

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH SIDNEY GRANETZ

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Sidney Granetz on June 30, 2005 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and

Peter Asch: Peter Asch.

SI: Mr. Granetz, thank you very much for being here today.

Sidney Granetz: You're welcome.

PA: Let's start off with the first question of when and where were you born?

SG: I believe I was born here in New Brunswick. My mother lived at 123 Somerset Street, before she was married, and my dad lived in the town of Raritan, which is about fifteen miles away. She was a legal secretary and my dad worked in a haberdashery. I spent the first part of my life actually in Raritan, which was where my parents moved to when they got married, which was a year before I was born, in 1927. From there my dad, while working in the haberdashery business, picked up selling Atwater Kent Majestic Radio, which goes back long before you boys' time. He would sell it out of a Model T Ford to a number of people. They, in time, said to him that they wanted to be comfortable listening to the radio and he decided to go into furniture, which was the business that we spent most of our life in; that's how we got started with it actually. I spent my grammar school years in the Raritan School system, up through eighth grade, and there was no high school in Raritan, so I was accepted at Somerville High School in 1944, and I spent four years there. My dad had, by that time, established a radio store and then a furniture store and I was working in the furniture store after hours. After the four years there, I had applied to a number of colleges and I was accepted here at Rutgers. So I was here from 1944 to 1948 pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering.

SI: Is there any immigration history in your family?

SG: My dad was born here; my mother was born in Budapest. Obviously, her parents [were] also, I assume, born there and they moved to New Brunswick. Whether that was the first house, I know it was the last house, that they had, at Somerset Street.

PA: What did your mother's family do for a living?

SG: My grandmother was, I think, just a home wife. ... My grandfather, I'm not sure of, to tell you the truth. [laughter] It was not a business; he was not a professional man, he was a common laborer I would assume. From there, I spent the next four years here at Rutgers. I went into ROTC, primarily to avoid being drafted at that time, and also at that time there were only about two hundred civilians on campus, the rest of them were all Army troops. ... [I] graduated from here in 1948. I think I received my diploma in one hand and my orders from ROTC in the other hand. [laughter] ... I spent a tour in Guam, and came back. I was back about four or five months and they recalled me, again, to go to Korea, and that's where I ended my military career, so to speak. As I often said, "they were in a hurry to get me there. They flew me over, but bringing me home was thirty-one days on board a ship." [laughter]

SI: Could we go back and cover some particulars?

SG: Go ahead, because, basically that covers the extremes, [laughter] or the limits of the area.

SI: Was your mother's family part of the Hungarian community in New Brunswick?

SG: Must have been ... yes, definitely.

SI: What do you remember about Raritan Township?

SG: Raritan Borough. Raritan Township is the Flemington area. This is Raritan Borough. Basically, one of the things I remember, and it's funny, is they were devoted Yankees fans, ... and when Joe DiMaggio would strike out, they would wear black armbands. [laughter] It was a sad day as far as the town of Raritan was concerned.

PA: What are your memories of Somerville High School?

SG: Not too much, because I was transient, I didn't live in Somerville and I couldn't spend much time with the kids, with my classmates primarily, because I had to, first of all, go to work and, secondly, I had to transport myself, walking, back and forth to Raritan, which was about a mile and a half away at the time. ... Very little recollection of Somerville High School *per se*.

PA: Any memories of Pearl Harbor?

SG: Well, it was with shock, obviously. It was something that [was] completely unexpected and it kind of sent things into turmoil. I know a number of the students at the high school left school to join the army, but other than that, no. The recollection is very, very vague. One of the things that is short with me, is that my memory doesn't go back. I can't recall things. My wife ... drives me crazy because she starts picking up things, but I can't. [laughter]

SI: You spent a lot of time in your father's store growing up.

SG: Yes, the afternoons and weekends I spent working.

SI: Do you know if the Great Depression had a large effect on your father?

SG: Well, it wasn't so much of a big factor for him as it was for his father, my grandfather, who lost his fortunes twice in the Depressions. Dad was a self-made man. He picked up, as I said, the radio business and started with that, and that was in 1933. Then he built it up from there, moving to bigger quarters and adding furniture, and we had jewelry and we had carpeting, and we had almost everything. The advent of that, actually, was [that] we had two stores on Main Street in Somerville, and the town of Somerville wanted to redevelop an area, and the area that they selected included our store. We tried to keep our store there, with the Borough, but they said, "You either buy the whole sixteen acres or you get out of town," and they, essentially, threw us out of Somerville. [laughter] So we built a shopping center on [Route] 206 in Raritan, and they continued business there until 1985, or somewhere in there.

SI: What did your family think of Franklin Roosevelt?

SG: They adored him. They adored Roosevelt, and, again, we never got into politics to that extent. It was something that they avoided and I've avoided as well.

SI: That is interesting because I have heard small business owners didn't particularly like Roosevelt because of his policies.

SG: Because of some of his policies, again, as I say they never tried to get involved in it. They would circumvent it so that they didn't make any decisions one way or the other, but they did support Roosevelt.

SI: Before Pearl Harbor, did you know anything about what was happening overseas, in Europe or Asia?

SG: Basically just what was in the news reports. I had no other contact other than that source of information.

PA: How about your children? Do you have any children?

SG: Oh, yes. I have four children. My oldest is Robert, [he] is a nuclear physicist at MIT. He graduated number one in his class. He made [an] application only to MIT, for early admittance, and he was accepted, and he's been there ever since. He's still there. [laughter] He's working on nuclear fusion. I don't know whether you saw the news report last night about what they called a (Tokomak?), that in essence is supposed to produce the cheapest energy available, freely, and duplicate the energy of the sun. They're going to put a plant up in France. It was just announced last night. He's working on it up in Massachusetts, up at MIT, and they have a branch here at Princeton, and there's also a branch in California, UCLA. My second son, Marc, also graduated first in his class, went to Harvard and he now is the global director of mergers and acquisitions for First Boston, Credit Suisse, worldwide. He's doing very well. My daughter went to Clark University, and unfortunately developed MS, and she passed away here in '94 at the age of 36, having been subjected to a horrible life, as far as I'm concerned, for almost twelve years suffering. She couldn't move anything but her eyes. And my youngest, David, he had his own business for a while and then it was bought out by another firm, [in] the printing business, premiums, e.g., making labels and name cards and things like that, [that] people hand out or give out, plus a lot of other advertising material. He's down in Maryland. Marc is in Connecticut, and Robert is in Boston. [laughter] He refuses to leave there.

SI: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

SG: I had two brothers, yes, one of them obviously as I was telling you before, I bumped into him in Korea. My brother, Alan, the youngest brother, [is] presently here with us in Somerville, and the other brother [is] Lester, the one that I ran into in Korea. Les went to Tulane University and Alan went to American University. Les is deceased.

PA: Were you the oldest?

SG: I was the oldest, yes. I was the one who was supposed to set the example for all of them.
[laughter]

SI: It seems like your parents encouraged all of you to go to college.

SG: Without a doubt. Yes, without a doubt. They said there was no future, unless you went to college. You had to have the extra training that was necessary.

PA: Did you have prior interest in engineering?

SG: No, not specifically. I love to build the Heath kits, and I love to play with model trains. So it was a little electrical basis in there, but really nothing other than I'm handy with tools, and I just thought that the engineering would be the better bet. I'm not a reader so to speak. I can't sit down and read books, I get fidgety, so I always have to have something, like hands-on things to do.

PA: Did you plan to go into engineering, or was it a plan to always, to stay with the family?

SG: I had planned to go into engineering, yes. The unfortunate part is, that after spending five years in the service, the industry was so far ahead of me, I forgot I'd have to go back to school and I said, "Forget it," and I stepped into the business with my dad and I ended the business.

SI: The tape was paused and Sue Yousif is now joining the interview.

PA: I was talking to some engineering students from the '30s, and before World War II, and they were encouraged not to go engineering because of their Jewish background. Did you run into that?

SG: No. No, I didn't run into it at all.

SI: You came at a time, a very interesting time, to the university, at the end of World War II; they had a lot of returning veterans. How do you think that affected your education?

SG: I don't think it affected it at all actually. I was in my own little world, actually, and the subject matter required constant attention and study and I got involved in sports to a degree. I was on the swimming team with I think Coach (Riley?). I was on the Crew; I think that was with Logg.

SI: Chuck Logg?

SG: Yes, and I was in track, throwing the javelin for, well, I don't remember who the coach was.
[laughter] But with those activities and, again I would go home weekends and work, so I didn't have much time to commiserate with the rest of them here. [laughter]

SI: Had you considered any other school?

SG: No. It was a matter of finances to a degree. I'd gotten a scholarship for some assistance here and it was a major determining factor. I didn't even apply to some of the others.

PA: You lived on campus your first two years?

SG: I lived on campus all four years. Yes, I started out in Winants Hall and then Ford Hall and then I joined a fraternity, which was Phi Epsilon Phi, and they were living across the street from Ford Hall in what I call the Delta House. ... Then from there they moved to 11 Mine Street and those were the places that I bedded down so to speak and studied.

PA: Was Greek life a major component of Rutgers at that time?

SG: Was what?

PA: Greek life, fraternity life?

SG: Well, again, I think it was to a majority of them, but to me I was home working and studying at night, so I didn't have much time for [it]. ... I didn't even go on a pledge trip or anything else because I couldn't.

PA: It was just a place to study.

SG: Yes, it was just a place to stay.

SI: What was that first year like with the ASTP on campus?

SG: Ass trap, that's what we called them. [laughter]

SI: Were they in classes with you?

SG: They were in classes with us. ... Some of them had an attitude where, "You kids are sitting here [at] a desk and we're getting ready to go to war," that type of thing, which bothered me a bit. But, as far as studies, as far as the curriculum and the like, it didn't interfere. You just knew that you were a minority on campus, because they were the great majority at that time.

SI: Were there limited opportunities on campus during the war for classes or activities?

SG: Not that I was aware of. ... The sports, as I said, I got into, but the classes were pretty much set. They gave you a schedule of what you had to do and [you] just went about doing it.

SI: Could you only live in Winants?

SG: No, no, there were other options, but, again, that was the first thing I think that came along. ... I didn't want to live off campus. I wanted to try and get some campus life, because I knew I was going to be going home every weekend.

PA: When you did ROTC was that when you first got involved with the Signal Corps?

SG: ... Well, I think ROTC was just the basic. Signal Corps came on assignment, and I assumed their assignment was based on the fact that I was pursuing electrical engineering, and I had knowledge with Morse code. I had knowledge with cameras and I'd done some minor radio work. So I would assume that that was the guiding light as far as they were concerned, directed.

SI: Was all that experience through working at your father's store?

SG: Yes, part of it was, because we had a radio shop and furniture. [laughter] I think I can still remember the first televisions that came out with a round tube. ... We had one of the first ones in the area, and we had people coming into the store to sit down and look at the TV and see what was going on. We had a maintenance man, because we sold appliances as well, and he was a crackerjack. He knew his onions about the mechanics and the workings, and he did some radio repair work, and I used to do some with him and that's where I got part of it.

PA: Did you know that upon graduation that you'd be ordered for a tour?

SG: Yes, I was aware of that. But, as I said, I used that as a vehicle to avoid being drafted out of college, because I was then eligible for the draft.

SI: Before the atom bomb was dropped, did you see yourself going into World War II at some point?

SG: I didn't see myself going into World War II, no.

SI: You thought the war was going to end before you [entered].

SG: Yes. [That] was my impression that it would be.

SI: Just to ask a few more questions about the World War II era. Do you remember if rationing affected your life at all?

SG: Well, rationing had to affect almost everybody's life. You were limited in the certain things, you had to have the stamps in order to buy certain merchandise, but as to affecting quality of life to my way of thinking, no. It was just one of those things you had to endure.

SI: Did it affect your father's business at all?

SG: No, no, the furniture business and the appliances, there were no restrictions. Gas was the big thing. [laughter]

PA: Did you have any family members in World War II?

SG: Yes, I had an uncle, a dentist, Dr. Abraham Granetz, who passed away at Walter Reed Hospital of some disease which I'm not sure of. He served for about three years.

PA: As a dentist?

SG: I would assume as a dentist in service, yes.

PA: You indicated on your pre-interview survey that you had two uncles that were involved in the military, was the other one in Korea with you, or was it World War I?

SG: Well, another uncle was in World War I. What he was or did, I don't know. I happened to find the papers. He passed away at a 101 and I was the executor for the estate, so I had to go through his belongings and I ran into his army uniform and ran into some papers.

PA: The World War I veterans, did they ever want to talk about their experiences?

SG: No. No, never even mentioned them.

SI: Do you remember following the news of the war?

SG: Oh, yes. I remember the fact that we did, but when you get into details on it I wouldn't remember what it was. I can see headlines, like seeing big pictures on the front pages of the papers here and on the radio. But other than that, details will just not stay with me. [laughter]

SI: One of the things we're curious about is, as a teenager and then a college student, what kind of presence did it have in your life as a person on the home front?

SG: Merely the fact that I knew I was going to have to go and I was going to try and prepare myself the best way I could to do it. ... That's why I took ROTC, to get the training and go in as an officer rather than an enlisted man, and utilize what knowledge I'd been able to accumulate to serve.

SI: Do you remember your commissioning ceremony at all?

SG: No, not at all.

PA: So after you graduated you were initially sent to Guam?

SG: I was sent to Guam, yes, [I] spent I'd say about nine or ten months there and, again, that is completely gone from my mind.

PA: Do you know what you were doing?

SG: I don't remember what I was doing, I don't remember the officer in charge, I don't even remember ... I think Agana is the capital of Guam and that's about all I remember. [laughter] If I want to forget something I can do it very quickly.

SI: When your tour was over, were you discharged or where were you stationed?

SG: I was stationed at Fort Monmouth and my wife joined me there. We spent six, seven months there, and then I was recalled and, as I said before, they flew me to Korea. They were in a hurry to get me there. [laughter]

PA: Before we go to Korea I want to ask about your wife. Where did you meet?

SG: We met here at Rutgers. She was an NJC girl and that's Douglass in today's world. I can remember the fraternity got a call that one of the girl's friend's was having a party. It was on a Sunday night, which is when I came back from being home, and a couple of the boys said, "Look, we're going over to a party, you want to join us?" I said, "Yes," and I did and I met a young lady who impressed me, long flowing hair, and she was relatively tall compared to me, and I carried her phonograph home that night. [laughter] She lived about three blocks away on the other side of Livingston Avenue. After that, we started dating and it just continued. We married February 22, 1951, which was just before I was going. ... Well, when we learned that I was going to be shipping out to Korea, we got married. The date is of import to us because in the furniture business we would run sales, and my dad had a pet sale of Washington's Birthday sales. ... Business was such that you are open most nights, as long as you could be open, or if somebody wanted to buy something you were open, and I said to my wife, "Sharon," I said, "we're going to get married on February 22nd because that's Washington's Birthday and everything closes, it's a holiday." Well, it didn't stay a holiday long with my dad because he started warehouse sales on Washington's Birthday. [laughter] So I was again working when I thought I'd be off. Anyway, I think it was June or July of '51 that I was recalled, to go back in the service in Korea.

PA: When you were in Fort Monmouth, had she lived there?

SG: We both lived nearby in Red Bank. Sharon taught school for several years and stopped to raise our family when I returned from Korea. After our youngest child entered first grade, she enrolled in graduate school. Sharon has an Ed.D. from Rutgers and works as a Learning Consultant on the Child Study Team in the Somerville, New Jersey, school district.

SI: Just to try and figure out what you were doing in the Signal Corps, do you remember if you were maybe repairing things?

SG: Repair and maintenance was my title and that's what it was over in Korea as well.

PA: Was your whole group recalled or was it just you?

SG: Just I, because I don't even remember who I was with in Guam. [laughter] I have no idea where they went; a couple of years after I left, I probably would have but fifty years later, no way.

SI: Do you remember any other postings besides Guam and Fort Monmouth before Korea?

SH: No.

PA: Getting on that plane to Korea, what was your first feeling?

SG: Frightened. I'd never done that much flying, so it was a new experience that way. ... Of course, the unknown, you don't know what to expect when you get there or what's going to happen, so you anticipate a little bit but, otherwise, it was just another assignment so to speak, nothing special.

PA: When you first landed, were you given some time to acclimate or were you immediately sent on active duty?

SG: No, we were immediately on active duty, but we weren't on the frontlines. We were [a] service organization, so we were in the rear. ... I never did get into fighting, thank God, but we'd set up a post, we'd set up camp, and just moved into a position and started working with the men that were there and the problems that had to be solved.

PA: You were doing repair and maintenance on radios?

SG: Repair and maintenance of radios. We also had a light plane attached to us [in case] somebody had to go somewhere in a hurry. It was a country that I had never been exposed to, obviously, though it was quite barren and foreboding, to so speak.

PA: What was your impression of the Korean people?

SG: I didn't have that much contact with the Korean people. We stayed in camp. [laughter] I wasn't going wandering anywhere.

PA: Were you stationed out in a rural area?

SG: Oh, yes. But they tell me it was near the Punch Bowl area, [a basin near Hae-an-myeon, Yanggu-gun where many violent battles were fought during the war], but I'm not positive because I never went up there to look. On that map, they gave me coordinates, said, "That's where you are." I said, "Fine, as long as I can stay here," and then I had an unusual experience, which I related in that email. ... I'd found out when my brother was drafted, his wife and my wife moved in together, lived in the same apartment, just to keep each other company. ... One time my wife wrote me a letter and told me that my brother's wife, my sister-in-law, was upset because she hadn't been getting any mail and I said, "But where is he?" And she gave me the information and I made contact with my brother and, evidently, his wife had tried to send him money, cash, in an envelope and for some reason it was intercepted and by then he got no mail at

all. My wife told me about it, and I called one or two officers in that end of the business and they said that they would keep a check on it, see what was going to transpire. Anyway, she never sent any more money by mail, but the mail started up again after somebody started looking into things. I guess they caught on, but, in the meantime, he was pretty dejected, and he was battalion adjutant of an artillery outfit on Heartbreak Ridge. They were only about ten minutes away on what I called the front, because I was still behind the frontline. But to get there, you'd have to go twenty miles south, twenty miles over and twenty miles up, and I called him one day and I said, "Look, can you get a three-day pass?" And he said, "All right, I'll write myself a three-day pass." ... I had him come over to our area and he lived with the officers for a while. ... They had no ice cream, or steak, or anything up where he was but we did. So I asked the cook to get him a couple of steaks and get some ice cream. We wined and dined him and made him feel good, which kind of helped his ego a little bit.

PA: Did you have relatively nice facilities where you were stationed?

SG: Yes, yes, and with the light airplane, the Grasshopper, I was able to get my brother flown over to me in a couple of minutes, rather than waiting half a day or three quarters of a day to get him back there. Then, again, another note in there, my wife decided to send me a salami, [laughter] and, of course, she's put it in regular mail and it went by boat. Well, by the time it got there the odor, [laughter] it could have been an enemy weapon. They handed it to me at the end of a pole because they didn't want to get close to it and I said, "Just hold it," and we dug a hole and buried it. [laughter]

PA: You were an officer?

SG: I was an officer. I was [a] first lieutenant at that time.

PA: Had you gotten a jump on the rank from ROTC?

SG: Yes. I started as a second lieutenant and I was promoted to first lieutenant there in Korea. ... Then to induce me to stay on, they offered me a captaincy but I said, "There was no way." I said, "I'm out of here." [laughter] And then they sent me on that thirty-one day slow boat to China. *Edwin D. Patrick* was the name of the ship; I'll never forget that name. [laughter] It took that long to get me, but I was seasick, I can't stand that type of motion. ... I can remember one of the fellows that I came with took a picture of me coming down the gangplank, he says, "I couldn't tell the difference between you and the gangplank, you were so thin," and I've never been that thin since. [laughter]

SI: Did you have men under you?

SG: Yes, I had, that's a good question, I don't know, I don't even remember. I would venture to say I had about a dozen men under me doing the repair work and going out on special calls.

SI: If your unit got a call from the front, would they go up and repair on the front, or did everything come back?

SG: Everything came back, in most cases. Once in a while, there was something that they couldn't move and then I would detail a group to go up [there]. ... Each of them had certain specialties, so that depending on what the problem was, or what we anticipated the problem was, those were the people that were assigned to make the trip.

SI: In an average day, do you think you did any repair work yourself or was it mostly managing?

SG: No, it was mostly management, mostly management at that point. That's why I started losing some of the contact with electrical and, as I say, by the time I got back here, the industry was so far ahead of me that I had to go back to school but I didn't want to do that.

SI: Did you notice any changes in technology while you were over in Korea, such as better radios or better communications?

SG: No. The equipment was pretty much standard and new innovations didn't come to that part of the world. [laughter]

SI: Were you far enough back where you would be out of the range of artillery?

SG: I would be out of the range of artillery, yes. We heard those sounds, of artillery or bombardments, or anything else. We were in a fairly secure area.

SI: Were there any air raids?

SG: No, none that I remember anyway. Of course, some of that would have been a routine type of thing, if there were, but it wouldn't be something that would stick in my mind.

SI: In your area was it only Signal Corps, the Signal Corps section of the 25th?

SG: Well, the 25th is an infantry division, but this was the signal section of it. So, yes, but we were separated from the infantry. They were up front and we were in the rear.

SI: Were you adjacent to any other unit, like the headquarters unit, or was it mostly self-contained?

SG: It was self-contained, yes, strictly for the repair and maintenance.

SI: Did you have any Korean workers in your area?

SG: No.

SI: Not even shoe-shine boys?

SG: No. Well, there were some houseboys they called them. ... Youngsters who would shine shoes and sweep up and clean. Yes, some of the officers had a couple of them, I didn't, but there were some.

PA: How large a camp, how many men?

SG: Truthfully, I don't remember. I know, I can only recall I had taken a picture of two tents, one with a sign out front "Hog Pen" and the other one called the "Pig Pen". There must have been, oh, I'd say fifteen tents in this encampment.

SY: About how many people per tent usually?

SG: How many people? I truthfully don't know, I'm sorry.

PA: Was this area under the command of a colonel?

SG: I believe the gentleman in charge was a Captain Wright, again, I'm not sure. That's just vague memory and there were no high-powered officers there, no.

PA: Did that make it more of a community, less of a regimented division between the enlisted men and the officers?

SG: I would say so, yes. It was just a small segment that had one purpose in mind and they adhered to that, and everything else was oblivious to us, the way I remember it.

PA: Was it an integrated unit? Were there African American repairmen as well?

SG: Truthfully, I don't remember. I can't remember. To me it wouldn't matter, I mean, but to specifically say that there was Hispanic, or African, or the like, I couldn't tell you.

SI: Was it pretty much the same group the whole time you were in Korea, or were people rotating out?

SG: No, they're pretty much the same group. We were, all didn't go over together, but, of course, we melded there and stayed pretty much the same. There was very little movement in or out of the organization.

SI: What was your attitude like while you were over in Korea? Did you feel you had a duty to do, or did you want to get out of there?

SG: [laughter] Both. I knew that I had to do it. I knew it was something that had to be done, and I tried to make the best of it, but there was no question that I wanted to get back home as soon as I could.

PA: So the re-enlisting offer wasn't even ...

SG: It didn't even dent the armor. [laughter]

SI: In general, did you mind military service?

SG: Well, it wasn't a matter of minding. I knew it was an obligation and I knew it when I signed on the ROTC I was going to serve. I also knew that even if I didn't sign that I was going to serve, [laughter] so I just tried to do it the best way that I could. It's just a matter of accepting what is fact and living with it, that's all.

PA: I want to ask a question about your brother, was he ROTC or had he been drafted?

SG: No, he was drafted.

PA: Had he gone to OCS and gone through all that?

SG: No, he was a sergeant, he was an enlisted man.

SI: Did that create any problem when you brought him over because I've heard stories of one brother being an officer, one brother being an enlisted man, and they wouldn't let them stay together, or eat together?

SG: Not in our small organization, no, because I had told the fellows that I was going to do it and there was no problem. He slept in the officers' quarters with us, he shared our meals, it was three days that he was there, and, as I say, we fed him well for three days. [laughter]

PA: He was stationed close to the frontlines. Did he see combat?

SG: Yes. He was stationed a little farther north, but not completely on the frontlines, but he was in battle. They were firing Howitzers. As I recall, [the] 587th, the only reason I recall that number is because as I said I have a picture in the car I brought with me, but I forgot to bring it up, of the two of us, the picture was taken and was sent to the newspapers and he was with the 587th Artillery Battalion there.

SI: Do you remember if he had any interaction with other army units or other UN units, or anything?

SG: Nothing, no. Almost isolation. [laughter] Not that I remember anyway, at least not at the level that I was concerned with.

SI: Another thing that Korean War veterans always talked about is like the extreme weather in Korea. Do you recall that?

SG: Well, one incident that I'll never forget is what I called horizontal rainfall, because you'd sit in the Quonset hut and the rain would come in one side, go out the other side, and you'd sit on the floor and never get wet. Yes, the storms. When it blew, it blew, [laughter] and you'd get a lot of rain coming, but you lived with it.

SI: Were you there in the winter at all?

SG: Good question. I don't think so. I don't recall seeing snow. I don't recall seeing any snow. I may have been there for eight, nine months but never do I recall seeing any snow.

SI: Did you go on leaves or passes while you were in Korea?

SG: No. There were no places to go as far as I was concerned. [laughter]

SI: You never went to Tokyo?

SG: I never went to Tokyo, no.

PA: Was your base supplied by air drops or were there vehicles?

SG: No, motor vehicle, yes, over some rough roads. They're not paved that's for sure.

SY: Since you were in such a small group, was it easy for you to bond with your fellow officers, so that you would keep in touch with them even after the war?

SG: Actually, no. I couldn't recall the names of anyone of them if you ask me to, and, again, it may just be inherent because I don't have that long-term memory. If I were to go through some files, I'd probably recall some names but nothing that I've made any contacts with.

SY: Even right when you came back?

PA: You were just there to do your job and you finished it.

SG: [laughter] That was it. I was concentrating on one thing.

SI: Did you correspond home frequently with your wife and your parents?

SG: Yes.

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SI: We were talking about mail.

SG: We had constant mail going back and forth between the two of us. I'd also intercepted and handled some mail from my sister-in-law to my brother as well, because I could get on the radio and transmit across to him if it was something that I thought was vital enough.

PA: Was it your position in the Signal Corps, or just the fact that you were farther from the lines that let you stay in better contact than your brother?

SG: No, because of my position in the Signal Corps. They gave me access to the Grasshopper, the light plane, to pick him up and also gave me access to contact him. I think he worked the switchboard for a while so it was relatively easy. [laughter]

SI: Did you ever run into anybody else you knew from Rutgers or elsewhere from your career?

SG: No, no.

SI: Was it difficult that early in your marriage and having to spend a year or so away from each other?

SG: Oh, yes, no question about it. It was not something that would have been planned or something that we wanted to do, but, again, it's a matter of acceptance of what you had to do. For my wife, she had my sister-in-law move in with her because she wanted somebody around. She was lonely and my sister-in-law also was lonely but it's not something that you want to work on.

SI: Was your other brother ever involved in Korea or was he too young? Your younger brother was born in '44.

SG: Oh, my younger brother? No, no, he never was called in the service and he's escaped it so far. Don't know what tomorrow is going to bring around here. No, he graduated American U and he came into the business at that time and he'd been there ever since, until we sold it.

SI: After you returned and were discharged, did you make any use of the GI Bill?

SG: No. No, I went right back into the furniture business and that was it. That was the entity that I was going to spend my life at, [at] that time.

PA: Were you discharged immediately after returning from Korea?

SG: Yes. I think we came back to Fort Monmouth and we got discharged out of Monmouth.

SI: At any point, in either your time in the service or at Rutgers, did you ever experience any anti-Semitism, anything like that?

SG: The answer is "yes" but if you ask me to recall incidents, I couldn't. There were certain amounts of, maybe inherent tensions that you'd feel with certain groups, certain people here on campus as well as in [the] service. Unfortunately, we've lived with that all our lives and even in the town where I was living, in Raritan, there were only three Jewish families, the rest were all Italian, mostly Italian I should say because, I don't know what the total amount was but the majority were Italians. There were incidents with some of them, you swallow hard and you go on.

SI: Did your religion play a big part in your life when you were younger?

SG: No. No, my grandfather was a rabbi and so I had a lot of training up until my time, the time of *bar mitzvah*, and after that it started downhill. [laughter] I still maintain a bit of it because my

family, my parents did even after my grandparents passed away, but it has diminished for, it had been watered down, let's say, by time.

PA: Were your children *bar mitzvah*-ed?

SG: My children were all *bar* and *bat mitzvah*-ed, yes.

SI: Was Phi Ep one of the Jewish fraternities?

SG: Yes, it was. Yes, Phi Ep, Tau Del and SAMmies [Sigma Alpha Mu], yes.

SI: Was it still, at that time, where Jews and non-Jews couldn't go into each other's fraternities?

SG: Yes.

PA: Were you involved in Hillel or any of the Zionist movements?

SG: No. No, again, I didn't spend time with that because of going home. That required after school operations and I wasn't available.

PA: Did you or your family have any opinion about the Zionist movement?

SG: No.

PA: To pick up with your return from Korea, do you have anything else to add about the Korean War?

SG: After my return, basically I, as I said, I went back to the business and essentially took over for my dad who retired. Never retired, to tell the truth, he came to the business, he had an office, he'd sit there and he'd talk on the phone to his friends and golf [laughter] which is what I'm doing now, golfing, and he developed leukemia and he passed away in '82. ... Then it was my brother, my brother Lester, also came back from the service soon after, I don't really recall exactly when, but soon after I'd come back, he came back and we all went into the business. The three of us were there and then he passed away in '87 from a brain tumor. So I was there with my younger brother and we ran the business here until last July when we closed, finally sold it off.

SI: In 1985, did you leave the 206 Mall?

SG: No. We left the 206 Mall in 2000. We left that and then we left the office building, which is what we used as a warehouse and then made [into] apartments, and then we made offices out of it, left that last July.

SI: How many locations did you have?

SG: We had three. We had one in Somerville, we had one in Flemington and we had one down the shore, I can't think of the name of it, below Red Bank.

SI: Shrewsbury?

SG: No, not Shrewsbury, no, it's Toms River. Toms River is where we had [it], that was a business that my brother Lester started. That was the time when they were ready-to-assemble furniture and we had a store called Crate Expectations, [laughter] a pun on [*Great Expectations*] where you'd actually buy pieces and then assemble them at home. ... That was in our Flemington store, as well as Colonial Furniture, in our Flemington store, and down at the Toms River store, and they folded up pretty much right after my brother passed away in '87. He was taking care of those two.

PA: You had the one until you sold it.

SG: We had the one that we held onto and when they threw us out, we built that shopping center on 206. That was in '72 and the only reason I can remember that is because I remember laying the corner block in 1972. [laughter] I'll never forget, and we just continued the business from there and then finally sold it.

PA: Did you immediately after the war begin your family life?

SG: Yes, yes, pretty much. Well, the first one was born in '55. My oldest, yes, 1955 my oldest, and we had had trouble conceiving. As a matter-of-fact, my wife had gone to Margaret Sanger [a Planned Parenthood clinic] in New York and we spent a couple of years trying after I came back. She finally conceived in '55, then '56, then '58, then '63. [laughter]

SI: Did your wife work the whole time?

SG: No. She worked pre-children and after they all were in school.

PA: Did they work in the family business when they were in high school and college?

SG: The two older ones did, Robert and Marc, Robert primarily. The oldest worked in the business on a partial basis, not as an employee.

PA: They never had aspirations to take over the business?

SG: No. I'll be very truthful, I didn't want them to. [laughter] That was one of the reasons we encouraged them to go to college. Robert at MIT, Marc with Harvard, and my daughter went to Clark, and David went to American University.

PA: None of them saw any military time?

SG: None of them saw a thing, thank God. Not that it isn't a necessity, but you live in fear. In fact, now, my wife and I sit down to talk to our grandchildren. One of them is fifteen now, another one at fourteen, and the possibility exists again, who knows?

SI: Are there any anecdotes that we missed, or anything?

SG: Nothing that I'm aware of, that I can recall anyway.

PA: Are you active in Rutgers, in your fraternity or with the alumni?

SG: No. The fraternity is extinct. It was bought out or dissolved by ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau] and I've had, it's an unusual, I say it's an unusual situation. There were a group of about six fraternity brothers, and since we've graduated we, the six couples, get together almost every year. At least once a year, if not more, and when we have a family blessed event of some type, these six couples are always invited. So we're always seeing them. Alvin Rockoff is one of them. A fellow by the name of Bobby Blackman and Sally, Marty Miller living over here in Pennsylvania at Washington's Crossing, and then I've got about five who have moved to Florida and they have a little organization down there. In fact, for my seventy-fifth birthday when my wife and I went to Florida and the Grosses, one of the [couples], heard that I was coming and they knew my age, they had a party and had all of the fraternity from down there together, so we had a big party down there. [laughter] But it's been unusual that we've stuck together like that. I don't know too many that have done that type of thing. Well, other than that, I pretty much covered the waterfront.

SI: Thank you.

SG: You're welcome, sure. I'll take a look at it and review it.

SI: If anything comes to mind, sometimes we do the interview and then they walk out and they remember other things.

SG: My memory doesn't know much. [laughter] I won't remember that much, but I appreciate it, thank you.

SI: This concludes our interview with Sidney Granetz on June 30, 2005, in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

SG: Thank you very much.

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Reviewed by John Miller 12/09/05

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 12/23/05

Reviewed by Sarah Rice 01/23/06

Reviewed by Sidney Granetz 12/8/12