was cautioned during all this, and told, and given things to read, which I did, but, this is how I learned. As I say, it was on the job. Going

over on the ship, I had mainly been keeping medical records. I was fortunate. I was on a good spot on the ship. We had turbulent seas and saw a lot of sickness. I was in the middle and up fairly high, which is one of the better places to be.

KP: Yeah, I mean where were the medics? Did you room together going over or bunk together?

JE: Yes. … Now, the poor guys, the combat fellows, were down below deck, and some of them up toward the bow, the stern, and, of course, if you get rocky seas, which we did, as I recall it was a bad time, there was a lot of sea sickness, but, we were up high, I guess, several decks up. We had superstructure there, in the middle of the ship, which is probably the more stable part. The very ill people had beds there. ... I don't remember doing any sort of hospital work there. I was somewhere along the line even before I went overseas, they learned that I knew how to type, from high school. So, I spent some time [typing], both getting ready to go over and preparation. I got off kitchen duty, and cleaning cans, and things, and sat there, and typed things, and I made out reports on the ship going over. So, that wasn't bad.

KP: So, it sounds like you had desk work.

JE: I did, for that.

KP: You were in a compartment that may have had others in it, but, you had some personal space that most others did not.

JE: I did. Ah, it's horrendous. Mostly it is. I traveled down below, and I saw some of these …you know, it was bad. You're there for three weeks or so, crossing like this.

KP: Where did you and the other medics take your mess?

JE: That, we were with everybody. It was standup. As I recall, there were long trays that went one side, starboard, to the other side, and you stood. You brought your things there, you sat it there. You just hoped it didn't rock too much or you'd spill all over. There were some people that got ill there. A lot of people didn't eat regularly because of the turbulent seas. I usually managed to get down there and didn't seem to have that much trouble with sea sickness, like some people.

KP: I have only met one other medic so far. In combat, it was pretty clear that you were assigned to a unit, but, when you were not actually in combat, who did you report to and how were the medics organized, particularly because, in your case, you did not have the sort of school training?

JE: Well, I had two functions, really, as a combat medic. I started at the lowest level, which was litter-bearer, really. My job was to go out there where things were happening, and give first aid right on the battlefield to these people, and then, remove them by litter, either by hand carrying or by mounting the stretcher over the hood of a jeep, which we did whenever we could. That's about the extent of it. We got to a little bit further back, a forward-aid station, and then, from

there, they'd have an ambulance, or some other unit come, pick them up, and take them back for further treatment. The doctors were further back. You didn't even have doctors at the forward-aid station, usually. There were skilled medics that were working that part of it. During our six months of combat, we lost a lot of men. What did I say, we had about one hundred and twenty medics in the regiment and probably eighty percent were casualties. At least eighty. Some came in, were replaced, and were casualties. It might have been higher, either killed or wounded. One who was killed had stepped on a mine, a shoe mine. I volunteered to go out with a particular company, so, I made the switch, and I became a surgical technician. I worked with, I think it was Company D, which has heavy machine guns and mortars, .81mm mortars. So, I started with the machine guns and I moved with them in combat. When I was with the division in combat, I would get general directions from the medical detachment, but, immediate things, and where were moves, and things were the company commander, with him. As a litter-bearer, in that earlier part, I did a lot of that. I was under the control of the head people in the aid station, mainly the forward-aid station. There was, I remember, a master sergeant who was running this one, and he had been in it for quite awhile, and I still see him at reunions. He rides a motorcycle around. He was a pretty stern guy. He ran the shop and did a good job. So, we'd have to report to him. You'd have periods where you're not constantly under fire and you'd be located in the same general area, the forward-aid station. I never got to the rear aid stations or the hospital part. I never saw that. We had some of our areas, occasionally, when we're not under fire, … one time, we were back from the front a little bit, and we had an upstairs in the house that was our headquarters, and that was kind of luxurious. Even there, we were under attack, the road below got strafed, just a hundred yards away. Another place, I'm painting on the Red Cross on the canvas roof of the truck we were using, and I heard this machine gun fire, and I just got down as a precaution, I always played it safe, and, sure enough, strafe hit the truck I was painting. I was there reporting to the sergeant in charge of that forward area. He was my boss. Officers, doctors, I really didn't have that much to do with. They were back.

KP: When you landed in France, how long before you would see your first combat?

JE: Well, we landed in early October. Probably close to the 10th of October. We spent about ten days, from the 10th to about the 20th, in the Marseilles area. We spent the first night on the ten mile hike through the city, and then, set up in pup tents above the city in a staging area for the division, Calle staging area, and so, in most of October, I was not in direct combat, but, then, we went by convoy up the Rhone Valley, and we passed all sorts of dead animals, cows, cattle, vehicles, and destruction, all the way. We didn't see any humans, they had been removed. Then, we got into combat a little further north, up there in Lorraine, eastern France. So, I would say I was in combat pretty shortly, in the first week or so in November. It was very fast. We had a whole list of towns, some of them are kind of interesting. Some of them we visited on our trip last year when we went back. It was hard for me to keep track of towns. I didn't keep a running diary or anything. I just couldn't do it. I guess I just didn't want to do it. I stayed with the unit, first of all, as a litter-bearer, going out and bringing people back, taking care of them, moving from town to town in rapid order. Talking about the combat, I have experienced every sort of combat you can as a infantryman. I was under fire from small arms, directly we were under fire, a lot of mortar fire, a lot of casualties. A lot from artillery, they had 88s, the Germans. They were very deadly. *Neblewerfers*, rockets, fired by the Germans at us in certain places. We were

strafed, I was strafed a couple of times. I was bombed once, I can tell you about that one.

KP: You have experience ...

JE: I've had the whole … mines. I was going into an area where a lot of these would be ASTP guys ... lying there, it must have been about fifteen of them, on the ground. Some were hit by air-bursts, they hit trees and they explode in the trees, and shrapnel. A lot of them had walked on mines. … I was going to help one, and one of the fellows was conscious, and yelled, "Watch it, watch it, there are trip-wires here, all over." There, they had put a couple of little gauze badges on a couple of them. I was ready to help somebody, and, if going there, I had just nudged this wire, it would explode in the air. So, you had that kind of mine, too, as well as the mine buried an inch or two in the soil. So, I ran into everything.

KP: Do you remember the first time you saw combat and had to help someone?

JE: I can't even remember what was first. It was just one thing after another. It's unbelievable that I escaped, frankly. … There was one action after another. I remember some things distinctly, some injuries distinctly, that stand out in my mind. When somebody was hit in the stomach area and he was pulling his guts out, he was in pain. Another person we had on the litter and his brains were oozing out, and then, of course, we saw all kinds of persons with lost arms, and bleeding was the major thing that we had to address, our job. Some of these ... people you couldn't help. I remember specifics of injuries of that sort. I don't remember which was the first or what.

KP: Did you ever become sick? I mean, particularly initially, you are seeing a lot that would really make you just want to vomit.

JE: Right, right, I guess I was on the verge, sometimes, but, you're under such fear at the time, and I must say I was. You are there, and you're doing the job, and you have to be there, but, … I had said my prayers, "Let's hope I get through this." I don't remember that illness on that part slowed me down from doing anything. … I think the worst decisions, the worst things of all, were carrying people. … There were a lot of injuries, serious injuries, in one area. It was a wooded area, hilly, and we were walking a great distance, and we had somebody who was on the litter who was obviously very far gone. That was one, maybe, where I saw the brains and all. We just decided he had had it, there was no hope. …

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

KP: This continues an interview with James Essig on November 17, 1997 at Rutgers University with Kurt Piehler and …

SC: Scott Ceresnak.

KP: You had been talking before the tape got cut off about making a decision some times about who you could go get.

JE: That's right. It was difficult. That was, I found, very difficult. … You could tell if some person was dead or alive by certain tests, you'd try for a pulse, or see if there was any breathing, or so forth, and make a decision, and then, of course, you had to make a decision about who gets on your litter. You can only do so much. Some cases, they were conscious, and wounded in the arms and all, and you'd tell them to follow us, come with us, and they'd be able to walk back. We did that, but, we had to choose. Who could we help the most? …We gave whatever first-aid we could, and then, we had to move them back quickly, to get more advanced aid in the rear. This was difficult. This was hard. You had to make a decision there pretty fast, and, many a time, you are making it, you're under fire.

KP: What about reaching people?

JE: Yeah, well, that's one of the dangers. We had to try. If there was some way of getting them out, we had to be there. I had all sorts of experiences. A couple of them were in one village that we visited last year, I'll tell you about it. For example, just to illustrate the obstacles, on the hillside behind the village of Rimling, there were wounded near a quarry, there were two quarries. One of the quarries had two American tanks in it. They were in position to fire back at the Nazis, who were attacking. This was at the same time as the attack up north in the Battle of the Bulge. The Nazis were trying to break through to Paris again and trying to make a last ditch push against us. The fellow in the rear US tank yelled to us, my buddy and me, with the litter. He said, "We're moving out of here, we're under fire." Meanwhile, right at the entrance to the little quarry were two foxholes, one on one side and one on the other, each had a couple of wounded guys. So, we got, we thought, perhaps the worst on the litter, and then, we had to time it, because the Germans were firing mortars at us. We could hear the mortars being fired down below and counted so many seconds until the shells exploded around us. We pulled the litter under the lead tank. The driver didn't know we were under his tank, and we knew he was going to pull out of there in a minute, but, we were under the tank, and the shrapnel was hitting up against the sides of the tank, so, we had some protection under there, from mortars at least. … We allowed so many seconds, and we pulled our casualty out, and then, we ran down the hill. Then, Nazi artillery opened up with air bursts as we're going down. We didn't get hit, but, that's the sort of thing. There were difficulties of getting to people. It's tough. If there was a heavy blanketing fire, you just have to wait 'til it lets up a little bit, and we had to wait to carry this guy out, to time the shell fire. That was difficult. However, there were many, many cases like that. One of the decorations I got was for removing people over a period of a couple of miles up and down hills in woods and under fire. Sometimes the walking wasn't that good.

KP: What about getting lost? Was that ever a problem?

JE: The only time that it came to be a near tragedy was during a very brief break period. I had my first driving lesson there, in the infantry as a medic, on the front line, and it was a two-and-a-half ton truck I was driving, my first vehicle. We started out and ... we were running toward a German position. We stopped just in time. We were under fire. We got out of there fast. ... We then knew, basically, which direction to go and that was not a major problem.

KP: You say that was your first driving lesson.

JE: I had never driven.

KP: You had never driven?

JE: I had never driven, no. That was my first driving, it was a big truck, right. So, I drove this thing about ten miles or so. You know, you do things that you don't do in the calmer days. Just as learning medicine on the job, this was mine. Later, a jeep, I drove that, and things of that sort, but, this was the first time. These guys say, "Here, we'll take it over." So, I did, but, we went the wrong way. [laughs]

SC: I am curious as to what you carried with you and what drugs you had. Did you carry sulfa drugs?

JE: Yeah, sulfa, we had sulfa. We didn't have the new antibiotics and things. We had sulfa drugs and I had…morphine. Morphine was the major drug, painkiller type drug. We had aspirin and stuff like that. I had a first-aid kit which I wore around on my side. We had the drugs there, and had some emergency bandages in there, and stuff on that sort. That was basically it. The main thing was stopping bleeding, covering up exposed parts, and any major wounds you'd wrap up with bandages. That was the major job.

KP: So, you never carried a weapon?

JE: No, no.

KP: Did you know of any medics who carried weapons?

JE: I had heard ... of some cases. One medic, as I recall, was shot right through the red cross of his helmet. He was shot right through the red cross. I think that was more of a problem in Asia and fighting the Japanese. We had medics who were shot. Obviously, they knew we were medics. Our truck, as I say, was strafed by a German plane, and that had the big red cross we were painting on it, but, … I never carried a weapon. I took a prisoner or two. I did. They wanted to be my prisoner. They were wounded, they were Germans. They were wounded, but, I didn't have a weapon.

KP: When you were under fire, how many times did you think they were actually firing at you or how many were simply you were in the line of fire?

JE: I think it's more the second, in the line of fire. I think there was more of that.

KP: You never felt they were deliberately aiming at you?

JE: No. Another time, we were in a medical vehicle, and we were along the Rhine River in a city called Heilbron, and the Germans were right across the river, and they fired at us, though we

had markings on our vehicle, the red cross. We were going out looking for some casualties, driving along, and we were under small arms fire. They must have realized we were medics. I don't think that was all that frequent. You were just under a general intense fire in the area, rather than being singled out as a medic.

KP: Were there ever any "unofficial truces," where the Germans and Americans would stop fighting, or, for a few minutes, hold their fire?

JE: No, I don't remember any instances of that sort, no. Not in the period we were fighting. … It was a period where, partly, we were stopping a German advance, we were stationary, and we were near this village. I could tell you about my trip, the city of (Pichi?). Later on, we were on the push as you got into '45. We were pushing the Germans back and constantly on the move from one town to another. So, we weren't really stationary all that long in the latter part of the war.

KP: You mentioned you really cut your teeth in the Vosges Mountains. That must have been very frustrating.

JE: Yup.

KP: You have alluded to some of them and one of them was the air-bursts into the tree which brought you fear and were very deadly.

JE: Yes, yes, that was deadly.

KP: The weather had sort of turned, too. Could you maybe talk a little bit about it? Partly what you were doing was treating the wounded, but, it was also pretty miserable weather.

JE: That's true, it's true. One of the great difficulties with infantry is where you do your living. Many of them had to live in foxholes. They dug holes for protection. Of course, you're on the move, can dig deep and make a fancy place, and, if it's wet, you get wet. There are people that have to be treated with ailments of that sort. As a medic, especially when we went to the forward-aid station, we usually have a forward-aid station with some sort of shelter. I mean, it wasn't always very adequate, and it was close to the action, but, there was some sort of shelter. So, we were a little better off, and the wounded were under some sort of cover, but, the regular troops, the infantry troops on the move, they were out there, ... and I was out there when I was with the latter. I don't know how long it was, maybe three months or so, I was a company aid man, I was with them all the time, and you were out there.

KP: When you were a litter carrier, where did you sleep? Did you sleep at the forward-aid station?

JE: Yeah, mainly the forward-aid station. Then, I'd move out from there and come back there.

KP: How much sleep did you get?

JE: Sometimes very little, sometimes very little. Sometimes, there'd be a day or you'd have other things you'd have to do to keep up with your job. That was a problem. There was a lack of sleep.

KP: What about your meals?

JE: The meals when we were on the move. If you were back, we had a couple of points where we were a little further to the rear for maybe a week. There was some action, but, not much. They served a hot meal and, as a chow-line, you could walk to it. Other times, it would be K-rations. They'd be packages. They'd come in little rations and give you some protein, some kind of meat, or biscuit, a little candy bar, a pack of cigarettes, a small pack in there. That was the K-ration. C-rations were a little better. They were canned things. We didn't get much of that. It was Ks. You ate a lot of that kind of stuff.

KP: So, even though you were slightly back, it sounds like you still ate a lot of K-rations?

JE: Right.

KP: The kitchen was not close enough?

JE: It really wasn't close enough, no. For company, for people who were serving in the command companies of the division, ... or if your regiment wasn't on the move right at that spot, or your battalion, eating wasn't bad. They did have a full, hot meal and different things. When we were in action, and most of the six months I was there were pretty active, it was a lot of K-ration, a lot of that sort of thing.

KP: What about showers? Did you ever get to shower?

JE: Oh, God. [laughs] That was really a luxury. ... I don't even know how I bathed anymore. There were no outhouses, either. You just kind of made a hole in the woods there, set up, and that's what they tried to do, to keep us going to the same hole. Showers, that was a treat, when we'd get to a spot where we could take a shower. That was a treat.

KP: You mentioned that there were several babies that were born.

JE: Yes.

KP: How often did you treat, you yourself personally, but, also, the other medics, civilians?

JE: I would say most of our work dealt with the soldiers, but, I don't know, if I had to put a percentage on it, maybe twenty percent, or something. There were wounded civilians and I did take care of some wounded civilians. So, that was part of it. Some place, one place I'll tell you about our experience in our trip, a village we visited, where we had some civilians stay with us in the forward-aid station who were bombed across the street. So, some of these people were with

us, ... right with us, at that point. Other times, we went out and we would take care of some civilians. There were only, I guess, ... three, maybe four, cases of babies being born and the fellows went out to take care of them. That was rather uncommon for us.

KP: So, you never delivered.

JE: I never delivered, no. I wasn't even on hand for my six that were [born]. … That came a little later. [laughs]

SC: The winter of '44 to '45 was particularly harsh.

JE: That was bad.

SC: I am sure you had to deal with frostbite.

JE: There were some, mainly foot troubles, wet feet, wet feet and the cold. They had problems, serious problems. I don't remember, specifically, many of those cases. We had good winter clothing and everything, and were pretty well prepared for it, but, it was bad. Mainly, the problem was trench foot and things of that sort.

KP: As a medic, did you have a role in trying to get people to take care of their feet?

JE: … No, we didn't have sessions ourselves with the fellows. Certainly, as a litter-bearer, no. As a company aid man, maybe I would, occasionally, give some personal advice to somebody. We wouldn't have a session explaining this. They should have had this before.

SC: I am curious as to your visceral feelings towards the Germans that you were fighting against. Did you have any anger toward the German civilians or the German people in general?

JE: No, ... when we'd get located somewhere temporarily for a day, maybe two, we'd have a sick call and that would be the extent of it. Anybody with a problem, they'd come to you, and you'd try to help them one way or the other, and tell them what to do. That's about the extent of it.

SC: So, there was no personal animosity?

JE: Yes, right, right. I didn't personally have anger towards the civilians. Maybe civilians in some places do attack soldiers, and they're a problem, but, I don't think we had so much of that sort of situation, when we were fighting in France, certainly not, and even in Germany. I was astonished, I was really surprised, ... when we made the trip a year ago to France and Germany, including some major receptions in Germany. I knew the people in France admired us and appreciated what we did, but, even in Germany, there was a feeling among many and they told about their parents being in the battle. There was sort of a respect for the American soldiers. I don't think we encountered any. There wasn't that type of resistance in our fighting. It was more clear cut. It was against the German Army units themselves.

KP: You mentioned that you took several prisoners.

JE: Not several. Maybe two or three at most.

KP: They were wounded?

JE: They were wounded Germans, yeah. I walked them, in most cases they were able to. I was able to get them back myself to a sheltered area, and took care of them, their injuries, and then, they were taken care of, but, they were very willing. I just made sure they didn't have any guns on them. They were more than willing to be prisoners at that point.

SC: Do you remember how they were wounded?

JE: No, obviously, they were not so incapacitated that they couldn't walk back. I think, in each case, we walked them back to the area. Then, someone else went through the formalities, making a prisoner, and so forth.

KP: I am curious, you are able to talk about what happened, but, were you always able to talk about it?

JE: No. ...

KP: When did you start talking about the war?

JE: I'll tell you, for a long time after the war, I don't know, maybe some years, any sound, any explosion anywhere, would upset me greatly. I was just nervous. I just didn't want to talk about it. I didn't join any veterans organizations. I was not interested in parades. I was just turned off by all this. I guess, I don't know when, but, maybe, it took about ten years or so. Then, of course, I told my family and kids about some of the experiences, and they've seen some of the awards I've gotten, and they've wanted to know what that means, and so forth. Now, I can talk and my biggest worry over all these years, then, was not about me personally, but, about my kids getting involved in that sort of action, and the possibility of a war, and them being called up. … They were just of that age, they could've been called up for Vietnam. We just would do everything we could to prevent that from happening. That was my big worry, was the effect. My concern was that a war like that doesn't happen again.

KP: I guess some of the things you have sent to me on Rimling ...

JE: Rimling. They pronounce it differently in France. I almost can't understand them. …

KP: That seemed like a significant memory for you. I do not simply say that because of the reunion, but, because you saw a lot there.

JE: I saw a lot there. I was there for a while, I don't know how long, but, I was there around the end of the year 1944 and the very beginning of '45. That was the Battle of the Bulge period, if

you recall, and the Germans were making a really determined effort to move through our area, and it was back and forth, at that point. … I have two or three places that I have very distinct memories of and that's one of the towns, that's one of them. There it was in a town, a village, and still, today, it's about five hundred people. We had set up our forward-aid station at one end of town, in the basement of a school building, and there's a picture in the paper here. We had our ceremony right there and there it was in the basement. You go down stone stairs, and you go down, pretty solid stone walls, and we had room to keep some casualties there, temporarily, until they could be evacuated. We also had a few civilians who came there for shelter. … Just to show you what was happening there, just across the street from that was a village church, and that's where we had some of our ceremonies. There were houses next to the church, I thought I had a picture of it here, but, there are pictures. We were right in front of that here, and there was a little area next to it, and the church was on one side. Anyway, one of the US Army units had an artillery observer up there, up in the tower of the church, just for observation, because German tanks were just beyond the town there. I guess the Germans knew that, and, at one point, they flew a plane in pretty low, and dropped a bomb, trying to bomb the church. They hit a house right next to it, wiped out a family in the house. We were in the basement of this forward-aid station and the whole place shook. You know, you're down in the stone and it shook. That was one of the frightening things, and then, another time, a German patrol came into town, and you could hear these hobnail boots on the floor above us, and we heard some German voices, and so, I'm just telling people, "Quiet, quiet." I was afraid they would just precautionarily throw a hand-grenade down the basement. They didn't come down, they left, and we were okay. That was one experience there. Another place in that town, I was out picking up casualties, and we came under pretty heavy fire, and we were in a house, and somebody yelled, "Gas." We had had reports that we had inadvertently fired some gas shell, or something. We had heard rumors. We thought that this was a retaliation. I didn't have my mask with me. It didn't smell like anything. It smelled like shell-bursts, like an explosive, and that was really what it was. I lay behind a piano, at that point, until it ended. It was German tanks that were just a quarter mile, or a half-mile, down the road, and they were firing at us. That was one. Another time, we were racing back from picking up people, going back to the forward-aid station, and I took shelter in sort of a basement at street level of a house. There was a whole family, about twelve people, and they were all saying the rosary there, praying. They were asking me in French, "Are you staying?" You know, they wanted to get out of there. The Germans had almost cut us off there. … We were right there, right at the outset. … Oh, and that's were the incident with the tanks on the hillside took place, just above. So, there were a number of things. There were a number of events just in that one spot.

On our visit to that village, they had a major celebration. We were the first units of the American Army to come there since the war. It's over fifty years. They had a parade, they got a band from a neighboring town. They had a unit of the French Army. They had a representative from Paris, to the assembly in Paris, local mayors, all sorts of people, the Free French Forces, and they had about a two hour ceremony right outside the church there, and right outside the building where I was in action. A couple of men, then, came up to me later, and they were in their, I'd say, sixties, and they said, "I was with you, I was with you." They were boys age eight and ten taking shelter in that forward-aid station when I was there. So, that was kind of remarkable. That's one place that I definitely recall. The people were so appreciative. We liberated that town, we held off the

Germans. They had a whole monument there, "To our dead," and they listed all the dead of the village, all in early … 1945, … all 1945 deaths. They were so appreciative that we came and protected them. It was fifty years later.

KP: While all the talk was overshadowed by what was going on in Bastogne, the Germans had launched a major offensive in the Alsace-Lorraine area. It almost looked, at one point, that Strasbourg would not hold and that they would break through.

JE: And, the other area we were in, in there, was the Vosges Mountains. We fought in the Vosges Mountains. A lot of that was open woods, and hillsides, and there you had these tree bursts and this other artillery. There were times when we could hear the firing down below in the valley, and the shell, so many seconds later, there'd be an explosion, and you'd have to gauge what you were doing there, picking up somebody, or doing something. We actually freed the village of Bitche. I wasn't involved in the town at all, although there was a major reception there. We got to the citadel of Bitche, which is up on the top of a hill, a mass that had never been taken at war, and we took it from the Germans. That was another area of great activity. Still another area … that I remember definitely was after these events. I was, then, I guess, a company aid man. We were up along the Rhine River and Heilbronn, I think it was the Rhine, Heilbronn is the name of the town. We had major confrontations there. Our division lost a lot of people there. We crossed the river there. I remember there being a sort of factory warehouse building right on the banks of the river, and there we came under very intense rocket fire. I remember there [were] *Nebelwerfers*, those German screaming rockets. There, as I told you, we were also under small arms fire. We went along the river to pick up people in the jeep and bring them back to shelter. Well, those are ... three major areas. There were so many others, … it was one thing after another. Toward the end, we were moving, we crossed the river, and we were proceeding in Germany toward the south, toward Stuttgart. At that point, I was riding on a tank, on the top of a tank, with some of the troops, and we were moving rather rapidly. Now, in all of this, there were some very different, pleasant things, even in the midst of combat. One time, we were clearing out a town, going door to door, and I was with the machine gun platoon at that point. Doors would open, people would come out with loaves of bread and some places they had some candy they must have saved from years earlier. They showed their great appreciation and wanted us to take some of this. … Another French village, we got to the end of the village and there was this brewery in the basement. We went in there and the Germans were just beyond. The people had told us they had taken some of the men with them, they were just beyond. We go down there and there were a lot of men and women, a lot of people gathered in there. A lot of men were wearing black arm bands, they were the Free French. We came in and they just went crazy. They started singing the *Marseillaise*, the French national anthem. Exciting. Things like that, it's really beautiful. The people were appreciative of our efforts. You hear all these people visit Paris and hear the people don't treat us well, and this, and that. We visited Paris, too, and it was nice, that is on this trip, but, I must say, fifty years later, it was grand. Now, the affair in Rimling was written up in the papers. I sent you copies, the English translation, too, I think. They also made a video of that whole thing, the ceremony, with the music in the back, the marching music, French and US national anthems, speeches in French and translations in English. It was marvelous. I showed this for my class up at Ramapo College the other night. I said, "Well, it's Veteran's Day, we're going to allow a little bit of time for this." So, I showed them some of that. They were

enthralled by it. They were fascinated, they really were. They hadn't seen anything like this. Here were veterans, ten of us, who'd been in the area. I was, maybe, I and one other of us, ... in that village in the fighting. Others were right nearby. These people went all out and they were so appreciative. The students just asked questions, they were fascinated.

KP: I am curious, when you changed from being a litter-bearer to being a ...

JE: A company aid man …

KP: What changed in terms of what you did?

JE: Well, it's just that you were under the direction of the commander, whoever is in charge of your unit. As a company aid man, you move with them all the time. Your contacts with the aid stations are not that frequent. There'll be someone there to pick up, …you'd give immediate first-aid with them, right on the scene, and then, there'd be someone in the rear to come pick them up, and take them back. Sometime, you'd have to help do that, too. Whereas the other one, … you're waiting for where the action is happening and you are sent out. What they tried to do, in most cases, is do this on Jeeps. We pretty commonly had brackets set up on the hood of the Jeep, and you'd lay the litters across, a bracket on each side and the litter across, and then, there would be a vertical pipe, or something, a wire cutter, because, what the Germans were doing, occasionally, in some of this, is running thin wires across, so, anyone sitting on the Jeep would get beheaded. So, that was on there, and you'd get these Jeeps back, you know, into the wilderness, as close as you can, as far as you can, and put your people on board, and get them out of there, sometimes under fire. … Other times, there was no way. It had to be on foot. That was it.

SC: Did you ever see any casualties from friendly fire?

JE: Not that I was aware of. It could have happened in some of it, when we were moving, particularly. It's possible. I couldn't identify as having come from friendly fire, in our case.

KP: You were with a company and were really part of that company.

JE: That's right.

KP: Do you remember the company men, and the ACOs, and that sort?

JE: … An infantry regiment, what did we have? we had four companies. We had three, A, B, C, rifle companies, and then, D is the heavy weapons company. One thing I like about D was, you're just a little further back with D, but, at times, you're on the point as you moved into villages, but, I was with the machine gun platoon. … I don't remember anything specifically that makes them any different. I had great respect for the officers. They wouldn't put their men at risk if they didn't have to. They were very cooperative, certainly getting wounded people taken care of and out. It was very good. I had no problems, really. I just remember some names, and where they came from, what areas, and they seemed like good, ordinary, young guys. Fairly

youthful, most of them. I don't know, ... I was thinking about applying for Officer Candidate School, but, I guess it was too late in the point and I didn't follow through on it. I decided against it. I decided I didn't want anymore of a career in this, but, some of them went through that. I don't think we had any West Pointers in the unit.

KP: I have read that the corpsmen were really respected.

JE: Oh, yes, indeed.

KP: I think infantry took care of the corpsmen. They did not want them put at risk or damaged, because there was a little self-interest here, but, also, the respect for what you were doing.

JE: I think that is true and that's what made me feel good about the job, too, as well as helping people. … I was respected doing that. That made it tolerable to go through all this. One of the things before one of our receptions or big gatherings, we have annual ones, the division association, my name was in the bulletin for something. I got a letter from the president of a bank out in the Midwest. He wrote me a little personal letter, thanking me for saving his life. That was under fire, during intensive combat, so that people remember. That was some years after the war.

KP: And, he remembered who you were?

JE: He remembered who I was, I was the corpsmen who had saved him, yeah. So, that sort of thing made it worthwhile. I felt like I accomplished something on that score. … It was a very harsh experience, I must say. You can't underplay it. It's six months and that's a long time to survive with all those people next to me. … One time, we're going through the woods, bringing back somebody on the litter, and the guy in the back of the litter was hit. So, I don't know how I got that person back. He was wounded, he wasn't killed or anything. You're with people all the time who are casualties. One day, they are fine, and the next day, they're among the wounded.

KP: What was your closest call? You mentioned a couple, but, there must have been one or two. You have already told us a number, like painting the red cross. Was there one or two where you really did not think you would make it out?

JE: Well, some of these cases, where we had that fellow who was hit in the head, and it was a hillside in the Vosges Mountains, and the Germans had the area under fire from 88s, their favorite artillery piece, also, mortars. It was constant fire. ... That's where the fellow at the end of the litter was hit. I went through a period there. That was one spot that I didn't think I was going to get out of that one alive. … In Rimling, all of these tanks, I saw them just a half mile down the road, and firing point blank up where we were, and they could have come forward. I don't know, we probably could have repulsed them, we had artillery behind us somewhere. You know, you're right there, and the thing is, you just don't know what is going to happen next in a spot. You're under fire and you don't know it. I didn't actually come into visual contact with Germans. I didn't get into that close to it, in most cases.

KP: But, you did see some small arms fire?

JE: Small arms, right, but, I didn't see them. They were sheltered, or across the river, or back.

KP: How many cases of battle fatigue did you care for?

JE: Oh, there were a number, I don't remember how many. I remember two or three people who were really, really battle fatigued, and they would start wandering around, like a dream world, or start walking the wrong way, and doing this and that. We had to get people like that back. That happened. There were some people, even some medics, you know, after a point of it, that you begin to crack. I don't know how long I would have taken it, frankly, if this had gone on and on. I'd have needed some help, or something, but, I managed to get through it all. … That's why they have this R and R sort of thing, rest and recuperation, or whatever they call it. They had some troops go back for awhile, but, we did have some battle fatigue cases. We had to take them back. They were casualties, really. So, we had to lead them back to shelter.

KP: Did you ever have anyone fake paralysis, or someone say they can not move their legs, or anything?

JE: No, no, these were real. At least, as far as I'm concerned. I never had any experience with anybody faking, no.

KP: When I say faking, it is just that their case of battle fatigue is so bad that they can not move.

JE: Right, right. No, I didn't experience that situation.

SC: Did you keep in touch with people from home and write letters?

JE: Yeah, we had mail calls, I don't know, once a week, once every two weeks. It would catch up with us. We'd be not under fire at the time and it would be, maybe, a little bit further back. They'd call names, and give you the letters, and we did have it, occasionally. It wasn't more than once every couple of weeks, as I recall. It was very infrequent.

KP: How often did you go to services when you were in the Army? How often were you able to go to Mass?

JE: Well, during combat, it was very sporadic. Occasionally, a chaplain would come up and, particularly, if we're in a defensive position and we're not really under attack. … I remember attending in an open area, it was in a semi-forested area, and we were asked to spread out, and not stand in the same area, and move around. He'd be in one end there and they'd have a Mass there ... in the open field. I remember that a couple of times. I never attended any church services during combat. We were constantly moving and that was out. It was very infrequent, during the combat part. Afterwards, I made an effort to go to a local place, whether it was France or whether I was stationed in Germany. I tried to go. That's one thing that, you know, … I had people at home praying for me, and I did, too. I did two things. I put faith in God and I also took

every precaution I could. I had all the responsibilities, but, I just didn't go loafing around out there when I didn't have to. I was careful and I picked my spots, sought shelter when we had to. Like under that tank, I couldn't stay in the open there.

KP: So, when you had to dig a fox hole, you would dig it?

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

JE: Some of them just said, "Well, if it's going to happen, it's going to happen," and this was the attitude. I just had the impression that many of them on the front line were a little too casual. They weren't doing everything they could to keep themselves protected, to keep things under control. That was just an impression having been through all this.

KP: When you say they were casual, they were casual about what? Foxholes?

JE: About foxholes, about seeking shelter, about being close to someplace they could get into quickly if they came under fire. I think there was a bit of that. People were foolhardy at times, like here in civilian life. I don't remember if this was during combat or right after the war, we had a truck driver in one of the units we were serving, he was driving along and just went off a bridge that had been bombed out. He just went down a hundred feet, and he was killed, going too fast, not watching what he was doing. This sort of thing happens. In some cases, you can't avoid things happening in war, but, in other cases, people are too, maybe I'm using the wrong word, casual. They weren't careful enough to take precautions. So, you had that sort of thing in combat.

KP: I have been told that, when a soldier is waiting to die, there are no atheists in foxholes, and if they call for anyone, besides the medic, they will often call for their mothers. Did you experience either one of those?

JE: I really can't say that I did. I really can't say. Sometimes, they would whisper something and sometimes I couldn't understand what they were saying. I didn't have personal ... I was briefly with a lot of wounded people. Of course, not all of them were near death, or thought they were near death, when wounded. Some were bleeding, and you could take care of them fairly quickly, and get them to the rear to get better attention. I didn't run into that sort of situation or anything as dramatic. I'm sure it happens, but, I didn't see it. … But, as you say, as to respect, that's one thing I did find, a great deal of respect for the medics, the combat medics.

KP: Did your unit, not only your company, but, your larger unit, your regiment, did you ever liberate any slave labor camps or any concentration camps?

JE: No.

KP: Did you encounter any displaced persons wandering around, particularly in Germany?

JE: Yeah, I encountered individually. One place, I gave first-aid to somebody and it was a

Russian. The person was drunk and there was some comment made, "These Russians, they're drinkers," or something. So, there must have been some of those along the way, but, that was my only personal contact with that sort of thing.

KP: What were your memories of V-E Day? Do you remember when the war finally ended?

JE: I think I was either in Stuttgart or in the vicinity in Stuttgart when the war ended, when we got word the war was over. Of course, what an amazing feeling of relief. The immediate thought then was, "When am I going to get home?" Then, of course, the immediate problem was, we get home and are needed in the Pacific. So, we all had on our minds, "So, we get out of this, we get shipped home, and then, we get shipped over to fight the Japanese." We were very, very worried, most of us, about that. They had established a point system, so your time in Europe, your time in the service, your time in combat, is in your favor. There were some other benefit points you get. If you had enough points, you went home and got discharged, but, otherwise, if you fall short and they need you, off you go for another tour.

KP: Did you have enough points to go home?

JE: Not immediately. … No, I went home. … None of us knew where we would be going or what would happen, but, there was a common feeling, that was just a feeling. Whether there was any merits in it or not, I don't know, but, that was a worry that many of the GIs I was with in the company had, "So, we're going to get shipped off now." That's where the atom bomb probably saved a lot of other American lives. At that point, at the end of the war, I was looking, trying to figure out just where I was staying, and I think we were staying in a village four or five miles from Stuttgart, in a German Army barracks. I visited that on our trip to Europe. I used to be able to get transportation, one way or the other, into Stuttgart, this is during occupation, right after the war ended. They had opera there. The opera house had been bombed, but, part of it was intact, and they had operas going on. We had prime seats, first balcony. I used to go on Sunday afternoons. One thing, as a medic, after the combat period, there would be some sick calls, and handing out some pills, but, otherwise, I was fairly free. After a while, the other soldiers had a routine, some further training and other things, but, medics, the company officers let us go our way. That was nice. I remember, one point, I was able to borrow from a German civilian some fishing hooks and I fished for trout in a stream that was not open, generally, for trout fishing. So, I enjoyed that. That was after the fighting. I might also, if you want to hear about after the war, I took advantage, as I say, of travel. I applied for college training while I was in service. I was selected. Most of us wanted to go to a place in France that was really topnotch and really good, but, I didn't make that. I was sent, and it turned out to be excellent, ... to England. I spent, this was in '45, from somewhere around September to November something [there]. They had set up a little college with American professors for GIs. I was sent to go to this. This was about an hour from London. I'm trying to think of the name of it. … They called it Schrivenham American University. I had a couple of courses that I later got credit for at Rutgers.

KP: What did you take?

JE: I took one on English composition, and I wrote accounts, some things I was seeing at the

time, essays, and even a short story. One of the things I have at home is the English Village Inn. So, I went to two local inns to see what it was like. Some of the fellas went every weekend there and that was it. That was their entertainment. We had, at the time, free rail transportation anywhere in the British Isles. I went somewhere every weekend. I went to Scotland, visited Edinburgh, and sailed on Loch Lomond. I went to Wales, Caernarvon Castle. I went to South Wales, even to the dog races. I went to London and I spent a couple of weekends in Oxford. I stayed at the home of a professor in Oxford one weekend. I went to a couple of balls there. A couple weekends, I stayed home and the Red Cross brought in some women for the dances they had for us. I kept contact with a couple of the girls, still today. One lives in Canada, raised a family up there, and I still see her. That was enjoyable.

KP: How long were you in this? How long were you in England?

JE: I'd say about three months?

KP: When did you arrive in England?

JE: I think it was during the fall of 1945. The war was over and everyone was back in the Stuttgart area, my group. Then, I went to England and I had to go back to Stuttgart. I was assigned to an artillery regiment and I was assigned to them until I came back to the States, very briefly. I think it was from September to November, or something like that, in England. Somewhere in there, also, I had a leave to the French Riveria. I spent a week or ten days on the Riveria in Nice and traveled around. What a wonderful experience that was. I saw my first bikinis. [laughs] Another time, I rented a bike and wanted to go up the mountains, there were mountains right on the sea there, and I was going up there, and I got a flat tire on top. I couldn't ride it down. That's the way things went. Then, I also had a leave, I made out very well, ... to Switzerland. That was in the winter there, when I came back from England, in Zermatt. I spent a week there, a train trip to Switzerland. That's the first time you see all these goodies, you know, people on the railroad and things to eat. We hadn't experienced this, of course, in our quarters in France and in Germany. I skied on unbroken snow in the Alps. There were some good things.
…

KP: You did some traveling that in civilian life would take you a long time to afford.

JE: That's right, exactly.

KP: Even in France, several thousand dollar vacations.

JE: Yes, yes, each one of those, but, some of our fellows just stayed put and went to the local bars and taverns. I took advantage of it and traveled. I hadn't done much traveling before. This was our trip a year ago, my first trip back to Europe. I hadn't been back.

KP: Really?

JE: One reason or another, we just never [went]. We've been to other places, including Canada

and the boarder area of Mexico.

KP: Why do you think you never went back?

JE: I don't know. I was too busy. I've had a very busy life since I got back. I don't know, I really don't know. My wife says that there are so many things to see in this country. We drove the car all the way to California and back and we've done all other sorts of things. I just hadn't. This opportunity was just wonderful. We had a twelve day trip to Europe. It started in late September. I think I mentioned this right up here. We started in Paris, two days, and, again, my wife and I did everything. We rode the subway, we rode buses, we rode cabs, we rode on the Seine, a boat, and visited the main attractions, and did a lot of walking, and then, we took a train, ... one of the new trains took us to Nancy. It was about a two hour ride and that was a great experience. There we joined up with our bus that took us the rest of the trip. We visited, on that trip, Raon-L'Etape is a village where we started fighting, actually, in that general area. We were not the first unit from our division back there, but, they still had a big wreath-laying ceremony, a meeting with the mayor in his office with dignitaries all around. It was nice. I've got pictures of some of that. From there, we went to a national cemetery and a wreath laying ceremony. From there, we went, I think Rimling was the next major stop. I might add that, after the ceremonies, we ended up in Rimling at a reception where all the women baked all their famous French pastries. Incidentally, in that village, they got me down to the forward-aid station. The cellar had been sealed off, and they opened the trap door, and they got a big aluminum extension ladder, and I climbed down there, and I was where I was a half century earlier. That was really remarkable. Then, we went to Bitche. We had a meeting with the mayor and the people in Bitche. From there, we went directly to Stuttgart. In Stuttgart, we had a dinner with the mayor, Mayor Rommel. Mayor Rommel is the son of the Rommel the desert commander, the famous general who tried to do away with Hitler and who later was forced to commit suicide. … Then, we went North and the next town was up north, another national cemetery and wreath laying. We had a meeting further north in, I think it was Sinsheim. It's a town that had a museum, and they had all tanks and other things from World War II, uniforms of the 100th Division, and the mayor came out, and met us, and had a luncheon for us there. They also had a lot of things from the United States, showing the swimsuits, and Marlyin Monroe, and so forth. It was an interesting museum, it was a nice stop, and then, we went up to a place called Schwetzingen, which is further north on the way to Frankfurt. We met with the mayor there and the big castle with one of the finest gardens in Germany. … And then, Frankfurt, and we flew home from there.

There were six major receptions with wine of honor they called it, "Vin d'Honneur," and other things, and people around. Everywhere, even in Germany, there seemed to be great appreciation for what we had done. Some of them told us what they had experienced in their families. … The German papers wrote us up, too. … This clipping was in Schwetzingen. We met with the mayor there and that was our tour leader. He was from England. This was our bus driver. He was from the French Army. He was an expert driver, he was great. We were all sitting around here, about the ten of us. That was in the mayor's chambers. These pictures are in another national cemetery. We laid wreaths and roses. This was in Raon-L'Etape, they have, on their building there, the 100th Division, we liberated their village. This was in the Bitche. We had a unit, our

unit is called Sons Of Bitche. [laughs] That's the mayor and other local dignitaries there at the reception inside. This was at the … Maginot line, the entrance. They opened it for us especially, they took us on a tour there. This was the lady that wrote the articles for the paper. She interviewed me for one of them. Here we are in Rimling, the mayor there. There is the building of the forward-aid station. … The church is right here, the famous church. This was the museum at the other town we visited. We were having lunch and I sent you a letter, I think, from a German professor who's done a history of our division, and that's the guy. So, I spent some time with him. He speaks English well and we got along fine. That was at the same place there, that reception there. … He gave me a couple of things, … pictures from World War II, some of the damaged areas. I thought it was kind of interesting, some of the places I was fighting in. He went to the National Archives in Washington. He wrote a book on some of this, Gunter Beck. This just to illustrate, … Heilbronn, we lost a lot of soldiers there. I had front line action there with artillery, and with rockets, and so forth. Then, we ended up down here, as I say, in Stuttgart. … I remember all these towns, all the places we had action in. So, he showed some of the actual action here, some of the scenes of the fighting, in the areas along the Rhine, this is all along the Rhine. A lot of damage. There's the general of the 100th Division, General Burress. There were some German soldiers, I guess prisoners, somewhere along the line, I don't know where that was. … This was something more along the lines of what I was involved with. … Here we are along the Rhine, we had some casualties. This could have been me, it could have been anybody. After the war, I went back to college in a big way.

KP: Before that, back to the war, I am just curious. You did not want to talk about the war and you did not join any veterans organizations. When did you start becoming interested in your division's reunions and things?

JE: I'd say, maybe, within the last ten years, that's about it. All that time, I didn't go to a reunion. I just stayed away. Somehow or another, we got to a couple of them. My division originated, mostly soldiers from the east coast, and the first one was in Arlington, across from Washington. My son was working there for the federal government in fisheries, actually, and they lived near there, and we stayed with them, and went to the reunion there. That was nice. Then, another one we went to was in South Jersey, one of the places. This last one was in Charlotte, North Carolina. These were all within the last ten years. So, I've gotten interested. … That's the 100th Division Association. The actual division doesn't exist anymore, it's the association.

KP: No, I know, that is what you meant.

JE: I stayed with them. I sent my money in each year, and contributions and all, and I've had some contacts with people through them.

KP: Did you stay in touch, initially after the war, with anyone you served with? Did you exchange Christmas cards or anything?

JE: Well, the closest was a guy I served with, went through basic with, and I brought him home on our last leave, just before we went overseas, and he later married my sister, and they had six

kids.

KP: So, that was a long term thing.

JE: That's a long term thing. So, that's the closest. My sister has subsequently died, my younger sister, but, their kids are very prosperous, in high positions in their areas, mostly finance, actually.

KP: This sister and this romance, where was he from?

JE: He was from Detroit.

KP: That was not a likely romance, then.

JE: No, not at all.

KP: Now, this was a younger sister?

JE: I'm the oldest of eight in my family and she was next. She is Dolores, she's on the list there. She was a registered nurse. She was in the Nurse Cadet Corps during the war and all that. She raised a family. … She's got six of them.

KP: And, the friend you brought home, what was his name?

JE: His name was Gerald Madigan. I met him, and before I met my wife, I went out to his place, and I dated his sister. [laughs] We had a nice vacation there, north of Detroit, up in Michigan there. That didn't work out. Somewhere in there, I met my wife. Jerry's romance blossomed as a result of the war. That was a wartime romance. It was a little difficult though, you know. We'd get out, and, of course, he'd go back to his family. I saw the possibilities here, so, I took my sister on a trip out to visit him, and we stopped at Niagara Falls, my sister and I, and everyone thought we were newlyweds, and we just came there. We played along with it. After our trip to Detroit, the proposal came, and they got married, and they had a very happy marriage. They lived in South Bend, Indiana. That's where she died. It's been a few years now. He is remarried, a very nice lady. She's a widow. The kids are all over and the kids are doing beautifully, all top flight jobs with corporations. That's been very nice. I've also met other people, good friends. Some people I still correspond with, some of the people on some of these trips. A young lady who was our guide on the bus in Scotland when I was at school in England, I've kept in touch with her over the years. She's out in Wyoming now. She's featured in all the big parades, rides on some big pony all dressed up nicely. She's quite a gal. She knew the governor of the state and wanted me to come out and see her, but, that didn't work out either. [laughs] I've kept in touch with some of the men in the unit, too, over the years. I'm very active right at the moment in the fiftieth reunion of the Class of '48 at Rutgers.

KP: Now, you came to Rutgers. You had the GI Bill. Did you just assume you would come back to Rutgers or did you think of going elsewhere?

JE: I thought about going elsewhere, but, I thought highly of Rutgers, and I liked what I'd seen, and started to do here, and had such a tie here, so, I came back here, but, I was on an accelerated program, so I finished up in a couple of years work.

KP: So, you did not come back until September of ...

JE: I came back, well, wait a minute. I'm trying to remember.

KP: You got out of the service in March of '46 at Fort Dix. So, when did you start? Did you start in the summer?

JE: I think I started in the summer. I started in the summer. I was here in the summer of '46 and we had summer quarters, or something, I don't remember anymore, and then, I went right through to the end. I finished in June of '48. I had some credits. Oh, wait a minute, one summer, was it that summer or another, one summer I spent at the University of Wisconsin? It was either that or the next summer. I have to look at the records.

KP: But, you spent the summer there. Why?

JE: I just wanted to see another part of the US and I heard nice things about it. I had a dormitory right on a lake, a big lake there. That's where I did my fancy dancing.

KP: And, you got academic credit?

JE: And, I got academic credit, absolutely. I brought credits from Wisconsin, I brought credits from England back to Rutgers, and they accepted these things. I did a lot of work, I mean, it was academic work. That's where my friend in Detroit, his sister came to visit me in Wisconsin. We spent a couple of days and I showed her around. They thought a romance might start up, but, it didn't. Then, I went straight through, accelerated.

KP: But, you became quite a man about campus. You took part in a lot.

JE: Oh, yeah, I was extremely active on campus. Before I came down today, I wrote down a few things from the yearbook, if I can find it. The one thing that I got, just to list some of the activities, … I was elected to Cap and Skull Society, which was, they pick ten or a dozen in the graduating class with highest honors. It's a topflight thing. I was in Who's Who in Students. I was active in debating, varsity debating. We debated all over, including West Point. Radio debates, I was on. I was president of Tau Kappa Alpha, which was the honorary forensic fraternity. I was president there. I was a member of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity on campus. I was, at one point, vice-president, one year. I joined the Spanish Club, I was in the Newman Club. I was cross-country captain.

SC: Do you mind if I ask what was the Newman Club?

JE: The Newman Club was a Catholic club on campus. They sponsored social events, and so forth. It was a nice place to meet nice young ladies and girls meet fellows. That was nice. Cross-country, varsity track, and what else? a few other odds and ends activities, but, I was extremely active.

KP: Why so active, because a lot of GIs just got on with their studies?

JE: I just had to make up for lost time. … It was an idealistic feeling, but, I wanted to make a contribution, to do something. That's why, with the medics, ... I got into that. I don't know, I just enjoyed it. I was a Rhodes Scholar candidate. I went through interviews, went to Princeton for interviews and everything. I wasn't selected for that. It would have been interesting to go back to England. Something I got, the Irving S. Upson award. I don't know what that was.

KP: Bert Manhoff, when he went back, he also became very active. He was sort of told by the doctors, when he was discharged, that it would be good if you got really active when he went back to school, in school activities and school work. Did you have any sense of that, that you wanted to forget about the war by just getting so active, or was it different motivations?

JE: I wasn't aware of that. Maybe it was in the background, an escape from all of this. … Maybe, looking back, probing my psyche in those days, it could have been a factor. I just wanted to get into activities and benefit myself in the future. I just felt I lost time. I was supposed to be in school and, part of that time, I was in that trouble over there. I just wanted to do it. So, it worked out. Oh, another thing I got into here at Rutgers was Phi Beta Kappa.

KP: So, you were doing pretty well.

JE: Yeah. I gave the talk, the acceptance speech, at our formal induction into Phi Beta Kappa.

KP: I am curious, it is a standard question I ask of GI Bill people, but, one of them is there were all these GIs on campus, how often did you talk about the war?

JE: Very little.

KP: Which is understandable, having done this awhile, but, also, sort of surprising, because you all sort of dominated the campus.

JE: That's right. No, very little, there was no contact. Now, years later, I just received this award from the State of New Jersey, this Distinguished Service Medal. This was a fellow classmate in '48, who was not in my division, but, fought in some of the same areas, and got a Bronze Star. He was decorated a couple of years ago and he told me about it. So, he sent my name in to the state and I got this a few months ago, this award. A major general presented it, just a couple of months ago. Lousy pictures, but, it gives you the idea. This was up in Paramus and they tell what it's about here. I told some of my history here, but, he told me about it and we talked about combat things. A lot of this talk about combat came afterwards. Another case, I received a variety of medals in World War II and it ended up, basically, I got a Bronze Star

Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters. It was for valor and heroic achievement. The third one came fifty years after the war. When I was on the faculty at Ramapo College, a fellow faculty member who was also in the state assembly, Ben Mazur, had been a combat veteran in infantry in World War II himself. He heard that if you had a Combat Medic Badge, which was one of my honor badges, you would be eligible for a Bronze Star. It was a way for the military to make up for their lack of consideration for people at the lower levels, like private or PFC. Officers would get a lot of these things. So, they awarded a third Bronze Star for me and he pushed it through. He pushed it through then Representative Toricelli. Representative Toricelli presented it to me in his office in Hackensack. This was about, I don't know, ... three years, or so, ago. My wife and grandchildren were there. It was kind of nice, a third Bronze Star. … So, I had a list. I had the three Bronze Stars, the Combat Medic Badge, I had a Distinguished Unit Citation for my unit, and an Oak Leaf Cluster. That means that my unit got special, … I've got a write up on that here, too, from the War Department. That was something from that professor. He dug this out of the archives. This was from ... discussing what our division did around the city of Heilbronn on the Rhine River. So, I got that, and the usual World War II Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European campaign medal, and he got a lot of this for me, that was nice. So, it was contacts. We talked about the war at lunch time, he talked about his situation, I talked about mine. … So, in recent years, I've talked more about it.

KP: I am curious, because you have seen a lot. For example, Scott will be a doctor and it will probably take years before you see that.

SC: If at all.

KP: If at all. You saw in six months what some physicians do not see in sixty years.

JE: That's right.

KP: Yet, you were going to school with eighteen year olds who had just come from high school. I am curious, particularly in your fraternity, but, also, elsewhere, what the relationship was between the GI Bill students who had seen all this and the eighteen and nineteen year olds who had just come straight from high school?

JE: You're definitely more mature. I'll tell you, it really showed up in fraternity life, where there was a lot of horseplay, and there always has been. Some fraternities have had criminal activity. … In those years, I came back, and I was a member, and I didn't live in the fraternity house, because I felt like I could get more done living in a private home. I was too busy to participate. ... I went to parties. We were a more mature group then. We really were. What I saw when I came back from the war was a very mature group of students at ... Rutgers College. It struck me more so that what I've read in other places since, and so forth. They were there to learn and to accomplish things.

KP: Unfortunately, we have wanted to interview some people who were here at that time. We have interviewed Bart Klion.

JE: Yeah, I know Bart very well, he's a good friend.

KP: But, my father-in-law says, because he was in NYU in the later part of the GI Bill years, he made this off-handed comment that he was sort of intimidated by all the GI Bill people.

JE: Oh, really?

KP: Well, they were bigger often and ...

JE: Yeah, yeah.

KP: He knew they had been in combat and some of them acted like they had recently been in combat.

JE: I didn't experience that. I didn't have that at Rutgers. I had [the] GI Bill that I used at Rutgers. That was wonderful. I had enough left to go for graduate work at the Wharton School, the University of Pennsylvania. I got my MBA. There's where I looked for a school with prestige to add to my background. There, there were some veterans and some young people, pretty mature guys, that were selected to go there, and then, I went to New York University, Stern School. It took me seventeen years, because I was working full-time and I was raising a family. After some prodding, I got the thing done and I got my Ph.D. I got some awards in the process there, also. There, my counterparts were Ph.D. students, you know, very serious minded, and a lot of them were foreign students, a high percentage of foreigners getting advanced degrees. This is what you find more and more. I think even in Wharton School you'll find that. So, there wasn't any looking down on or looking up to, because you were there on the GI Bill.

KP: You abandoned your plans to become a doctor, even though you had gotten all this medical experience.

JE: Maybe it was too much too soon, or something. I don't know. It was always an idea. It was never a primary thought. Some of it was a way out of the just shooting, and sniping, and so forth, and being able to help people during the war, but, I'm not sure I really wanted to be a doctor, and I was unsure of myself. I came back to Rutgers, and the US government provided a battery of tests here on campus, and I spent a whole day taking exams. They found I would qualify in certain areas. Even then, I had great doubts. I wanted to make a kind of contribution where, maybe, I could have something to do in achieving peace, and avoiding the necessity for doctors on the front, and that sort of thing. So, I took it and I explored history as a possibility. I was interested in teaching that. They felt I could do it, but, pointed out the career goals. Then, I had the opportunity to work for, right after the Wharton School, Ford International, the International Division of Ford Motor, and I got involved in international things. It was very interesting. I had a mentor who was a former Columbia professor and that worked out well. So, I made a switch. I wrote a couple of articles that were widely published. I was quoted in the elite editorial of the *Wall Street Journal* one time for something I did, and these all …

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

KP: This continues an interview with James Essig on November 17, 1997 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and …

SC: Scott Ceresnak.

KP: You were saying you worked at Ford International and you wrote several pieces. Could you just summarize that again?

JE: Oh, boy, I don't think I've listed all this. I worked, it was close to five years, at Ford International, and I was thinking of possibly serving overseas and gaining experience. That didn't work out. The company, later, I was working on Park Avenue in New York, they later moved out to Michigan, the International Division. They left an export division in Jersey City. I went there and was there for a couple of years. I didn't like the work I was doing there, so, I moved out. In the process, then, I ... decided to stick to the business world and I had a job opportunity with Texaco. I worked with the Texas Company in the Chrysler Building in New York. I did international research, and I wrote pieces, and forecasts, and so forth. That didn't seem to be my thing. … At that point, I decided I wanted to go for a Ph.D. degree. I had my Masters', of course, then. It was not very feasible working with Texaco, so, I got over to Prudential in Newark, in the corporate office. I was hired there. Over there, they encouraged me, I got encouragement, and I was able to schedule my work. I was taking night courses at NYU, what used to be called the Graduate School of Business, in downtown Manhattan. You'd take the Path train from Newark to there. So, I was over there almost every night, taking courses, and then, of course, I took some at Washington Square. Before that, I had taken, after the war, some courses at Columbia University, some graduate work there, too. So, I finished up and wrote a dissertation in the finance area, on the financing on intermediate size firms, manufacturing companies. I felt my thesis was that companies can get financing locally, from local banks, from members of the family, when they're very small. They reach a point where they've got to have more funds than the family or the local bank can provide and it's at that point that many of them run into trouble. Many of them sell-off, disband, and so forth, and we had a division, or a group, in Prudential that made loans to these middle-sized businesses. So, I explored. I got permission, and I spent three years exploring files, late at night, and going through the records of how these companies financed themselves, and what we did. That was the basis for my dissertation. I just found and identified points at which they where able to get unsecured long-term financing, when they were first able to issue stock. It's very expensive, the flotation cost, a little company, and you've got to be a certain size, and so forth. I looked into that, a chapter on the importance of small business in promoting employment, and so forth. It was generalized, but, with that thesis explored, and they accepted that, NYU. I had topflight professors examine me. I was examined by them all. This went very well. I found this to be interesting. It sort of moved from economics to the international. My degree at the Wharton School was in Foreign Commerce. It was an MBA. So, I moved, now, to something more economics and finance related. My teaching started in economics, but, the demand in academia has been more for finance professors than for economics professors. I saw the light. I've been teaching ten years up at Ramapo in finance. Before that, two years, two full years, at Seton Hall University.

KP: I guess I wanted to back up to a point you made earlier about your idealism and how you wanted to prevent wars. One of the things we noticed was, in the readings of the old *Targums,* that there was a lot of interest in the United Nations. I think there was even a United Nations Ball here. Could you maybe reflect back on your thoughts about the United Nations and your reaction to it? You seem to have written some on that earlier.

JE: When I was at the Wharton School, I took my mainly business courses, and so forth, and theory of trade. You get into that, but, I did take there a course in international organizations. It was sort of a, I don't know, the law school people and others were taking. We really probed and we studied the UN, some parts of the United Nations. I did some research while I was at the Wharton School on this general subject. I found it fascinating. I haven't followed up on that type of work. ... It was part of my course offerings for my MBA. It included ... that part of international work in my training. My articles, I don't know, I guess the ones I've thought the most of were in *Challenge* magazine. I talked about the aid to developing countries, ways to promote growth in developing countries, and so forth, through trade, not aid. I gave illustrations, and I went about, and did personal interviews with a lot of companies in the New York area. What are they doing in this regard? So, this was published. This was picked up in an elite editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*. They liked what I had written and there I am. My boss called me one day and, "Hey, you're here in the *Wall Street Journal*!" [laughs] … I wrote another one or two. It got to *Challenge*. That was put out by New York University. It's still out now. It's been resurrected in recent years. It's a good little publication, every two or three months, or something. I published one in a Jesuit publication, America… and there were a couple of other major business related publications I've had big stories in. I'd only do this when I feel I had a real message to tell and I was trying to convert people to my way of thinking. We have a guy that's doing that currently. You may have heard, the election, Murray Sabin?

KP: Yes, yes.

JE: He's a guy I work with. I worked with him for ten years. Murray and I worked together in finance at Ramapo. I'm teaching a course next semester in securities and investments. Anyway, … my motive in writing was really because I felt I had a message. Having been through the war and all, I had a message I wanted to get out on this. It was picked up.

KP: I guess I am curious, because you worked for three different companies, you were in Ford long enough to make some observations.

JE: Oh, yeah.

KP: Could you maybe discuss the different corporate cultures, in particular Prudential? You got to a fairly high level.

JE: I did, yeah.

KP: Could you maybe observe the differences between the corporate cultures that you experienced and your observations as kind of a detached observer at times?

JE: Well, at Ford, I was very interested in what they were doing. They were, then, in the process of expanding production abroad, outside the country. Now, I had tours when I was with them of the production processes in Detroit. I went through Dearborn, Michigan, through the plant assembly. I went through Dearborn Village, the historical place there, and so forth. I got involved. For example, there was something about production, some relationship with Portugal, and I did some research in that. So, what I ended up doing a lot of the time there was writing a weekly bulletin summarizing articles in the US and foreign press that related to the general economy, and mainly pushing these free trade ideas, and so forth. These went to Henry Ford's office and others, topflight in the company. I knew enough Spanish, I haven't used it lately, but, I translated some articles, some Spanish articles. My boss, Jack Sundelson, who had been with the UN at one point, and had been on some mission in Europe, diplomatic, or something, he was the professor who originally taught at Columbia. He's gone now. He did the German and some others. He did this. This was circulated very widely. That was there. The culture was fine. I liked what I saw and I hung in there for five years, although I got sort of sidetracked.

KP: It sounds like if they had not moved to Detroit you might ...

JE: I might have stayed, right.

KP: You saw promise of promotion?

JE: Right, exactly. It was a very routine operation in Hoboken. The offices were in, like, a warehouse building. I was in an office with two heavy smokers, and I didn't smoke, and I was going crazy. I set up a fan outside the door, and … I moved out of there. And, Texaco, I don't know, I don't want to say anything adverse, but, I didn't like the culture I saw so much at Texaco. … We had a good office and my immediate bosses were fine. It just didn't compare with what I had originally found at Ford.

KP: In what way? More bureaucratic?

JE: It was bureaucratic. I didn't see the opportunities, for example, for promotion. … I was interested in doing advanced work in academia. My boss at Ford was very much in favor of that and helped me. I started at Columbia where he had been. They didn't have enough of a night program. I couldn't continue there, and then, continue working. They were not so receptive to that at Texaco. It was just a different, I don't know, atmosphere. ... I discussed this with Prudential. We had a couple topflight guys. We had a guy from McGraw-Hill, Gordon McKinley, was the head economist, and then, Bill Freund. You've heard of Bill Freund, I guess. Bill was the chief economist, and then, he later went on to be the chief economic guy at the stock exchange. He's now at Pace University, heading some kind of graduate program, semi-retired. I had a couple of other people afterwards that I didn't think as highly of. I found that worked in line. They supported my going ahead and my studies.

KP: People have told me that at Prudential, it is very paternalistic.

JE: Oh, yes. One thing that I noticed was that people would go to Prudential and you could be there for life if you do a reasonable job. Just to give you an illustration of how it got, I sat in the dining room with the middle-management sort of area all the years I was at Prudential. We sat in the dining room and we were assigned to particular tables. One time, I made the mistake of sitting in the chair occupied by someone who had been there longer than me. It's just a spot in the dining room at the same table, but, where he normally sat. What a, oh, God, what wrath I stirred up by doing that. This was this sort of thing. This persisted a little bit in other areas. There were some other problems of that sort. That was at Prudential. I saw a distinct change in the culture, though, when I was still there. Prudential began to move into the active stock market area. They now have, it used to be Prudential-Bache, ... Prudential Securities. With that, you found people were coming and going. Long time employees who had put in their years were let go. They brought in others. ... There was much more turnover. It was more of a Wall Street thing, where I know economists who've been with a half a dozen firms. They move around. There wasn't the tie, the long-term tie to the company and its tradition, like the early days. It had changed, it had definitely changed.

KP: I have interviewed a number of Prudential people and they have talked about paternalism and people like yourself who had stayed there from their first job, and then, thirty or forty years later, they would be higher.

JE: That's the way it was, it's true. Major, major, major change in the setup there.

KP: You had been in three different corporations, and then, you had a second major career which was teaching.

JE: That's true. It's a second major career.

KP: What prompted you to teach?

JE: I'd always sort of wanted to get into this sort of thing. I had been teaching, and I think this is a good thing for a person who is in business who wants to make a switch, is to do adjunct teaching. I had been doing it. I started it quite a few years ago at Fairleigh-Dickinson Graduate School. I designed a couple of courses. History was one of them, American Economic History. I did that. I enjoyed it, and I even met some people, years later, that were in my classes, and they said how they enjoyed it, and so forth. It was amazing. I met someone on a bus one time. I had in mind retiring before the usual sixty-five, and then, things began to tighten up at Prudential. It went through this cultural change. We got a new, young guy who was running the shop who was a monetarist and I didn't agree with half of his views. There were a lot of people leaving the company. I decided, "I'm going to take early retirement." So, I left at twenty-eight years. Thirty, you get the full works. So, I had twenty-eight. I decided to go, and I got good benefits, and excellent pension, and so forth. I looked around, and, in the last year, I started teaching at Seton Hall. I was there working at Prudential and working full-time at Seton Hall for the last year. I was a busy guy. So, I enjoyed doing that. I got my taste of being a professor, and being on committees, and that kind of stuff. Then, I switched to Ramapo. They had some problems at Seton Hall, things I didn't like going on. I looked into different schools. I had opportunities

across the river in New York, the College of Insurance. I had opportunities at Fairleigh and other places. I looked at Ramapo and, even though, I started as an assistant professor, I liked the place, I liked the people and the setting. That was a wise decision. That school has done very, very well. It's highly respected around the country now, liberal arts. Got a really forward looking guy, Bob Scott is president. I've known him quite closely. I've been there, I started as an assistant. Old patterns don't change. Up there, the Business School was overwhelmed by the non-business part of the school. There are other schools there. There was an arts and sciences, a school with sciences, and another one. ... They seemed to have the control over promotions and business came in a little later. I got the first promotion to associate professor in the Business School there in fourteen years at Ramapo, first one. I pushed it and I got it. I had written a couple of things, and they liked what I was doing, and I got it. Now, there have been some other promotions and they've gone to full professors. A lot of people have been there twenty-five years now. So, that's what I've been doing. I retired formally September 1, 1996, but, I didn't want to quit entirely, so, I've been teaching as a part-timer. It's always a different course. They needed someone for Corporate Finance. Everybody's got to take that. I had thirty-two people in the class. Next year, it's Capital Formation, a senior level course that I designed. This semester right now, it's Corporate Finance II, where we go a little more deeply into some areas. I've got a class of eighteen right now. Just today, I spoke with Murray Sabin, who's heading up that area, and I'll be teaching Securities and Investment, which is a very popular course. I'll probably be up to thirty again. ... Also, in addition to doing that, I got some awards as a cooperative education advisor. Students can go out on a job and gain college credits. They get regular pay on the job and they can get either three credits or six credits a semester. We allow up to eighteen credits. I have four students this semester. I've also taken over a couple of students who've applied for special studies. So, I'm keeping busy. I've got that, and then, I'm also on the Ramapo Business Network Committee, which brings in top-level speakers about six times a year. I'm on the planning committee for that. We've had heads of corporations, a couple of top people from Washington. We've had Tom Kean and Bill Bradley. We've had former Governor Florio. We attract an audience of one hundred and fifty business leaders in the area, and so forth. I'm going to a meeting Thursday, a planning session, and I've got a couple more names, somebody from the Federal Reserve Bank in New York. Also, somebody who's written up in the *Star Ledger* with AT&T. He's an economist that I personally know. I'll be suggesting some names. So, I'm doing that sort of thing, and then, of course, here at Rutgers, I'm on the Fiftieth Reunion Committee. Thursday, I'll be here again, in the Winants Hall, for a Finance Committee for the Class of '48. I'm serving on that. There's a meeting at the Rutgers Club next Monday night, planning. I don't know if I'll come. It gets to be a point, it's a lot of driving here.

KP: Oh, no, you have a drive.

JE: I have a drive. It's a little much. These are some of the current activities.

KP: I am just curious, so, I do not forget to ask, how did you meet your wife?

JE: Oh, yes. I was on, you know, this Newman Club I talked about. They have an alumni group that was based in New York City. I used to go. Occasionally, they would have dances and things. So, they had a boat ride on the Hudson River. I had another girl along on this one. We

went up. I went in the swimming pool at Bear Mountain and she didn't want to go in. I met this other young lady in the pool and it happened to be my wife's sister, younger sister, was there that day. I saw this very attractive lady sitting on the boat, and I just wanted to say hello to her, meet her. She said, "Well, that's my sister." So, I arranged, anyway, to follow up and to meet her. I took the other girl home, of course. We had dates. My wife lived in Edgewater and I was living in Dover. So, I'd drive the forty miles, come see her, and take her out. I don't know, I came back, and I hadn't seen any women overseas that I was especially interested in. I had about thirty pictures on my wall of different people after the war. There was somebody else from the University of Michigan that worked at Ford that I found rather interesting. ... But, anyway, just by dating, I decided that this was going to be my lady. My wife, Bea, is a graduate of Columbia University. She is an occupational therapist. She has a rating. While we've been raising a family, she's been working. She worked, first, with the Veterans Administration and a couple of places in New York, and then, Holy Name Hospital in Teaneck.

SC: That is where I was born.

JE: Were you, Holy Name? All of my kids were born there. That's interesting. Bea's been there and she left about ten years ago. She retired. The conditions there for the employees were not the greatest.. ... Now, she is very, very active in all sorts of things. She's president of the Women's Club in Dumont. That's one activity. She's been working for years on English as a Second Language. We've gotten to know some foreign people from Japan, and other places, and we're very friendly now, gotten to know each other over the years. She's worked with senior groups in Teaneck and other towns. She's been very active, plus, ten grandchildren. She went out, twice in the last month, to our one daughter in Clinton, New Jersey, who has three children, a little baby girl now, and two boys. We're very close relations with our six children. The grandchildren seem to appreciate our efforts. We keep busy.

KP: A lot of your kids attended Rutgers.

JE: Yeah, I should make that point while we are here.

KP: Yeah, you have had a lot and some at Cook and Douglas.

JE: We have six children and five of the six have graduated from Rutgers University. Five of our six children have graduated from Rutgers University.

KP: Only one did not?

JE: Only one, and that's ... Jeanne, she moved out to California. She took courses at University of California at Irvine. She's within a course or two of graduation. I'm trying to get her to finish it and get her degree. She's worked with the State of California for at least ten or twelve years. She's in the Park Service. She's, now, if you ever go to Sacramento, and you want to take a tour, she's in charge of the women who lead the tours and things like that. ... She started school down at Stockton State, the year they started, then, made the switch out to California. She's the only one. My kids are all mostly in the science area. The next one on the list, Ron, Rutgers, Cook

College. He got to the University of Massachusetts. He's got a Masters' in fisheries. He's even done some work beyond. Then, you go down and Theresa was Douglass. She, I guess, ... had another area, but, she had ended up taking some special work, teaching at the early childhood level. She's done a lot of that. She's got a little business of her own that she operates from her home. She's got four kids. She's an active one. I'm losing track here, she's got four. She keeps busy. Business, plus, the four kids. She's down in South Jersey. Ron is one son. He's now a marine biologist working for the federal government in Amhearst, Massachusetts. They have one son. Then, you go down to the next daughter. She's a graduate of Cook College. She's almost, I'm trying to give her a push, too, to try and finish her Masters' in food science at Cook. She's there at Cook, and then, Denise, the one who has the two boys and new girl, was a horticulture major, from Cook. She doesn't have a formal outside job at the moment, but, she does, really. She's very active at quilting, won some state and national awards, and works part-time in a little store up there in Clinton, and then, finally, Ken, the youngest, just got married in May. He's a graduate from Cook in Chemistry, has a Masters' from Fairleigh Dickinson in business. Again, here, it is finances. We didn't have the money to send them to the expensive places. We could not get scholarships for some of these. I'm in that income level where I'm a little too high to get the aid and not, you know. ... We've liked the background and we've been down here for a lot of events, obviously. That's interesting, I'm glad you reminded me of that.

KP: It is striking, because of the number of children you did in fact send to Rutgers. You have a higher proportion than many.

JE: I think that's probably true, yes. I've appreciated my time here, and I'm willing to work with our class, and everything. I've really enjoyed it and I feel I've gained from it. We're trying, now, with our class reunion, to have an interesting program. I'm on the finance side. I've agreed to help out and call some people. I've got one coming to the luncheon on Thursday, so, I'd better be there, come down again.

KP: You were also on the Dumont Board of Ed.

JE: Oh, yes, another part. I was on the Board for ten years.

KP: How did that come about?

JE: I don't know. All our kids went to the public school system in Dumont after their parochial grade school. The younger ones went right through the public school system. They all went to Dumont High. We were always active in the school system, and I thought highly of it, and I thought this was one way I could, perhaps, repay. I did that until I started teaching full-time. Then, it took too much time. The meetings were in the evenings and they'd go on. They were really involved. I was, later, elected president the last two years. You can't repeat after two years. I figured that was a good time to end it, to retire. I put in ten years on the Board of Ed in Dumont. It was interesting, handing diplomas to people I know, and am close to, and so forth. That was nice, a nice feature. We had some interesting times. It was really a learning experience. You're dealing with all kinds of people. You're dealing with the finance side, accountants, lawyers, and the teaching staff. I was involved in negotiations. It's a very, very

demanding job in any town, the Board of Ed.

KP: And, it is completely unpaid.

JE: Unpaid, completely. The only thing we got was an annual board meeting down in Atlantic City. You'd get a couple of days down there and they'd pay for it, but, that was it. It was unpaid. I was asked to run for the town mayor, but, we didn't have a manager, at the time, and I was trying to do these other things. You can't do everything, so, I said, "No." Now, I'm doing some part-time teaching and am active at some things at Ramapo.

KP: And church.

JE: And church, I've continued to be active there, and my activity, when I'm not there, is basically surf-fishing. I mentioned fishing earlier, well, mine is mostly ocean, but, from the beach. ... As a matter-of-fact, I did something one night. I had a cold and everything. My son said he's taking a day off, he had a day last week on Wednesday. We went down, I met him on the beach down in Point Pleasant, one of the beaches there, and we fished. That was nice. I don't get a chance to do that very often, now. We each got striped bass and some other fish. It was not a good day, basically, but, I just enjoyed being with him. I got a phone call from him, yesterday. He was down another day he had time off. It just worked out he had a vacation day. He went down and tried a couple of places. He went to where we were, and he hit the tide right, and he caught forty striped bass. They were up to twenty-five inches. They have to be twenty-eight to keep. He was worn out, he said, pulling them in. They're a battling fish. This is that, plus, a garden at home, picking apples. They're all picked now, everything's down.

KP: I am curious, because you have mentioned how you really did not want to see another war.

JE: That's right, that's right.

KP: What were your reactions, then, to Korea and Vietnam?

JE: Well, I was very upset, what was it? Korea, when, who was it? MacArthur wanted to push up to the China border there. I was very upset enough to write a letter to the paper. It was published in several papers against that sort of thing, feeling that we should resolve this somehow. I'm not against the fighting we were doing, but, let's not extend it up, and that sort of thing. So, it was published, and I got some calls, and people applauded me, and so forth. Vietnam, I thought was just a botched up mess. It was handled wrong. That upset me enormously.

KP: Even at the time?

JE: Yeah, even then, I thought we were doing things we shouldn't be doing. It just wasn't handled properly. Before that, we almost had a conflict with Russia in the Cuba thing. That was just a mess. … The Cubans wanted to invade and throw out Castro, and then, at the last minute, they didn't get any support from our then President. I think it was Kennedy in that one. I don't

know. The problem is, people make the decisions and they don't do the fighting. If the people who made the decisions did the fighting, some of the things we did in Vietnam, they might have thought twice about some of the activities. It's just a personal feeling on my part. World War II, we all felt we had to. Hitler was such a menace, and had done so many vile things, and it just cried out. We should have gotten in sooner in that one. This current thing in Iraq now, I don't know. We should have gotten rid of the head guy there in the beginning. That was probably a mistake. I don't know whether going in really is going to solve the problem. I can see the need for some of this. You've got to be resolute and you can't just be wishy-washy. You've got to have strong armed forces, but, at the same time, my instinct, having been through it all, is that I'm generally opposed to war. I'm very worried if my kids are getting involved in this sort of thing.

KP: It sounds like you really did not want your son to serve in Vietnam.

JE: No, I did not. No. We didn't have to take any actions or anything, but, no, I would have been very upset if he had had to go off for that. I would have been very upset. You learn from experience, I guess. I don't know if there's anything else I can tell you. This was a nice honor, this New Jersey thing. This was what they gave me. Did I give you a copy of that?

KP: Yes, you did. I thought that was very nicely done.

JE: They did a nice job on that. … Oh, here's a picture of me, in those days. I must have had this done in basic, or something. I had my name on the bottom. I must have sent it to my parents or somebody.

KP: I guess one of the things that I am struck by about your career in business is that, particularly in the beginning part of your career, you were really, particularly at Ford, it was really American business expansion. We had been strong before the war, but, the real sense of expansion, and, I guess, optimism, and you could really, at times, call it arrogance ...

JE: That's right.

KP: Could you maybe reflect on that, and the economic field, and how that changed significantly from the 40s, and your clash with the "monetarists"?

JE: As I say, I was involved more in the economic advice there, on trying to make some understanding out of all the things that were emerging in the world economies. So, we would write digests of articles in foreign publications on economic trends that might have some bearing on Ford. I found that extremely valuable. I didn't get into the economics, the actual decision making. Do you put a plant here, do you do this? There are some economic concepts involved in that. I was looking at the general world, economic and political situation. I really enjoyed that work. I enjoyed doing that. Another thing that I got involved with in economics was, I was elected president of the National Association of Business Economists, the New Jersey Chapter. There's an article just a few days ago in the *Star Ledger*, a big feature story. The president, former president of the national, … he followed me as president of the local chapter. His name is

Mark Dadd. He's a top economist with AT&T. Mark went on to become the national president. They changed the name. It's the National Association for Business Economics. The idea being that this is not just economist things, we write all their sayings, and computer language, and mathematical terms, but, this is how this subject is used in business firms. He's making that point. It was made in that article. It was very nice. We were in that area when I was with Ford. I was with a guy who had served overseas. It was partially in the non-business sense in some of the European countries. Well-informed in French and German, he knew the whole story. I learned from him. He was a professor from Columbia. I enjoyed it. There was a quite different culture when I made the switch down to Texaco. My work there became more domestic.

KP: And, the same at Prudential?

JE: Prudential I found very good in many respects. We got involved there in some major domestic issues. For example, the needs of the aging and health. I published an article, it was widely published, on this problem. When Greenspan revised Social Security, I was head of the committee that worked over Social Security. I had a few points of that. I'm interested in these national issues when the company is involved in it. I met Greenspan personally, from Prudential, before he went to Washington. He was in the Townsend-Greenspan Company and he was a consultant. He came in and he spoke to a small group of us, some of our top officers. We sat down together and we had him in for a day, for a big session, with some outsiders in. I used to see him at some meetings in downtown New York, in an economic group. I'd run into him, occasionally. I saw him in Washington and he knew me, although we hadn't had any real close working relationship. I met a few very prominent people like that over the years.

---------- END OF TAPE THREE SIDE ONE, ----------

JE: I think where you work, your culture, your attitude, you bring certain attitudes to the job, and so forth. So, now, my influence is on the students I have, but, I was very impressed when I played this video the other night of our reception in this French town and they heard a little bit. I fast-forwarded in places. They got a good feel, a sensing of what it was like and that we were appreciated. A little bit of history in that, some history lessons in that.

KP: Anything else that we forgot to ask you?

JE: Boy, we've covered the area pretty well. I threw things here, just in case. I even brought this along. I think what you're doing is excellent. Bart is on the committee, the Class of '48, of course. He writes the column for the publication, and our class notes, and things. He told me about it. I was very impressed. I think this is great. We were the class. We came back …

KP: No, you were in that ...

JE: We were in that area, yeah. We're there. I think it's a fine idea. It's a once in a lifetime thing. It was a major, major war. Unlike Korea, especially unlike Vietnam, I think there's an approval for what we did there.

KP: Is there any movie or novel that accurately reflects what you experienced in combat?

JE: I may have seen something along the way. ...

KP: But, nothing sticks out?

JE: Nothing sticks out, no In my case, it was a prolonged period, over a six month period. There were brief periods when we didn't have combat, but, it was pretty steady and constantly moving. I couldn't even keep track of all the towns and the cities we were in. I was looking at my records here, just to try and trace some of this. It is very difficult. No, I don't know of anything that. … For an extended period, you could have one incident, and so forth, and write about it, but, to be in something for an extended period is quite another matter. I'm just happy I survived. I guess I had no physical ailment. I may have, who knows, maybe mentally it bothered me, and I didn't want to do anything for years. I'm just very thankful that I was able to come back, and I came back, and I said, "Gee, I've got to make this worthwhile," so, I plunged into Rutgers.

KP: Well, thank you very much, we really appreciate it.

JE: Sure thing. I've enjoyed talking with you and I appreciate what you're doing.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------
Reviewed by Scott Ceresnak ?/99
Reviewed by Lynn Marley ?/99
Reviewed by James Essig 7/99
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/6/99
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 9/11/99