

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH W. WALLACE KAENZIG

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins and interview with Wallace Kaenzig on July 13, 1994 with Kurt Piehler at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. And I want to begin with talking about your parents and ask you about your father. Where did your father work?

Wallace Kaenzig: My father worked in a factory which was called the Bone Mill. What they did was make bone handles for knives. And he worked there for a period of time after my oldest sister, after ... my mother and he were married and my older sister was born. And then he switched over and became a laundry man and he picked up and delivered laundry for the local launderer in that area ... The Egg Harbor City Laundry. And ... he did that and also on ... Fridays and Saturdays he worked as a butcher. So he had two jobs, which is very prevalent today. He worked Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday as a laundryman and Friday and Saturday as a butcher until the time that he passed away.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your family?

WK: ... Very much from the standpoint of not having any money. And I often point this out to young people, students when I talk to them about this subject. We lived in the country, so we always had sufficient food to eat. We just didn't have money. And as a result, you learn to save and you learn to wear your clothes properly-- not wear them out, because there was not much chance in getting something again to replace it. But there was one thing we had which was much, much different than those who lived in the city-- we had food. They were very, very hard pressed at times to have food-- the city people.

KP: So you grew a lot of your own food?

WK: Yes. My grandfather had a farm across the street from where we lived, so we were always well supplied with food. We didn't have to worry about that.

KP: Now your father died when you were very small?

WK: I was fifteen.

KP: How did that affect your family?

WK: Well, it changed my life completely, because I was an athlete who played ball and looked forward to playing ball in high school and college. But when he died, I had to go to work on weekends. I remained in school in ... high school. I worked Saturdays and summers ... with the American Stores which are now, they were then called, American Stores, now they're called Acme Markets. So I was able to work every weekend and all summer when I was in college. I notified the superintendent when I was coming home and he would have a job for me. So in that sense, I was very lucky. But what it did, it meant that I worked six days out of seven and had the Sunday off. But it curtailed my baseball playing, because I was so tired at the end of the week, the last thing I needed to do was go out and play baseball.

KP: So you wanted to play baseball in college?

WK: Yes. I was good enough. I could have. But I had to work my way through college. In fact, I often tell people I worked more hours than I ... spent in class. But I was usually working up to 40 hours a week while I was in college. But my grades reflected it. I passed. [laughter]. The name of the game was to graduate and get that certificate, but it did mean that I didn't participate in any extracurricular activities or anything like that. I worked weekends. I worked Sundays. Whenever I could have an opportunity to work.

KP: On your survey you indicate your parents had different religions and political affiliations. Did you notice that at the time or was it an after thought because I asked?

WK: No. It never entered into any discussion that was ... an unusual discussion as long as I can ever remember. My father was Catholic, my mother was Protestant. We were, the children were brought up in the Protestant religion although my father remained a Catholic. He was a Republican, my mother was a Democrat and mostly because my mother's father was the Democratic leader in the township in which we lived. So, it was very hard for her to be anything else, but a Democrat. But they never let this enter into their relationship. All they did was cancel out each other votes, when they went to vote. One voted one way, the other voted the other. ... But it never really became an issue.

KP: The ethnicity of both your parents were German.

WK: German, yes.

KP: But both were born in the United States?

WK: Yes. Both my parents were born in the U.S.

KP: How far back do you have to go to trace it back to Germany?

WK: On my father's side, his mother was born in Germany. Came to the United States when she was seventeen years old. His father was born in the United States, but his grandfather was born in Switzerland. He came from the German speaking portion of Switzerland. On my mother's side, my great-grandfather and great-grandmother were born in Germany, but my grandfather and grandmother were born in the United States.

KP: The reason that I ask: the attitude of German-Americans toward the First World War was very ambivalent, particularly before we got into the war. How did your parents view the coming of the First World War? What did they think of the First World War?

WK: Well as far as they were concerned we were on the right side. The only change it made in their lives, because they all spoke German, the community spoke German, was that they were required to stop speaking German in the stores or on the streets or anything like that. They couldn't speak the language anymore, they had to stop. In fact my older sister, who was born in 1918, when she began school at five years old, [she] could not speak English. However, that stopped, you know, when myself and my other sister came along. The speaking of German just stopped. And as a result, we all spoke English.

KP: Now, your community, you were grew up in Egg Harbor City?

WK: I was born in Egg Harbor City, but grew up in Cologne.

KP: Okay. So Cologne at this point is still very much a German-speaking community even though your parents were third generation?

WK: Yes.

WK: Yes. All the people there had-- either they or their families had immigrated from Germany. When you went down the street, they were all farmers, when you went down the street there were such names as Roesch, R-O-E-S-C-H, Sohn, S-O-H-N. My grandfather's name was Hanselmann and my mother's maiden name was Hanselmann. There were people Freihofer, Hoenes, H-O-E-N-E-S. This is the way the whole street was Kienzle, K-I-E-N-Z-L-E. So the the whole community was German and they all spoke German until World War I and then most of it began to diminish. And within a matter of ten years it had stopped. Although ... they still, like my grandfather, would always speak German to us when we were kids. Although he spoke good English, very good English. But he would speak German to us and we would answer in English. [laughter] Not knowing that it would have been fashionable to speak both languages.

KP: But I imagine World War I must have been very traumatic for this community.

WK: Well it was for them, except there was no one that they knew of who was on the other side. There was a was a man in our community whose brother was in the German army and he knew it and he was in the American army. But he's the only one that I knew of. All of our relatives were-- they knew of no relatives on the other side that were in the army in Germany or anything ... and it never became a big thing with them. There was no question.

KP: Was there any concern in the community that they might face persecution for being German-Americans? For example, there was a lot of vigilante activity aimed at German-Americans and German-Americans often had to demonstrate their patriotism. Were there any incidents that you knew of?

WK: No, there were none. In Egg Harbor City, which was German, and which their minutes of their City Council meetings were all written in German until World War I, there were never any incidents at all. In fact, they had a very high percentage of people who went into the army in the United States army and fought in Germany against the Germans.

KP: In fact, you had several uncles who joined the navy.

WK: Yes, I had three.

KP: Yes.

WK: Three on my father's side.

KP: And do you know why they joined the navy?

WK: I guess to get away from Egg Harbor City more than anything else. I think it was a case of where the Depression came most of them went in just as the Depression began.

KP: So they entered not during the war, but earlier.

WK: After World War I.

KP: So they entered in a sense to ...

WK: In between, yes.

KP: ... to escape the Depression.

WK: Yes. It was ... something to do where there was some income even though a minimum. They mostly went in, because there were no jobs available, so they enlisted in the navy.

KP: Did they stay in through the war?

WK: One of them stayed in and served for 25 years. The other one was surveyed out physically with a bad stomach. I guess he, [had] too much of that bad booze or something. He came out with a bad stomach. And the third one, when World War II ended, he came out. He didn't stay in any longer.

KP: There are those who have often commented on the North-South split in New Jersey. What were your thoughts on this? I mean going back to the 1930's, what were your thoughts about this? Did you feel there was any real shock this thing between North and South Jersey as a person from South Jersey coming north?

WK: There was a difference and I think it all had to do with the volume of population. We were ... south Jersey in those days was very rural, remains somewhat that way today. Atlantic City was the big city. Pineland was of some size, but not of any consequence. The seashore towns were very small-- Cape May, Stone Harbor, Wildwood-- were very, very small. Much smaller than they are today. If you visualize where there [are] so many of these homes and motels that, that was wilderness in the '30s, then you get a pretty good idea of what existed. Of course, the total population, the volume was up here so you really entered a different world. Where you noticed it in college was when you got into the classroom you finally you were really in competition with some pretty sharp kids, some pretty sharp people. You didn't have that competition in your own high schools in the south. A lot of the top students would go off and go away to medical school, law school, and so forth. But generally ... you're talking about one or two out of each class. So the big difference as we saw it, one traffic, two, competition. Very, very different type of a lifestyle. Much more ... they lived a much faster lifestyle than we did. We were still low and laid back in the south and when you came up here and got into the ... rat race, you know, you found yourself not only trotting but sometimes running to keep up. So I think that was the greatest

difference. The second thing was, I think economically people up here were better off than they were in South Jersey. ... We were strictly a rural farming area and the money just wasn't there and when you got up here, and I know when I came into school, over at the Phelps house, some of the people who were in there, who were supposedly bad off economically-- one's father was a bank president, another guy's father was a vice president of Exxon or Esso as it was in those days. So you found that it was a lot different. ... You weren't talking lower class, middle class, upper-class. You were talking lower middle-class and lower upper-class really.

KP: That is where you saw the split when you got here?

WK: That's where I saw the split, yeah.

KP: You mean you saw the South Jersey-North Jersey split being real.

WK: Oh yeah.

KP: And then you saw the split between the lower middle class and lower upper class.

WK: Oh yeah. You could see it with the students and what they were able to do when they got up here from an economic standpoint. Fraternities ... they were able to join fraternities where ... we just didn't have the means to do that.

KP: Where did you live when you went to college?

WK: I lived in the Phelps House on the Ag Campus for a year. And then I wasn't happy with the situation. ... In fact, some of the things that I just told you made me bitter. There were guys there who were poor mouthing and they had more monies than I thought I would ever see in my lifetime. And I said to myself, ... "I can't stand this. I've got to get out of here." So I came down and two other fellows in the Ag School, we found a place on Patterson Street down by the church and we lived on the third floor of the manse where the caretaker lived. We had a little apartment up there. Three and a half dollars a week for each of us and we did our own cooking, brought food from home. We would bring potatoes and canned goods, because everyone canned. ...

JP: This is your own farm canning?

WK: Yes, yes. All done [as] .. home canning. And you'd make a couple trips a semester to bring food. And we were able to buy milk at the dairy farm for ten cents a quart. So, we lived real well for ... in that type of situation and were a lot happier. We had our own study room, that sort of thing and then one bedroom and a bathroom, and then another room to study so that you didn't have the interference that you had where there were fifteen or twenty people living in a building.

JP: Why did you come to Rutgers?

WK: Well, I wanted to go to college and ... I came from an Ag background. So the place to go was to Rutgers. ... There was some interest displayed and talking to the county agent, the

Vocational Ag teacher, and that sort of thing made me aware of Rutgers and I decided that's where I wanted to go to school ... to become an Ag student.

KP: So, you definitely came to the Ag school?

WK: Yes, yes.

KP: That was your choice.

WK: That was my choice.

KP: Did you envision becoming a farmer?

WK: No, I envisioned going into some type of commercial agricultural. Either into sales or into some type of marketing or something like that. Then I ended up taking the vocational ed courses too, and ended up teaching Ag for several years after World War II.

KP: And you mentioned that Professor Schermerhorn was your favorite prof.

WK: Yeah, Schermerhorn.

KP: ... favorite professor. Do you have any recollections as to why does he stick out?

WK: Oh yeah. He just was one of the nicest people that you could ever run into. Very dedicated, very knowledgeable, a real teacher. Had the patience of Job. Would work with you. Would share things with you such as his work that he was doing in research, he developed the Rutgers tomato. ... That was one of his things. And, he would talk to you about his experiences in traveling through the country as far as agriculture was concerned. Like trips to California viewing the growing of lettuce, you know, acres and acres and acres of lettuce. So, he was just one of those people who was approachable by any student. ... Always had time for any student, and was just a great teacher.

KP: You mentioned he did a lot of traveling. How much traveling had you done before the Second World War?

WK: Before World War II, I had crossed the Delaware River into Philadelphia to baseball games to see the Philadelphia Athletics. My father would take ... me up to see a game. He had a sister who lived up in Philadelphia. And we would go up and that was it.

KP: That's the furthest west you had got?

WK: The furthest west and the furthest north was New Brunswick.

KP: And you had never gotten to ...

WK: I never got to New York City or anywhere.

KP: And you had never gotten south into Delaware or Maryland?

WK: No, no, nope. Never went below. Never got out of south Jersey until that time, but that changed everything.

KP: You had left ROTC at the end of your second year?

WK: Yes.

KP: But given your career it is surprising.

WK: Well, I just couldn't fit it in. I couldn't fit it in so I didn't try. Because even though there was some remuneration for belonging to the advanced ROTC, it wasn't enough for me to be able to sustain myself in college so I just didn't even try. I had to work where there were dollars coming in every week and not the way they were doing.

KP: If you did not have to work as much, do you think you would have stayed in?

WK: Oh yes, yeah.

KP: Did you expect the United States to enter a war at that time in the late 1930s and early 1940s?

WK: Oh yes. Yeah. If you were current on history and what was going on in Europe, there wasn't any question that it was going to happen eventually. I don't think we thought it was going to happen the way it did. But we thought that, in fact, we didn't think it was going to happen out in the Pacific. We thought it was going to happen in Europe only. And as it turned out it reversed itself and began there and then moved to Europe. But what was going on and what the Germans were doing in Poland and taking over Czechoslovakia and so forth, everyone believed that ... their final goal, which I guess was their goal, was to get in to take England. And we thought that we would probably be in it before they got that far.

KP: Where were you when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor?

WK: I was here at the college for the weekend. I was right here when it happened. And, of course, we knew about it in the morning because it happened, we knew about it, well not in the morning but, we knew about it around noon time, one o'clock, two o'clock, something like that. We knew something had happened. And finally, of course, the radio began blaring this whole thing and then they began recalling people and the ... railroad stations were a madhouse. In Newark and all over. All of these guys were home on leave or from their duty stations trying to get back. It was just a madhouse.

KP: And you observed this from New Brunswick?

WK: Yeah. And, of course, one of the concerns when you stopped to think of it now it was

really stupid. People were concerned about being bombed here on the East Coast. Well there weren't any German airplanes that could even get halfway across. But, you know, it was that mental thought that everyone had that "My God, here they come."

KP: Well, in fact, I know the college established an observer post that was manned.

WK: Yeah. They had guards on the railroad stations here, the bridges, the bridge across ... the Raritan. Of course, that happened to be a very, very important railroad. Everything coming out of north, points south.

KP: Who was the guard?

WK: ... They started out with national guards and then they switched over to hiring civilian guards eventually. And took older people ... who could not serve in the active military and they were the people who became the guards. And that happened, that went on for a couple of years and before they finally pulled them off, realized that they didn't have a problem internally. But it was even worse on the West Coast when we got out there. Everything was blacked out. Your lights were blacked off, with the exception of a very thin strip in your headlights. And, of course, driving in California, they were just as bad as they are today, and they would go up that Highway 101 along the coast at speeds in excess of what they should be doing and there were a lot of head-on collisions, because of that very, that black out and that very small light.

KP: Actually, Ralph Schmidt was talking about the black out and the restrictions on the Jersey shore.

WK: Oh yeah.

KP: I need to ask others about it. You had enlisted in the Marine Corps, but you have a story to tell about how you ended up in the marines, instead of the navy. Had you tried to join the navy?

WK: Oh, I had.

KP: Had considered joining in the army?

WK: Well, I didn't want to go into the army, I wanted to go into the navy. Well, I even took the test for the Naval Academy and I flunked the physical. And I had a bad eye. ...

KP: This was the Naval Academy. When did you try to get into the navy?

WK: Right out of high school.

KP: Oh, you did try.

WK: My senior year of high school, yeah. ... And I had a bad eye. I had an 18/20 instead of 20/20 and they wouldn't even touch you even with glasses in those days. In fact, that's another story about how I passed the physical to stay in the marine corps. But, there were several of us

from the Ag College that went down to the infirmary where the recruiters came to enlist in the navy. And we were filling out our applications and this navy chief was walking around the table looking over our shoulders and he saw College of Agriculture as our college here at Rutgers University. And he said, "What the hell do you guys think you're going to do, raise potatoes on a battle ship?" And we ... just looked at each other and realized that this guy didn't know what he was talking about, because we had ... more math, more science than most of the colleges required here. And so we just got up and walked out. And we got outside and we said "Who's coming next?" And they said, "The marine corps." So we went down when the marine corps came and enlisted in the marine corps.

KP: Now you enlisted in the marine corps wanting to enlist in the navy. And I guess, the first question: The marine corps in the 1930's had a reputation that, in some ways is not favorable, especially when compared to its image today. My dissertation advisor at Rutgers, once said, we now think of the marines as nineteen and twenty-year old kids who are very strong and so forth. In the 1930s, the image of the average marine was someone with tattoos and who drank a lot and you really didn't want to have much to do with him. Had you thought of this when you enlisted?

WK: Oh no. ... We realized that they were going to fight, so we were going to go, we joined the marine corps to fight. And that didn't enter our thoughts at all. What we found out was that the marine corps at the time of beginning of World War II was much ... older age wise, individually than it was after World War II began and even now. A lot of these guys, career marines ... were in their late 30s and so forth. There weren't very many young people who were coming in, just a trickle of recruits that came in each year. So it was a much older and we found that out when we got down to Quantico.

KP: Now you enlisted in March 1942. When did you leave for duty?

WK: We had graduation here, Sunday, May the 10th, and I was standing in front of the first sergeant at four o'clock in the afternoon of May the 11th at Quantico. So it was a very short period to enjoy my graduation from Rutgers. ... I knew ahead of time that that's where we were going and there were, I would say about a half a dozen of us from Rutgers who were in that category. ...

KP: And you all went down together?

WK: Well we all got separated. You see some of them came out ... from up here so their trip was different. I had my ticket out of Philadelphia, on the old Baltimore and Ohio down into Washington and then switched over to the Richmond, Fredricksburg and Potomac for the last ride down [on] ... the richest railroad in the United States. And so I got down there around three o'clock in the afternoon and the train stopped and ... you looked around and it was obvious that about a dozen of us were college students just coming in and there's a big six foot-five corporal there, redheaded corporal, who met us and didn't say much except saying, "Stand there. Get in the bus. Get out of the bus. Go in there." ... He was not a very vocal person. [laughter]

KP: Now you had enlisted in the marines, had you enlisted in officers candidate school?

WK: Yes. I had enlisted specifically to go into officers candidate's [school]. We were enlisted as privates first class. In fact, I had the measles in my senior year. When they were here to swear everyone in, I wasn't here so I went down to Princeton, March the 12th, and was sworn in at Princeton. So, and then of course, got my orders and so forth [as] to when to report.

KP: So you started out your training not as a private, but as a ...

WK: A PFC.

KP: You started out as a PFC and then you learned how to be an officer.

WK: We learned how to be PFC's a long time before we learned how to be officers. [laughter]

KP: Okay, so in other words the marine corps put you through boot camp.

WK: Put us through boot camp.

KP: And, and how was it?

WK: It was ... boot camp. And it was very physical. And, of course, we were shepherded by about five sergeants, all of whom wished they'd be [officers]. ... There was some resentment among a couple of them, but the others realized that they were never going to be commissioned officers, and they did their jobs real well. ...

KP: When you say there was some resentment.

WK: College kids, that's what they called us.

KP: College kids who were going to be the officers in a matter of months and they were destined to stay as NCOs.

WK: And there was resentment. "You college kids you got." Oh there was lots of profanity. "You think you know everything. We'll show you what you know. You stupid jerks." You know. So, there was a lot of that. And a couple of them were commissioned, but the majority were older and were not eligible for commissioning. ... There were four that were not eligible, because of their age. And after we were commissioned, we got on a much different basis with them. [laughter] We got a lot friendlier.

KP: But initially you were just recruits.

WK: Oh yeah, yeah.

KP: They were going to treat you like you were recruits.

WK: Oh yeah. They just rode you into the ground.

KP: Now you stayed in the marines a long time. How did your basic training experiences, say compare to marine training experiences say in the 1960s? What would you say were the similarities and differences?

WK: I think they were very similar. The one thing that I cautioned all of the young men going in the marine corps-- be prepared for physical exercise-- because it's physical. They'll run you until you drop or you will train so that you don't drop. But it's going to be very very physical. You've got to be able to take that. And if you can't handle that don't go into the marine corps. And it was that way then, ... I didn't know that the marine corps had automobiles for three months, because everywhere we went, we ran or walked. [laughter]

KP: And so you really, your training really consisted of what the image of what the marine corps camp is a lot of drill, a lot of hiking ...

WK: A lot of hiking. We did a lot of out in the woods [training]. A lot of training with weapons and we did a lot of running from one place to another. And we did a lot of scrub the barracks until we thought we were going to go through the cement deck. We did everything that you would do in boot camp, clean the head, scrub the heads, mess duty, everything.

KP: How did this compare with what would have happened to you if you had been in the army? Did you ever compare notes with what your equivalent in the army had done?

WK: I don't think it would have been as rigid as ours was and, or as rigorous. Not saying that it wasn't. I'm sure they want to whip their people into shape, too. But I don't think it was as intense as ours was in the marine corps. Because, you know, we knew what was going to happen after we were out of there. Everybody was going to go ... into a combat unit. Or most people did, but some didn't. But most everyone expected to go. ...

KP: Did you know this when you signed up?

WK: Well I knew we were going to fight.

KP: Yeah.

WK: But I didn't know the rigor of boot camp. [laughter]

KP: In other words you did not know what type of marines were required.

WK: No. At that time I didn't.

KP: So some of this was a real shock at the time. [laughter]

WK: Yeah. But, of course, I came ... from a background on the farm where we did physical work. I was an athlete. Played a lot of ball. So I was used to that kind of thing. So it didn't bother me. And you know, if you live through the Depression, you are used to adversity, too. So you can handle that stuff without too much trouble.

KP: Now, Quantico was the furthest you had ever traveled to. What was your impression of Virginia?

WK: Well, I think I was sort of awed by Washington. Well, I shouldn't say that. ... I should of said, my high school class went to Washington when we graduated for three days. That was the furthest. But I was still in awe of Washington as particularly when I got off the train in Union Station and had to find my way to the next train to get to where I was supposed to go and get there on time. That was the most important thing, you know. I knew eventually I'd find the right place to go, but I had to be there on time or else I was in trouble. So I think that was the biggest thing. And I think the next thing was, which turned out to be a very positive thing, that the people began coming in to form our class and they were coming in from all over the United States. Every college and university literally that you could think of, was finally represented in that class. So that was good because you began to sit down at night and talk to people in your squad who were from Kansas or Colorado or from up in New York State or Florida or in one of the Carolinas or some place so, in that sense it was very rewarding and it helped, because you realized, they were just anxious as you were. Because they were just as far from home or further from home than I because, I was four and a half hours. And some of these guys were four days. In those days it was very little air travel. You got on the train and three and a half or four days later you got to where you were going.

KP: It sounds like you did not get to see very much of the Virginia countryside.

WK: ... Only of those thousands of acres that encompassed Camp Quantico. [laughter]

KP: In other words you were very much in Quantico.

WK: Yes. Yeah. We ... didn't get out.

KP: When did you finally get a leave?

WK: We were allowed to go after the first three weeks we were allowed to go on weekends. At noontime Saturday and then you had to be back Sunday at ten o'clock. So for me it wasn't too difficult, because I could get up to Washington, catch a train into Philly and bus from Philly down to home. So, I, it meant that I could get home Saturday, late Saturday afternoon or early evening and then could leave like three Sunday afternoon. So I would have 24 hours or more where I was home. But I would only come home every other week, because there were so many things that you had to do. You had to study. Because all of this time you were in classroom also. So you had to know what you were doing or else you were not going to pass. So I would come home every other week.

KP: Which is quite a journey for 24 hours.

WK: Yeah. [laughter] But the fare I think was four and a half bucks from Washington to Philly and then a dollar for the bus down to Egg Harbor and, of course, we were paid at that time the great sum, each time we went up, you got a ten dollar bill, because they took out for

hospitalization and a couple of other things. So even the money as a PFC, we got paid little more than ... 21 bucks as a private. But I forget what ours was. But anyhow you got paid every two weeks and they handed you ten dollars and that was your pay. A ten dollar bill for two weeks work. [laughter]

KP: What's that, a dollar a day.

WK: [laughter] Yeah.

KP: When you went into the marines, did you expect to be sent to the Pacific?

WK: Yeah. There was no question that we were going to go to the Pacific because at that time the First Division landed in Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942. We were still in Quantico. Because we'd finished candidates class and were commissioned on July 18th and then went into to what they call reserve officer's course and that lasted until the 26th of September and then I was selected to go to artillery school and stayed there for another ten weeks. So I didn't leave Quantico until November and reported in to Third Marine Division in Camp Lejeune on December 7, 1942. They were just a year ...

KP: One year after Pearl Harbor.

WK: That's one year after the war [was] my reporting date. And in the interim I got married, too. I came home between ROC and artillery school and we were married and turned around and came back to Quantico and started school at 7:30 the next morning, we were married on Sunday afternoon I was sitting in my chair in the classroom at 7:30 on Monday morning.

KP: So where did you have your honeymoon?

WK: In Quantico.

KP: In Quantico.

WK: That was Quantico.

KP: Where did you get married?

WK: In Egg Harbor City, New Jersey. It was Mrs.(Cato's?) Rooming House. [laughter] There were about ten officers and their wives living in this rooming house. It was a big three story home and each one of us had a bedroom, but we shared baths, ... but it was nice.

KP: How did you meet your wife?

WK: In high school. I didn't know her before, but I knew her when ... she came to high school when I was a sophomore, she was a freshman. ...

KP: And you dated in college?

WK: High school and college. Yeah.

KP: Do you think the war speeded up your engagement?

WK: Well I think it speeded up the marriage.

KP: Yes.

WK: Because there was a question whether ... we should get married knowing I was going overseas, you know, the trauma of if you don't come back. The trauma, but we sat down and talked about it and decided we would ... go ahead and get married.

KP: Did you write during the war?

WK: Oh yeah. She wrote me every day and I wrote when I could.

KP: Did you save your letters from the war?

WK: I don't think we saved any. I have one V letter that I got that I mailed to my mother and she kept and gave to me before she passed away. But I don't ... we didn't save any of the others like that.

KP: What did you know of Japan before the war? You mentioned that you thought the war would take place in Germany and it was a bit of a surprise for you that it took place in Japan. What did you know of Japan?

WK: I think very little, except what you saw on the news and what you knew about their items that they manufactured, because they were doing what Taiwan, China, and all those are doing now sending in all kinds of knickknacks and material like that to be sold in this country and that was the extent of it. That and watching the news and reading newspapers and periodicals. ... And that was it. You know, we were all lead to believe that they lived on fish and rice. And nothing can be further from the truth, because when you finally get to Japan, when I finally got there, after World War II they have a pretty good vegetable diet with their fish and rice. And a lot of people didn't know that.

KP: That kind of thing surprised you.

WK: That surprised myself and a lot of other people.

KP: And you were really expecting fish and rice.

WK: Yeah. And the other thing was that they all had poor eyesight. Which wasn't true, therefore they couldn't hit you if they were shooting at you but they did pretty well with that.

KP: So you initially expected this when you went to war.

WK: Yes. And, of course, that myth was promulgated by the services and by our government, even after we were in the war. You know, there were a lot of people who were led to believe that ... these folks couldn't see you, because they had bad eyesight, and that wasn't true. [laughter]

KP: What is your most vivid memory of the war? You had served on, as you wrote in the survey, that you landed on D-Day in four invasions and the h-hour twice. Are these landings your most vivid memories?

WK: I think two most, that stand out most, was the first one, naturally. Because you had no idea what to expect. And we came in in amphibious tractors, with, not those that had the ramp in the back that dropped and let you out to go out the back, but you had to climb out over the side to come out. But, of course, all you could visualize is that some guy's lining up the sights on you as you're coming up over the side of that tractor. And when we landed, I remember vividly that the first thing I saw when I came up over the side was a dead Japanese soldier.

KP: Was that the first dead body you every saw?

WK: No, it wasn't the first dead body, but you know his face was so pale that it kind of surprised me, because ... I'm thinking all the time that they were brown and dark complected people. But in death his face was very pale. He was right on the beach and he hadn't been killed too much before we got there. So once you got ashore, you got out of that tractor and then began to move, the way you had to move, a lot of that apprehension leaves.

The second most traumatic to me was the landing on Iwo Jima. Because when I got on the beach, I had a party of five guys and we were with the reserve regiment. In other words, the assault troops had landed and had gone and then ... General Smith ... who was the overall landing force commander, was concerned about being counterattacked and driven off the beach. So he said land the reserve regiment. When we got on the beach there were bodies and material all over that beach. I remember going up, it had just started to get dark when we finally got in, and I remember going up to shake guys and saying "Come on and get off the beach." And they're dead and then I stopped, because I realized that ... there were more dead than alive out there and if they were alive, they probably knew by this time to get off the beach. But that first night that I took my party, my small liaison party, and we moved in right into the front lines, right up against the airfield where we could look back down onto the beach and that first night every round that the Japanese fired hit something or somebody. Something or somebody got hit. It was just incredible. And I thought, "My God if this continues, there's not going to be anything left the next morning." They hit the ammunition dump of the regiment that I was in. That thing went up. Of course, all that did was bring in more fire. The next morning ... the regimental S-4 and embarkation officer went out to ... get more supplies and speed it up they were both hit on the beach and killed right in the boat. And this went on for about [three days with] no artillery. ... I'm ashore and none of my artillery got ashore for three days. [laughter] It was brutal. They just couldn't get the stuff in. It was just a case of where you made do with what you had and the individual marine, which is what wins all your battles, was ... how it was done. Everybody did his job. And got up and moved forward and that was how it was done. They were the most traumatic.

Saipan wasn't bad. I went in, we landed at 10:20 and I was the exec of artillery battery and we were, we were the only battalion that got ashore that morning, because we were ashore and firing and most of the other battalions didn't get in until late in the afternoon. But we had some fire at us, some rounds while we were going across the reef. In DWKs, you know, you came out of the water and you're going very slowly. But, none of it was real close. Nobody got hit or anything like that. So that wasn't too bad. And then in Tinian it was a case of where they were down the other end of the island and we were up here so it was, and we outfoxed them and they had a rehearsal and a diversion down there and all the Japanese ...

KP: And that was ...

WK: That's right. They all went down there and we landed up here over at the beaches that were no wider than this room. Two beaches that wide, that's where everybody went through and we got through in such strength that they counterattacked that first night, but ... they just couldn't do anything. But it was the first landing, because you never know what to expect until you go through it you have no idea what's coming; and the Iwo Jima, they were the two.

KP: Yeah. I'm going to come back to both. I want to go back to your training. How effective was your training at making you an effective officer? Where did you see the problems when you started, you know, when you actually began to experience combat?

WK: Well, actually I ... don't think ... we were shortchanged. What you had was the lack of experience and length of time working with the troops that you commanded. That was the biggest shortcoming. You didn't have enough time to know each person and what that person was capable of doing, who you could rely on to do without having to go back and check and that sort of thing. So in that case we were shortchanged. However, as far as the amphibious portion of it, we were very, very well trained. We landed on the West Coast, either on the Ocean side beaches at Camp Pendleton or San Clemente which is the island off, I think five times as a division. In some very, very bad weather transferring from LCVPs to LSTs and all that sort of thing. Which was very, very good because when we got off Kwajalein, the day we got there and had to transfer for the next day's landing, beautiful sunlight, but a sea that was brutal. And I remember when we came up alongside of the LST to come out of the ... LCVP to get up, when you were at the trough you were looking up about ten feet and when you were at the crest you were just looking at the flat deck. So they transferred that whole division that day and never lost a man or had a man injured. Which testifies to the training. The training was outstanding.

KP: And your first position with the division, what was your ranking?

WK: ... I was a second lieutenant and the forward observer, which is where you start out in artillery. [laughter]

KP: So in other words, you are sent out to spot the fire.

WK: You're with the infantry. You're right up with the infantry, front lines with the infantry companies, the assault troops and you're the guy who directs fire. ...

KP: And you did this in all the campaigns you were in?

WK: No, I did this for Kwajalein and for Saipan and Tinian I had been promoted to first lieutenant, so I was an executive officer of a firing battery. So the executive officer is the guy who runs the battery. Does all the firing, all the commands, is responsible for seeing that everything, the guns are in their place, properly laid properly, your recorder and your people that sort of thing are doing their job. And then the third one, I was an artillery liaison again with the infantry regiment. ...

KP: So the information would go to you from an observer.

WK: Yes. And then you had the responsibility of coordinating the fires of the FOs with each of the assault battalions coordinating at the regiment, at the infantry regiment level, and then forwarding back whatever needed to be sent back to the guns

KP: You were at regimental staff at that point?

WK: Yes. I was a captain for Iwo. I had made captain.

KP: You had served under Captain Marengo?

WK: Yeah. We know Guido A. Marengo, Jr. [laughter]

KP: Was he regular marine corps?

WK: No, he was a reserve like us. He was a Californian, from Stockton, California, had gone to St. Mary's in California. And was a real happy-go-lucky guy. In fact, I saw him five years ago in San Diego and he hadn't, the only thing that had changed he had some gray hair here. But he was still the same. He's lost, he's lost his hearing. But he was a real good ... battery commander and knew how to handle people, was easy to approach, didn't push his rank around. When he was captain and we were lieutenants, you know. ... There was the respect that we had for him as the battery commander and as captain, and then he in turn, he had respect for our position and we never got into this business of you stand at attention and I'll talk to you when I want to and you talk to me when I tell you. There was none of that went on.

KP: Your immediate officers in your unit, were any regular marine?

WK: We only had ... two of them, one the executive officer of the battalion, Harvey Fehan, he was from Louisiana, and a warrant officer from Oklahoma, he was a ... marine gunner as we called them in those days. He was an ordinance person. But they were the only regulars, everyone else were reserves. So ... the old United States does pretty good with civilian soldiers. [laughter]

KP: Is that the impression you got from the war, that civilians can make good soldiers?

WK: Oh yeah. Outstanding and everybody was dedicated, you know. And you had guys out of

the Ivy League, you had people out of the smallest colleges in the United States, you had them from all over the United States and they were all dedicated. They all knew what had to be done. They were going to do it come hell or high water, and they took their jobs seriously, and as a result, we prevailed.

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

KP: What impact did the Second World War have on the marine corps?

WK: It was probably the best thing that ever happened to the marine corps, because you had this infusion of very intelligent, very dedicated, very educated officers who came in and I shouldn't overlook the enlisted. The enlisted that came in generally were all high school graduates or above. They, those who were out of high school for any period of time had all had occupations that they were trained in and could do their jobs and could do them well. ... I guess it existed in the army, the marine corps, the navy the same thing, it changed the good ol' boy routine where your father and your grandfather and your grandfather's father and everybody were in so, therefore ... you had a base on which ... you could build. Because you had, like people that I served with after World War II who became general officers, guys out of Harvard, guys out of Yale, University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, all of the top universities and colleges of the United States and some very, very good officers out of the small colleges where which we often overlook when we think of education, we think university and there're some very, very good small colleges. But these people put a new life into the marine corps. One thing it did, it didn't do away with the traditions and the way the marine corps particularly operated, but it softened some places where there had been, over dedication, I don't want to say brutality or anything like that, a lot of that stuff was eliminated when these people [came], because the reserve officers just wouldn't put up with that.

KP: Do you have some specific examples or stories?

WK: Well, as an example of the treatment of prisoners. Our own prisoners, not the enemy. You know they were, they were treated like dirt. Well, you bring people in who come out of civilian life where there is some compassion and understanding that you're dealing with human beings, that you're not dealing with something out from outer space. So, that was one place where you could see it. The questioning, not refusing a direct order or anything, but knowing that certain questions were going to be asked before you issued an order, ... it required the senior officers and the staffs and so forth to be sure that they answered the questions before they were asked, because you had intelligent guys sitting there and there was no way that you were going to pull the wool over their eyes or give them something which they knew was wrong. It just wouldn't work. It wouldn't fly.

KP: In other words, the 90 day wonders asked questions?

WK: Oh yes, oh yes. Yeah. They, you know, they responded. Direct orders, there's no question. You carry out a direct order.

KP: But they might be disturbed.

WK: Yeah ... but when this is finished I'd like to talk to you about this and a lot of them did. And, they so that the senior people who were mostly regulars, although there were some reserve colonels in that who had been in the reserve, really knew that they had to do their homework. And that helped the marine corps. That's helped the marine corps to this day so it was probably the best thing that ever happened to them. And then ... they found out, the old marine corps found out, that these young people could fight just as well as they could. They could shoot just as well, they could fight just as well, they were as intelligent or more so, and they could do the job and do it the way it was supposed to be done.

KP: Did you join your unit in Camp Pendleton?

WK: I joined at LeJeune.

KP: Camp LeJeune.

WK: What happened at LeJeune we were in the Third Division there and they knew they were going to form a Fourth Division so they took one regiment and one artillery battalion, one engineer battalion, one motor transport, one tank, and they split them in half. One half stayed in the Third Division the other half became the units in the Fourth Division. So then we got more replacements and then we went by train to the West Coast and we joined ... the 25th Marines went around by boat, the 23rd Marines and the 14th Marines went across by train, and we joined the 24th Marines on the West Coast and formed a Division.

KP: How long did your Division train together?

WK: We trained together from ... I'd say the first of September, we got there in August, from the ... first of September ... till the end of December when we loaded up to leave.

KP: And this was December of 19 ...

WK: ... '43 ... and we landed the January 30th of 1944 on Kwajalein.

KP: Which was your first landing?

WK: That was our first landing.

KP: Since you were a new division when you landed and it was your first experience.

WK: Yes.

KP: And how did it go?

WK: Well, ... there's always some things that happen, but it went extremely well, because of the training we had together before we left. ... It's like any other exercise now, if you take units and put them together and don't have time to rehearse and train, you're going to have trouble. But you always have to remember that the most confused operation in the world is an amphibious

exercise. And a lot of people don't understand that. The success of the amphibious exercise requires, relies on the training and the individual who is part of that organization. If everyone does their job, it comes out eventually. If somebody misses or a unit or something misses, then you have problems. But I often tell people they say, "My God, this is confusing." And I say "No, ... you've never been on an amphibious operation." You want to see confusion, you can swear that everything is messed up. You'll swear that nothing is going right. But it is. It's the case of where you're taking this large number of people and then you're putting them on a hostile beach and saying now do what we told you to do. Well, what happens? Some boats don't get there. Some people are hit and killed. Some people get onto the wrong beach and all of us, but it all relies on leadership starting at the bottom and going up. Your corporals, sergeants, lieutenants. See World War II was a lieutenants', a sergeants' and a lieutenants' war. That's where you won the war-- with the sergeants, with your ... units, and the lieutenant platoon leaders.

KP: Now did you realize this at the time?

WK: No. [laughter]

KP: I just thought I would ask that question, because ...

WK: No, I think we all thought that some guy would be standing up on a hill and saying now do this, now do that. [laughter]

KP: At the time you did not think that the war of the sergeant and the lieutenant.

WK: No, no.

KP: In making this comparison, what wars were fought at a higher level.

WK: Well, because it ended up being a, such an intense face-to-face war. You know, World War I the Germans decimated the French and the Americans with their artillery, never seeing them, you know, shooting from miles and miles away. Whereas, in this war when you hit the beach there was some guy facing you right there. So what had to happen, it had to be the sergeant, the corporals, the sergeants, the lieutenants who had to rally the people and continue on and do what had to be done.

KP: Stephen Ambrose makes the point in his discussion of D-day that in fact, he says it is really up to the average soldier and the NCO ...

WK: Yeah.

KP: ... are, in fact, crucial. In fact, he argues that American combat soldiers are very good at this even when they lose their officers, they can often be rallied, that they often exercise independent initiative.

WK: Because they're individuals. We ... train, train our people in this country to respond individually and do things extemporaneously, you know. When ... this fails, what do we do? We

try something else. Whereas if you look back at the history of the German soldier in particular, they were sort of categorized and they were in a corner. And if you took them out of that corner, then they were lost. Not the Americans. The Americans is so ingenious, he'll come up with something that make[s] it work. And that's what does it. That's what does it.

KP: Artillery is a bit more technological than infantry. Infantry is, in many ways a slug fest.

WK: Yeah ... It's physical and brutal.

KP: Yes, yes. What was the role of the your NCO in your unit? How important were they for making your artillery unit successful?

WK: Extremely important. Each section has its NCO in charge. Each gun has an NCO in charge. Then you have a gunnery sergeant who is in charge of ... all of those people. That's the technical firing part of it. Then you have an administrative NCO who is your first sergeant and so forth who does all the administration, you have a NCO in charge of ammunition and ammunition re-supply, you have another sergeant who's in charge of the motor transport for all of your motor transport. Another sergeant is in charge of survey. And another sergeant ... is in charge of the fire direction. All very key positions. All have to know and do their job for you to function or else you just, you might as well stay on the ship and not ... go ashore. And it's very critical, because as the battery commander and who is in charge of the whole thing, who works more closely with the battalion commander and that sort of thing for reconnaissance and movement and that and the executive officer who runs that firing unit, they rely heavily on those people knowing the job and doing the job. Because you can't go out and do each individual job. You've got to have people who can do it. ... That's why you have the gunnery sergeant who oversees certain things and the first sergeant who oversees others. So it's, it's very important. But see, this is the strength of the American. The individual is an intelligent guy who you can train, knows his job, does his job. He responds to leadership. If it's good leadership, he'll respond to it. If it's bad leadership, he'll tell you.

KP: Initially did you have any problems in your artillery battery that needed to be worked out?

WK: Oh, I had a problem with one NCO that I had to relieve. And it was a case, when I look back on it now, we were in a very, very intense situation where we were firing ... to stop a counterattack by the Japanese. And we were firing. I mean we were pouring the stuff out of there and we were interested in getting the information back. In other words, when you were firing by battery, you had to get each section chief to report in saying ready to fire and so forth. This one section, I'm waiting and I'm waiting and I finally say, "Sergeant so and so, we're waiting for you." Well he issued an expletive to me as the lieutenant and I, we fired and I said, "Sergeant take off your headset and give it to the corporal" who, the corporal's dead now too, the sergeant's still alive. I saw him about three years ago. ... "And you're relieved. And I relieved him and we transferred him to another unit out of artillery. But that was the only time I had any problem. This guy, I guess, didn't ... he was reacting to the situation and just said something he shouldn't have said.

KP: You mentioned that on your first landing you saw a dead Japanese soldier. You said that

was not the first time you saw a dead body in the war. What was the first time?

WK: Oh not in war. But I mean dead bodies as far as automobile accidents ...

KP: Oh, okay.

WK: No that was the first one. And, of course, as we got into to it there were a lot more, but ...

KP: Starting with your first amphibious assault. How close did you get to the enemy? You were you were a field observer.

WK: You get very close. You get very close. They were running in front of you. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever have hostile fire aimed at you?

WK: Aimed at us? Well somebody was shooting at you. You never knew sometimes who it was. But you hear it zap past your ear.

KP: Oh, so you did feel the ...

WK: Oh yeah. They crack when they go by.

KP: At times, how scared were you?

WK: I ... you're very scared. Anybody who says they're not scared is a damn fool or a liar. You're scared, because you know somebody out there is trying to kill you and so you're scared. I think ... you fear more of the mortar and artillery fire directed at you, because there's no way that you can duck or do anything. ...

It's going to go, and you're going to go with it. Whereas with rifle fire there's certain things you can take, you know, and crawl and get behind something or something like that. But that scares you pretty badly, because you never know where the next one's coming.

KP: I remember talking to Tom Kindre, and he said that when he got into the war, he had this romantic notion of the war, but he quickly realized ...

WK: They're shooting back. [laughter]

KP: Yes. He ended up not serving in the infantry, but this was his initial assignment when he was traveling to North Africa. Upon arrival he was assigned to another branch and taken out of infantry. He was disappointed because he wanted to go into infantry. Several months later when he learned more about the war first-hand, he realized that he probably would have been dead if he stayed in the infantry. In your first combat action, did you think that you made the worst mistake of your life?

WK: Oh, no.

KP: You were really at that point ...

WK: No, I knew that I was there and I made the choice and I was sticking with it so, no.

KP: Did you ever get used to combat?

WK: No, I don't think you ever do. You, you, learn to live with it. You learn there are certain things you do and you don't do. But I don't think anybody ever gets used to it. If you do, ... I think you got a problem in your head if you get used to it. What you do is you adjust I guess is the best way to say it. You adjust to what's happening and you know there's certain actions you have to take to try to prolong your life so that you don't do something foolish and get yourself killed.

KP: Now looking back on your first sort of invasion, did you do foolish stuff that in later invasions you just thought ...

WK: Yeah, after ...

KP: Why did I do that? What was I thinking?

WK: Yeah, after we cleared the thing, you know, got off the beach and got out of some hostile fire, got up and start walking around as if we were on a stroll and there were still Japanese soldiers in some of the trenches and pits on the other side and, of course, you did it. ... I was with a battalion commander who I always thought was a little nuts. And you know he's going to up and let's fix bayonets and charge and I said, under my breath, "You know this guy doesn't know that he has three infantry companies here who are supposed to do all of this sort of stuff." Not the battalion commander, but it works out. I think you adjust to it, but you never really get used to it.

KP: Could tell us something more about McFarlane.

WK: McFarlane was reserve and he was a justice of the peace in private life in California and a big guy, hard of hearing, and there were always lots of funny stories you can tell about ... his being hard of hearing, but the funny part is he was still the battalion commander on Iwo Jima. He was on the shore in Iwo Jima I think 30 seconds. He got out of the boat a roundlanded, hit him in the rear end, got back in the same boat and was evacuated and we never saw him him again. He wasn't killed but, you know, he was out of the war. That was it. That was his 30 seconds ... [laughter]

KP: On Iwo Jima.

WK: Yeah, on Iwo Jima. Yeah, got hit right in the rear.

KP: I guess before going back, your commanders left a distinctive impression on you.

WK: Oh, yeah.

KP: Because you remembered all of them. And I guess I want to ask you about Colonel DeHaven?

WK: Yeah, Louie DeHaven. Colonel DeHaven was a very handsome guy. World War I Navy Cross, ... very intelligent.

KP: Was he regular marine?

WK: Regular, but he was an alcoholic. And he kept the regiment through Saipan and Tinian. They transferred him up into corps artillery, amphibious corps artillery where they had five or six battalions, with the idea, I guess, he was going to make brigadier general. He went out to Guam where these battalions were stationed and he was drinking one night. And he went down in the mess hall and asked the cook to fry him a steak. The cook said, the lockers are locked and I don't have the key. I'm here to clean up and ... make the coffee and that sort of stuff for tomorrow morning, but I have no key ... to the meat locker. He pulled out his .45 and he shot the guy in the leg. Well, the next day DeHaven was on a plane back to the United States, was retired at his permanent rank which was lieutenant colonel. He lived in San Diego and didn't stop drinking until he had a serious automobile accident and almost killed him and his wife. And then he finally stopped. Well he lived to be 97 years old. But the guy, it was a real crying shame, because he was bright, when he was sober he was a great guy.

Like we had a club, a little club for the regiment, and, of course, we would go in there at night and all lieutenants and captains and raise hell, and we'd be in there and he would walk in. And he'd look at his watch and he'd say, "The bar closes in fifteen minutes." And everybody'd run up and get a drink. About a half an hour later he'd say "The bar is open for another half hour." And this would go on until after midnight. You know, in fact, the thing was supposed to be closed at ten o'clock. Stop, you know, and everybody get back into the tent and go to sleep so you could do your work. Well, he would do this kind of stuff and the troops knew it and even the enlisted troops knew it.

KP: Knew that he was a heavy drinker?

WK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a shame, because the guy was a bright guy.

KP: Was that common in the old marine corps?

WK: You had a lot of heavy drinking. Yeah.

KP: What about the new reserves?

WK: Well we did it under ... certain conditions. Right, you know, after you got back from a combat situation there'd be two or three very, very quiet nights and days. You're thinking about all of the guys that got killed and everything. And then it would begin and it would pick up and then just prior to going, you knew damn well that there wasn't going to be anything to drink for a

another three or four months, so it would get heavy. But, never to the alcoholic thing like ... this.

KP: You did not notice other people, especially other officers, with the same type of drinking problem.

WK: No, no.

KP: In other words, DeHaven's drinking problem you knew ...

WK: We knew ... he had a problem. There were a couple other regular officers who were on his staff who were the same way. But generally, and then I knew some over in the infantry regiments regular officers who were that way too. I think generally that the drinking was pretty bad. It has ... really cut down in the service, now, in the marine corp. It just isn't tolerated anymore.

KP: Like it was say a couple years ago.

WK: Like it was. Yeah. It just isn't tolerated.

KP: What about smoking?

WK: Oh God, everybody smoked like a smokestack, you know. Free cigarettes, free cigars.

KP: Interesting in fact Stephen Ambrose made a point, that everyone got I think it was two cartons of cigarettes when they boarded the ship for D-Day. Did you get similar cartons before invasions?

WK: Oh yeah, we ... the American Legion and the VFW would send these ... big boxes of free cigarettes and guys would, you know, they could get all the cigarettes they wanted. Well even if they didn't, they could buy them for five cents a pack. So you had, there was a tremendous amount of smoking that went [on], tremendous amount. I never smoked cigarettes. I used to smoke a cigar once in a while, but never during World War II, I really didn't begin that until after the war and I stopped that. But smoking, very, very heavy. Everybody smoked.

KP: Now, you had mentioned that you spent quite a bit a time in Hawaii during the war. In fact, that was your home base.

WK: That was our home base for retraining.

KP: How much of Hawaii did you get to see when you were down in training?

WK: Well I got to Oahu, we spent a day or two over there at Pearl Harbor and looking around the place and all of Maui all of that island. But I never went over to the big island Hawaii or ... any of the other islands.

KP: You mentioned earlier before we formally began the interview that you had access to plenty of milkshakes before leaving Maui.

WK: There was a dairy farm on Maui. We were very, very lucky. So one of the things, you say well I can't believe these hard, tough marines want milkshakes and milk. But the first thing these guys would head for would be downtown. There were several small ... towns and cities, down to what we called the drug store ... in those days. And they would [have] milkshakes, they'd drink two or three milkshakes. They just couldn't get enough milk. It was ... amazing when you saw this happen. Well, we were lucky we had fresh milk all the time, which was great.

KP: So this was one of the things that you really missed when you were out on amphibious assault.

WK: Fresh milk, fresh eggs, were the two thing you missed the most I think. You had a lot of recombined milk. Not as good tasting as it is today. A lot of dried vegetables that were recombined with water. Tasted horrible. They tasted like perfume. Most of them, I don't know why, I never could figure out why they tasted that way. Like red beets and carrots and potatoes and that sort of stuff it's, you endured and ate because you-- there wasn't anything else to eat. [laughter] But it was horrible. And finally, when we got into combat, of course, we had K-rations out of the box or later C-rations, then ten-and-one rations, where one box would hold enough rations for ten men for one day. Well that would have a big can of fruit. Would have fruit juice in it. Would have some cereal that you could combine, there was never any milk, but you could combine it with powdered milk or water to eat cereal, and it was a much better ration. So, it got a little better as it went along.

KP: Yes, because I have heard of the ten and one.

WK: Yeah. Well they had five and ones and ten and ones. Five rations ...

KP: When did the five and ones and ten and ones come into use?

WK: Saipan was when we first had them. Saipan was the first time we got them. They put-- come in a carton about like this, this and about that high and all of the ingredients were in there. And they were to be for a squad or for a section. Enough rations. They would each ... guy would get a box for his section. But they were generally pretty good as compared to K-rations and C-rations.

KP: The marine corps have been given a lot of credit for developing the doctrine of amphibious assault during the inter-war years.

WK: Yeah.

KP: In a sense, they saved the role of the marine corps and redefined there role from had traditionally been an police force aboard ship who prevented mutinies.

WK: Yeah.

KP: How did the marine corps change while you were in there in terms of the equipment. You

mentioned that the rations had improved?

WK: Well, the way it changed as it related to amphibious operations. When I first went in, the marine corps did not have the LCVP with a ramp in the front nor did we have the tractors. They were developed shortly thereafter. So we used to make landings at Camp LeJeune with ... pack howitzers with a boat that had no ramp and you had to have big heavy strong guys. They would lift these pack howitzers in pieces-- with bars in the surf, over the side, take them on the beach, put them together, and then man handle them off the beach. Well that changed when Higgins developed his LCVP. Then you could just back that thing in, hook to a jeep, and when you hit the beach, out you went with it.

From there the next thing was the development of the amphibious tractors. The original ones did not have ramps as I pointed out. Later they developed them with a ramp so that you could drop the ramp, the guys could come out the back and both sides. You could also take cargo and get the cargo out without having to have a hoist or a boom, or something to lift it out. The other development was the DWK, where these were cargo handling originally, and then they found out that we could put a 105 howitzer in them with narrow wheels and and one of them had an A-frame on the back. And you would pull the DWK with the howitzer and up behind that put a hook on your sling, lift the howitzer out, the DWK would pull away, and you put your howitzer on the ground and then you hook it up to the DWK and take off like that. Those were the kind of things and, well weapons also, you know, the M-1 rifles one of the greatest things that ever happened. That was a tremendous weapon. And ...

KP: What about in terms of the battle gear that you wore?

WK: ... When we first [started] we had World War I 782 gear. That's the mess kits, the tents, the ...

KP: When you started out?

WK: The leggings. In fact when we first landed, the first few landings we had to-- we wore leggings.

KP: On your first landing you had, in fact, worn leggings.

KP: And then after that you found out that the damn sand got in them and just ground the hell out of your legs. So you did away-- we just didn't wear 'em and you just had high top shoe and your socks and then your pants hung loosely. Because then you only had sand in your shoes. The other way you had sand grinding your legs, sand in your shoes, because ... no matter what beach you're on in any part of the world there's sand in that water and it gets inside.

So that was a step forward there with equipment and then cartridge belts with slings so that you could hang them over your shoulders and then if you went in the water you could just throw your arms off like this and you lost that extra weight so it wouldn't pull you down. That type of thing and then you developed, of course, new-- they came out with a new pack where you had two pieces. Where you could put certain things in the bottom part [and] certain things in the top.

And when you got on the beach you threw everything in one pile. A unit would throw it in the pile as they went through and they would bring it up to you later. It was all stenciled with unit number and everything. But you kept the top part which had your rations, your gear for your teeth, toothbrush and toothpaste and so forth. And, most of your bandolier you carried your extra ammunition, some carried them over their shoulders and so forth. So that was a development, the pack. The helmet. You got away from that flat thing from World War I and you developed a helmet which gave you some protection in the back of your neck or your head.

KP: Looking back on these changes you stated you observed, did you appreciate these changes as they were happening? Did you think they made sense? You mentioned the leggings, so obviously so were clearly beneficial.

WK: Oh yeah. ... Each one was a step forward. Yeah, there was no question that everybody recognized that it was better than what we'd had before. You were actually moving forward and getting better so that worked out well that way.

KP: Some people who I have interviewed have been in the navy and they have been struck by the fact that dangers existed in the navy in terms of typhoons and enemy attack, but in some ways it is, especially for an officer, a very comfortable life. Food is fairly good ...

WK: White sheets.

KP: White sheets.

WK: Great food.

KP: Yes. And it is in many ways, except when you hit ports, it is a pretty self-contained world. It is like being in America.

WK: Yeah. You're in your own world.

KP: Yeah. But in the marines you're sort of, you're part of the navy in many ways. You're out on a navy ship and then was it a real stark contrast to go from Hawaii on a navy ship and then within a matter of hours or minutes to go from this nice safe, ship ... ?

WK: Back to the mud and crud. Yeah, ... it's an adjustment. Of course, I always liked being on those navy ships, because you had showers, white sheets. Because when we were in the camps, in our training camps, all we had was a blanket and a mattress and a cot--a canvas cot and that was it. Pretty austere in the marine corp. And, of course, when you go in the combat zone all you had was a hole. But, yeah there is an adjustment there and it's quite dramatic going from that nice comfortable world into the ... mess. But, that's part of life. Part of the marine corps life and you adjust to it.

KP: And you as an officer, where, when you were transported where were you stationed? Where were you bunked? And where were your men?

WK: Well, if we were out on a LST usually an officer bunked in with a navy officer in one ... of their cabins. You usually bunked with them based on your rank. When I was a forward observer going out, we were in a-- you were down in a hold where they put 25 or 30 officers in one compartment. Usually hotter than hell, no air. The one ship I was on the **Sheridan**, we were right behind the heat from the engine room, in fact you couldn't stand it at night. We would go out and sleep on the deck. You just couldn't sleep in there. On my way to Iwo, I was in a compartment, we were on the **USS Bayfield** which was a coast guard transport. There were ten of us in one compartment. Ten officers.

KP: How big were the compartments?

WK: (laughter) I guess from here to there probably, ...

KP: So not more than a couple of feet.

WK: ... Well you had enough room for your bunk and your pack. And that sort of stuff you threw on the end of the bunk.

KP: And your men, were they on the transport?

WK: They were down, they were in the hold where they would sometimes be ten and eleven stacked high with about this much, with about eighteen inches between the canvas and the next guy. ... You know, it's ... [when you] think back on it now, it was ... really brutal. Now all the ships are air conditioned. All of these new ships are air conditioned.

KP: At that time.

WK: No, they weren't then. And it's a disadvantage. The air conditioning is a disadvantage, because if you're going into a hot climate, you come off that air conditioned ship and hit that heat. We had a couple of exercises in the Caribbean when I was on an air conditioned ships in 1962 and '63, they hit that heat, and boy it drops 'em like flies.

KP: Really, you could ...

WK: Yeah. ... It's not good. It's not good. If you know you're going to do this, there should be several days in which you try to make the transition.

KP: Wean them off.

WK: Wean them off the air conditioning, yeah.

KP: How interesting. What did you and your men do when aboard a transport?

WK: Well, we would get them up on deck and hold school. They would play cards, you know, mostly play cards, write letters and then we would hold so many hours of school on the operation that we were going into, so many hours a day. But you could only do so much, because boredom

sets in. But mostly they played cards and went to chow three times a day and that was it.

KP: What about the role of chaplain in your unit?

WK: Very important, very important. Good ones were good, some we could have left behind.

KP: Now ...

WK: We had some very good ones. And it didn't make any difference of denomination. The good chaplain had as many other than his denomination who believed in him and would, you know, coordinate with him, as ... anybody else. He had Catholics, he had Jews, he had guys who would go to him with their problems. The good ones.

KP: And when you say bad, how bad?

WK: Well, we had one in Korea, when I was in Korea, who just didn't believe the commanding officer, who later became a lieutenant general. He was a lieutenant colonel at the time, I was his exec as a major. And he really meant what he said and he ran that organization and he ran that camp. And there was a strict law, no drinking at night because of fires. One tent had caught fire in the division, the guys had been drinking the tent caught fire and it killed two or three people. So at nighttime there were two things, one-- no drinking in the tent, and at ten o'clock the fire went out, because everybody went in the sleeping bags. Well this guy would bring beer into [the tent] and the colonel found out about it. And he sacked him. He got him out of there. And he should have known better. It had nothing to do with their morale. You know drinking at night like that had nothing to do with morale.

KP: Did your marines often attend services?

WK: The closer you got to combat, the more they were there.

KP: Oh, so it took real combat ...

WK: Those ... when you're in camp those are who were from a background where religion was part of their life, they went to services. But as you got closer to combat the more people at the services. So ...

KP: So that ...

WK: Everybody wanted to get a word in I guess.

KP: So there are no atheists in foxholes as the famous slogan goes.

WK: There are no atheists in the foxhole. No. I think that's generally true, generally true.

KP: You saw the enemy very close up. What were your initial perceptions of the enemy? You mentioned earlier that you initially thought the enemy did not have very good eyesight, but you

quickly changed that view. You also encountered a dead enemy soldiers. What were your perceptions going into the war? How did combat change that?

WK: Well, it changes very abruptly, because you suddenly realize, see some guys get killed thinking that these people were like us, you know. Oh, they're like us. You know, oh they like us, you know everything going to be all right. You find that they wanted to kill you. So what is your reaction? Two things either you kill them or you make sure you don't get killed by them. And I think generally that's the greatest change that takes place. You find out that there are no friends out there when you're in combat like this. They're the enemy. They're doing what they were trained to do and that is to kill the enemy which is yourself. And that you better do your job or else you'll become a causality and nobody'll ever know that you somehow had a feeling other than that feeling toward these people.

KP: The fighting in the Pacific was quite brutal, particularly in Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Did attitudes harden toward Japanese over the course of the war?

WK: They hardened right after Kwajalein because we lost a 150 men killed in Kwajalein. So they hardened right away. You knew you were in it. So by the time we got to Saipan, there wasn't anyone anymore who believed that this was other than something that was going to be tough and brutal. It hardens very quickly.

KP: Did you ever take any Japanese prisoners?

WK: No.

KP: ... Japanese, you know, where you actually...

WK: Not our unit, no.

KP: Yes.

WK: But, one morning on Tinian after the island was secured. We had even covered the guns, we were attacked by about twelve of them out of a cane field. But, they were, all twelve of those were killed and we didn't take any prisoners, because they had the rifles, pistols, swords, came after our guys. And it was just at ... daybreak and I was sitting there talking to this warrant officer, I told you about the marine gunner. We were-- I was sitting in a jeep and he was standing there, we were drinking a cup of coffee. And, no windshield on the jeep, no top or anything. And some guy hollers, "Japs!" And I look over to the cane field, because I knew what was on this side and here they're coming right out of that cane field. I have no weapon, I got a pair of shoes, [a] pair of trousers on, nothing. I have no weapon. So I took off [to] where my weapon was, which was where the five direction area was. Got my pistol, told the kid to call the battalion and tell him we got Japs coming out of the cane field. By the time I got my pistol, got outside, of course, everybody had stirred. There was one guy down on the section close to where they came out, guy by the name of (Rossi?) from Cleveland. He had a BAR standing right at his hip and he cracked that thing loose and they were dropping like flies. Another one got all the way in to where the cooks were and he had a sword. And the cook jumped into the trailer, which had a

canvas over it to get his rifle. He came out, the Jap came around, he took a swing at him with a rifle butt, knocked the Jap down. He got up and went this way. The Jap got up and chased him with the sword. So he was trying to get a clip into his rifle, you know, so he could shoot. And he finally got the clip in and he turned around and he shot the Japanese guy that had a sword.

KP: So you did see some Japanese at close range?

WK: Oh yeah. They were close. Too close for comfort.

KP: Was that the closest to contact you had?

WK: Well, it's closest I knew of.

KP: Yeah.

WK: You may have been closer and didn't know it.

KP: Yeah. But in terms of actually seeing Japanese soldiers?

WK: Seeing, yeah. Well we had one that came out of a cave behind our position on Saipan and got a guy with a sword. It wasn't one of our own. And he was from another battalion. Got him right here and then one of our guys shot again and I think he really shot our guy on the side. 'Cause I had looked-- I went over to talk to this kid he was still alive and you could look down to where the shoulder and the neck intersected. It was cut open and you could look inside and see the muscle. There was hardly any blood and I could see the muscle and everything, but he had gotten wounded in the side and I think it was [a] rifle [that] got him.

KP: So he ...

WK: He died, yeah. But, this guy came out of the thing right behind us. We didn't even know he was there.

KP: You saw combat very close at hand, both people shooting at you, but also from close quarters. How did it affect your whole attitude towards the war and towards the enemy?

WK: Well, you knew, in fact, had we had gone to Japan we'd probably still be there. You know you look at the terrain of that place. What you knew was that it was going to be tough and brutal, if you had to go to the homeland. You knew you had to get this job done. What you kept thinking was, now I've been through four of these, is the next one my last one?

KP: You did. You did four?

WK: Oh yeah. You say, you know, your time-- your number runs out after awhile. Because a lot of your friends get killed and you're surviving and ...

KP: How many of your friends did in fact get killed?

WK: Guys out of my class that were commissioned together. Who were in the same division. There were about five that got killed. They were killed as lieutenants and captains. And, of course, some of our enlisted got killed. And some of these, we had other times when a whole batch of Japs came at us. Every position, we were in Saipan too when we got hit. We were always out on the flank. G, H, and I. I is over here, G is here, H is in the middle, I is out here.

KP: Since you mentioned Saipan, this landing was controversial, in part because you had the 27th Division there with you.

WK: Yeah. General Smith and General Smith.

KP: Yes, and do you have any impressions of what happened with the 27th? And there was a controversy over the relief?

WK: Well, in my mind it ... the only failing on the General Smith's part, I guess, was the fact that he didn't come down on some of his junior officers. I know for a fact that at night when you finally, the attack stops, you got to tie in so there are no gaps in your lines. And our guys would go to tie in and you couldn't find anybody. You'd find the troops, but you never found any officers. And they were always back somewhere. And that's not the way we, the marine corps fights. The troops are here, the officers are here. You're right with 'em and yeah ...

KP: You noticed that in the 27th?

WK: In talking ... with some of my friends who were in the infantry, afterward or during this thing, when you run into 'em or after when we got back to Maui. They were very upset about that fact that these troops were left by themselves. No officers there and lots of times gaps, which should have been filled. And since there were no officers there, those troops did what they would do any time, they're going to protect themselves. So they didn't at many times ...

KP: They didn't spread out.

WK: ... at many times they did not tie in. What we call tying in, so that this unit knows where this unit is and that if there's a gap there, that you cover it with artillery.

KP: And this was noticed among the junior officers ?

WK: Very noticeable, yeah. And then another one, was that the guys that hit us, three different times, had come out of an area down south of the airfield which was supposed to be closed off by an army unit. And hell they were coming through there just like coming down a highway. And they would come through at night and they would hit units on the way as they came through. So it was very noticeable. So I feel sorry for the general who was relieved, but I guess it was his fault. He was not exercising the leadership that he should have exercised. And I feel sorry for General Smith, Howlin Mad Smith, because he had to do it. You know, here he is, he's the big SB, because he had to do this. And if it was ... a marine, nobody would have ever said a word.

KP: Now it became an army versus marine.

WK: It became army versus marine thing, and it was too bad. So, again, it was nothing to do with the individual soldier in the army. It had to do with the leadership at the junior and middle level, the ... captains and the lieutenants, and the lieutenant colonels.

KP: Talking about leadership, we were sort of going up your chain of command, General Cates was in Guadalcanal. And did you have any contact with him or any impressions of him?

WK: Yeah, ... he had the First Marines. He was the regimental commander of the First Marines on Guadalcanal. He was a very fine officer. World War I, he was a lieutenant. And at Belleau Wood, where they had a hell of a problem. Again units were decimated and they were afraid of the Germans breaking through. He sent a message, a famous message which most marines know. He said, "I have nobody on my left, nobody on my right, I will hold."

KP: So that you knew going into his division. How crucial was Cates in shaping and inspiring the division?

WK: He was very crucial. He had the experience of World War I as a junior officer. He had the experience of Guadalcanal as a regimental commander and he came in as a division commander and was-- he knew what had to be done. And he was a great leader. A very approachable guy, a general, a gentlemen. He was out of Tennessee I believe, yeah. A very approachable man. And knew what had to be done. Took care of his troops. I mean he took care of our division, there's no question about it.

KP: When you say ...

WK: I'm sure we got back to Maui, because of General Cates. [laughter]

KP: Oh really. Because of the fact, you could have been sent elsewhere.

WK: We could have stayed on Saipan. The original plan was for us to stay on Saipan and he said, "I can't train these people on this island. You got to get me back to where we can get replacements, and some decent training areas, and the weather is decent. And ..." Because it was hotter than hell. Saipan is brutally hot.

KP: Without air conditioning, too.

WK: Yeah. And he got us back to Maui and then he moved up. And when we came off, he was still, he was the CG on Iwo. And then he got us back from Iwo. But he was due to leave. He would not have been the division commander because he was moving up. Yeah, invasion of Japan, he wouldn't have been there.

KP: When you took on replacement after Kwajalein and after each ...

WK: Each time, yeah.

KP: How did that work integrating replacements into units?

WK: It works if you have time to train. It's a great way to get replacements. It's like one of the big problems on Iwo was they were sending replacements in to us while we were in there fighting. Boy that is brutal on those poor guys. They come in to a unit. They don't know anybody. Everybody's getting the hell kicked out of them. And they're supposed to fit in and do their job. And they don't even know the names of the people who are alongside of them. And talking to some of them afterwards, who came in as replacements, they said this was the one thing that they dreaded and the hardest thing to overcome. The fact that there was no one there that they knew who they could adjust to.

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

KP: You mentioned that the replacements had a very low survival rate and had a hard time integrating into the unit. If you could just expand on that.

WK: Well, what I meant was, or what I was saying there was that those who came in the heat of battle. The ideal thing is to have your replacements brought into your camp where you have an opportunity to train together, but those that came in in the heat of battle or were thrown into combat units, didn't know anyone, had a much higher casualty rate than regular units. Because one, [it was] their first ... situation in which they were in combat, two, they had no one that they knew who could literally lead them by the hand or help them. And so the casualty rate was quite high. It was not the way, not the way to do it.

KP: Now historians and military thinkers have looked at it and they have argued that, and I think you seem to be implying, that the best thing for a unit taking replacements is to be rotated back for further training. And that one of the advantages the marines had was their launching of periodic assaults. In a sense, you would fight in an island assault and then you left and had a chance to re-train. Do you think that is the case?

WK: Yeah. That was a ... very important thing for us out in the Pacific in the marine corps. We always had that opportunity to get out of that situation. Get your replacements, re-train, and get ready to go. Everybody could get-- become healthy again and, you know, you sort of re-charge your battery. And so it worked out well for us. But like units in Europe, for instance, where they would pull them out of the line. But hell they were ... end up being so close that they really weren't out of the line, get replacements, had no opportunity to go through a training mission or training exercise, and then be pushed back in again. It was very, very difficult for a lot of those younger people who went in to those units to, the example of-- is the Battle of the Bulge. A perfect example of how not to do it.

KP: I guess Iwo Jima, which is one of your most vivid memories, and since you were in artillery, one of the questions about the Iwo Jima controversy is the failure to use more naval bombardments. In artillery, from your perspective on artillery, did you agree? Do you subscribe to that? What was your sense of the time as you could remember it?

WK: Yeah. It would have helped considerably had that bombardment lasted for several more days prior to the landing. But where we ran into the greatest trouble, was where we turned and went south-- north I can't-- I forget which way, the opposite of Suribachi. Anyhow, but we ran into a position where they were dug in and had cement blockhouses that were several stories down into the ground. And the only way you ended up getting those out, in fact, we, you could sit there [and] watch their whole area be uncovered with artillery fire, naval gun fire, bombs blowing the sand away and then this structure begins to take place. And it was so strong and built so well, that it took days and you ended up having to go in and then literally hand to hand dig these people out. So it wouldn't have made any difference there. But what it would have done was taken some of those positions back that infiladed the beach from Suribachi and from the other side off the Yellow Beach where I landed. And they were able to enfilade out of cliffs. Now, it would have done away with that. Which would have meant that people who were killed on the beach and the equipment that was destroyed on the beach, probably would have gotten off the beach. But when you turned and started the other way, then you ran into trouble. It was less-- they hadn't had that opportunity to do it with Suribachi. And Suribachi fell within a matter of three days or so. Whereas the other thing took three weeks before they were able to, because they were dug in so well. That was the large part of the island like a pork chop. Suribachi was the end of the pork chop and then the big part was up here and that's where all the problems were.

KP: Now you landed on the first day and did you stay for the entire conflict?

WK: Yes, yes. I wasn't wounded and I stayed until the island was declared secured and then I, the infantry commander asked me if I wanted to stay and go back with them and I said, "Well, I may as well go back down to the unit and then I'll go back." So we packed up and went back to the artillery battalion that I was part of. And ... but I remember the doc, the medical officer, Ira B. Hardy, who was a tremendous surgeon and was the head of surgery at Boston General eventually before he died or retired and died. He brought out a little brandy and gave each of us a shot of brandy when we got back. And we stayed there, the next night we boarded an LST and pulled out into the ocean off the island and transferred from a T to an APA called the **USS Bollenger**. And one of the great things about the **Bollenger** was they had the new music of **Oklahoma** on their victrola. Not a ... record player, a victrola that you wind up. So we got to hear **Oklahoma** when we got aboard in the officers mess. So that was great. And we also had two Easter Sundays coming back. We crossed the international dateline coming back from there back from Maui on the **Bollenger**.

KP: Would you consider yourself very lucky in terms of surviving?

WK: Oh yeah. Yeah, I was-- anybody who survived that was lucky. Either wounded or killed you were lucky if you didn't get wounded or killed.

KP: How many of those in your unit were wounded or killed?

WK: Oh, geez I'm trying to think now. I was separated from them so it was hard to tell.

KP: Well at least the group you were with in your infantry unit?

WK: Well the infantry units were decimated. I remember one of the companies, had four company commanders in about six days. And a good friend of mine, a fellow by the name of Walt (Coakley?), he graduated from Princeton. We were from the same class commissioned together and everything, we knew each other real well. He was going up, he had been an embarkation officer, the first time he hadn't landed as an infantry, either a platoon commander or a company commander. So I saw him when he came in and I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going up to take a company." And the next time I saw him he came back through the headquarters of the infantry regiment on a stretcher. He'd been shot in the stomach and he died down on Guam. They flew him out where the planes were coming in. But in those days belly wounds ...

KP: Were ...

WK: Were-- they usually were fatal. So Walt (Coakley?) died. A fellow by the name of Breckenridge from Idaho ... was killed. And two or three died in the same compartment, who were, who I didn't know well who were company commanders were killed on Iwo. It was pretty, pretty hard on captains and lieutenants.

KP: Do you consider yourself quite ...

WK: Very lucky.

KP: Did you have any close calls?

WK: Well you had close ones. I was sitting there talking to the S-2 of the regiment and I got up and walked back to where I had my radio and my other stuff, turned around, sat down on a sand bag, and a round landed and blew that guy's leg off. And if I had been in there it could have blown my head off, you know. Which was a case of what two minutes, three minutes maybe. So you'd say well how, what made me get up. What made me terminate the conversation, get up, walk away? And then a round landed.

KP: Did it make you superstitious?

WK: Oh yeah. You become very shy of funny noises, I'll tell you when they're coming through the air. [laughter] And as I always tell people, you learn you don't stay in one place too long. You keep moving, move around, because you never know. But that killed several people. It killed a couple of corporals and wounded the regimental exec. Blew this kid's leg off. He was a second lieutenant, he was a Japanese linguist in America, you know. He wasn't Japanese-American, he was American, you know. [He was] a Japanese linguist. But he survived, but [it] blew his leg off. But it killed several corporals. And a lot of the medical officers who were up with the battalion got killed, because they were so vulnerable. The casualty rates were always pretty high. If you're in that kind of intense combat. See it's short, but it's very, very intense. It doesn't go on for months or go on for days, hours or days, but it's so intense that people.

KP: How many cases of battle fatigue did you witness?

WK: We had a couple, but normally it was from heat as much as anything. Heat caused that. Had we not had the heat, they probably would not have had that problem. But a combination of heat, exhaustion, apprehension, all of that and when you combined that, then you got guys who just couldn't go on anymore. But not too much, not too much.

KP: You did not witness it?

WK: No, I remember we had a couple of guys in the unit, but not much. And they came around, they came around.

KP: In other words you really did not lose that many from battle fatigue?

WK: No, the infantry units would lose a lot, because it's an entirely. We used to say they get thousand inch stare, they look but they don't see anything past a thousand inches and you could see it in their eyes. But, of course, that's a 24 hour a day situation where you're ... right in there.

KP: Artillery you are up there, but you are not at the very front.

WK: ... We're not quite that close, you know. Your ... greatest concern is counter artillery fire and infiltration. People who are bypassed. That's your biggest problem, which [is] what happened in Korea. A lot of that happened there.

KP: We will get to that. Yes, I want to ask you about Korea. Did you see the flag raising at Iwo Jima?

WK: I didn't see it when they did it, but it was ... as if an electric current hit the island and somebody ... I don't know whether somebody said look, turn or whatever, but I remember I turned and looked and guys were crying. It was just like a shot. There it was that beautiful flag.

KP: So you did see the flag?

WK: Yeah. Oh, it was on a pole, you couldn't miss it. As soon as you turned and, of course, there it was the American flag and everybody knew that we weren't going to get shot at from that direction anymore. It was going to be coming from this way. But it was just like an electric current hit. Because everybody seemed to just turn at one time and see that. ... You know, ... lot of these kids were crying. Just broke down and cried. But it was spectacular in that sense. But the other islands you know, there wasn't anything like that ...

KP: Iwo Jima was really frightening in ways different from fears you had at your first landing.

WK: Yeah, it was frightening the first landing.

KP: You didn't know if you were ...

WK: You didn't know what to expect. But it went so quickly, when by nightfall it was over for

us. The 24th Marines on the next island, they still had some problems on the next island the next morning. But for us, the 23rd Marines it was over by nightfall.

KP: But Iwo Jima on the other hand ...

WK: It was just brutal night after night, day after day. During the day, you know, out of a clear sky, stuff would hit that beach and would, as I said, it either hit something or somebody. And the people who were doing the ... beach party and that were unloading the supplies and that ...

KP: Never were secure.

WK: Never were secure and they ... deserve a lot of credit. Just kept right on going, you know, and bringing that stuff in.

KP: In other words, being on a beach in this case was sort of ...

WK: Was the worst place to be, worst place to be.

KP: Throughout the campaign.

WK: It was like D-Day. Guys were there said, "Get off the beach. It's the worst place." And ... it was there. You know, just like Kwajalein and Saipan after about four or five hours that was a safe place to be. But not on Iwo.

KP: So anyone having to do beach duty.

WK: No forget it. Stay right where you are. Stay as close to the front lines as you can get, because that was the safest place.

KP: Which really was not that safe either.

WK: No, ... compared to the beach it was safe. Yeah.

KP: Are there any other things about Iwo Jima that stick out?

WK: Well I think that the fact that you couldn't dig in the volcanic soil. You would dig and it would just keep coming in like this. You just couldn't dig a foxhole.

KP: Yes.

WK: The only way you could get any is if you could grab some sand bags, fill them up, and then build a barricade with sand bags. That's the only protection that people could get. They just couldn't, you couldn't dig in like you could on other islands and dig a foxhole and get inside. It was just brutal that way. ... It was relatively cool, not cold, but cool so you didn't have the heat situation that you had at the other places. It was a lot better that way. Didn't have the flies that we had on Saipan, Tinian, and Kwajalein. Didn't see any rats. ... On Kwajalein the rats were

running around that first night we were set up. Because we didn't know what was going to happen and rats running all over the place. You know, I think that island was loaded with rats. But one spectacular thing on Kwajalein, the first night D-day night, the fleet pulled in to that Atoll. Into that harbor and anchored.

KP: They got close.

WK: And I mean, talk about thumbing your nose at the Japanese fleet. They pulled in carriers, destroyers, cruisers, and it was a moonlight night and you could look out and look as far as you could see. You could see these ships anchored in there. Well they kept destroyers outside, you know, circling for protection against the submarine or anybody coming in. But I'll never forget the **USS Saratoga** was the one that was closest to us. There she sat in the moonlight anchored in there. So that's thumbing your nose at the fleet. It was great.

KP: The marine corps is part of the navy. What was your experience in terms of your relationship with the navy? You were on navy ships and you bunked with navy officers. Did you ever regret not joining the navy?

WK: No, I was glad I didn't when I saw what it looked like I saw there. There was a certain, you got to be careful how I say this. There was a certain feeling of, that they had a feeling of superiority.

KP: One person I interviewed said that one of the reasons that he left the navy because he inferred that it was very aristocratic.

WK: Yeah.

KP: In a sense the Annapolis people were not to give up power.

WK: That's right. ... Yeah, it was a feeling of, not arrogance, I guess as so much as superiority. And you felt that. You know, ... we would go in and we were in our dungarees, because ... we were going to go to war. And some of them got offended, because we had to eat in the mess with them, in the officer's mess, and we had to eat in dungarees. You know, I remember one guy said "What the hell you think we're going to do, bring our blues to sit here and eat with you guys? You know, we're going to go to war. We don't know where you're going." But you know they would come in with their khaki trousers, khaki shirt and a tie, the bell would ring before you could sit down. The whole thing. Very, very formal. And it I think a lot of it was resentment toward us. Because they objected to us sitting in there in our dungarees. I remember on one ship it became an issue until ... our commander finally went to the captain of the ship and said, "Hey, I don't know what the hell you guys think, but we're going to war and this is all we wear. This is what we bring. We don't bring our whites, and our blues and all this sort of stuff."

KP: So it sounds like the navy people expected formal dress.

WK: Some of these guys, really, you know, narrow minded thinking. Fortunately, ... usually it was isolated. But it did happen. In my experience it happened. Ships that I was on where they

resented us being there. They would resent that we would stay in the ward room. After dinner you'd come in to play cards or something, what else were we going to do, you know. Where were we gonna go? So we'd come into the ward room, play cards, sit in there 'til midnight or so and then go and crawl in the sack, go to sleep. But some of them resented that. They wanted to come into nice and quiet. Because the ward room would be filled with smoke you know, and everybody smoking. Hot. And they wanted to come into a nice cool place, have their cup of coffee, and privacy.

KP: And there's all of these marine officers.

WK: Oh, there we are, the whole mob. So that happens, that happens.

KP: So you when you had these experiences, I would not say soured on the navy, but you were ...

WK: Well, I was happy that I wasn't in the navy. And even after World War II and after Korea. Whenever you'd embark aboard ship, you know, you ran into some of that kind of stuff. You say to yourself why, you know. Society's changed. The world is changed.

KP: You got the impression that the navy really was in another ...

WK: They haven't changed that much.

KP: Really? And are there other examples that struck you during the war or after?

WK: Well, one thing that I think that I always felt that I deployed a lot with navy. I was exec of an MEU, where we had a marine expeditionary unit the colonel commanded, I was exec and then we had a navy admiral and his staff who was really the landing force commander. These guys just couldn't understand. And I guess it was a lack of education as far as ground combat was concerned, couldn't understand why we had to do certain things, why we were concerned that this would happen and this wouldn't happen. And you would sit there and explain it and you say to yourself, "Where the hell have these guys been?" And, but you had to do it to protect your own interests and to protect the interests of your marines. So that happened to me on that MEU deployment and where I was in a position, where I was elevated enough in rank and job that I got involved in this. Most of my other deployments I was part of the unit and someone else had the problem.

KP: But you did notice a clear distinction between navy and marine before this assignment?

WK: Yeah, there's a distinction.

KP: When you were confronted with a ridiculous rule about what to wear at mess before going into combat.

WK: Yeah, yeah.

KP: And then when you are actually interacting on a command level you continue to notice differences.

WK: Right. Yeah. There's a difference. And it still exists. It's still there.

KP: Do you think you would have advanced as far in the navy?

WK: Oh, I guess I would have. Probably further. [laughter] I don't know. I would have gone as far I'm sure. Whether I'd have gone any further or not it all depends on, I guess, ... happenstance or chance, but you know, you have to work at it, too. People always say well you know, but if you decide that you're going to stay and you want to get very high in rank, you have to work at it. I being a former reserve officer who took a regular commission, I guess at times never quite wanted to go that distance. I did my job, I did it well. But I didn't take any opportunity to ... polish apples or do anything else. 'Cause if I ... by nature I'm not that kind of person and I'll be damned if I was gonna to do it just for that purpose. But you have to work at it.

KP: Where were you when the atomic bomb was dropped?

WK: We were on Maui. And the sergeant, my sergeant, section chief came up and woke me up. And when he told me, he said, "... The war ended." They had a short-wave radio, and of course, ... after that first bomb was dropped the troops were around that radio 24 hours a day. And he came up and woke me up and said the war was over. So General Cates was the division commander. So, General Cates closed all the officers clubs for two days. Opened all of the enlisted clubs. They could drink beer 24 hours a day all they wanted. I remember walking down the second day and I think there were about three guys there and they had ... gotten all the beer they wanted in one day. Three guys sitting in there drinking beer, that was it. So then he closed the enlisted clubs and then he opened the officers clubs for 24 hours. But by that time most people, you know, that had worn off so there was no great celebration or drinking.

KP: But the first 24 hours were?

WK: Yeah. That was the troops. That was theirs.

KP: Have you ever thought before the bomb that the war was really going to last a while?

WK: Well, I'll tell you what I thought of. I remember sitting in chemistry class here at Rutgers with Dean, what the hell was his name? He was the head of the chemistry department. And I remember him saying to us, "We don't really know what would happen if a chain reaction begins. We don't know whether we could stop it." And I keep thinking, when I heard that first one I thought, "Really, boy oh! Has it stopped? You know, has that chain reaction stopped?"

KP: You were still here?

WK: Or what? And, of course, by the time several days went by and we dropped the another one I knew that somebody figured out how to do it without having the world just disintegrate. But I'll never forget, Dean Read, he was the ... he did all the lecturing in general chemistry. A

whole freshman class is in there and he's the lecturer. He would write with one hand and erase with the other. He never turned around to look at you.

KP: Oh, he would just keep going.

WK: And he was lecturing. And I remember this question came up about the atom. Whether or not the atom could be broken down or whether if it began, would the chain reaction stop or would it continue? And I'm thinking to myself with that bomb, when I heard about that bomb, I said to myself, "I wonder. [laughter] Is it still going on over there and we don't know it." But when we were there we were very happy, because we were getting ready to load to go to Japan.

KP: And how long did you think if you had to go to Japan would it take?

WK: Oh, it would have taken a long, long time. See the terrain is so compartmentalized in valleys and ridges and so forth. And they had issued to the Japanese people that the island or those islands were to be defended to the last person. They had issued pitchforks to women and children. If you can't use a gun or a sword or a spear, here's a pitchfork to use. And they would have done it. You know, it was so, that they were so ingrained. And so with this stuff they would have done it.

KP: Attitudes toward the Japanese were very, very hard.

WK: Yeah, very hard.

KP: Much harder than Germans.

WK: Yeah, very hard, harsh.

KP: And yet they do change. Did they change for you after the war ended? How did you feel towards Japan?

WK: Well, once I got there ...

KP: When did you arrive?

WK: I got there when I was in Korea, came over for five days and saw that, you know, they were like us. Human beings just like us. And the cities were, by that time, ... pretty modern. You know everything had gotten back to pretty much to normal. But I always had that feeling that an Asian never forgets. And there's a resentment, an undercurrent of resentment against us for dropping that bomb on them. But if you stop and think, that bomb killed 80,000 people, Hiroshima. And how many thousands were killed in these islands that they killed of our people. You know, they-- nobody never equates it that way. It was just the nature of how they were killed is what everybody, you know, feels so badly about. And I think nobody wants to see another one dropped. I'm one of those that said, "Okay that's it. Let's stop that sort of nonsense." But it was one way to stop the carnage that was going on because if we had gone in 80,000 casualties would have been a drop in the bucket. Going into Japan. It would have been

thousands, and thousands, and thousands killed. So in a sense, if those that were there were innocent, supposedly innocent civilians, that's ... too bad. But they would have killed thousands of our people who were also civilians who happened to be recruited into military service. Which, you know, our form of government we are all civilians who were recruited to be military and so in that sense, I ... don't have any remorse. Except I don't, certainly hope that we never do it again to anyone.

KP: You left the military, you left the marine corps. After World War II had you thought of making a career in the military?

WK: Well I was overseas for two years and about that time I'm ready to come home. And they said anybody who wants a regular commission, has to stay and go to China. And I said to hell with this I'm going home. I haven't seen my wife in two years and I'm gonna-- just for a regular commission. So I came out. I came home as a reserve and used up all my leave and went on inactive duty. And stayed in the, I would go two weeks in the summertime you know for training and that sort of thing. But then when Korea started I wanted to go back in. And I put in a letter and they said, "Well ... ". What was the first one I got. "Right now we don't need you and so forth." And then about six months later I got a letter saying-- ordering me back to active duty.

KP: So you had wanted to go?

WK: Yeah, yeah. So I went back on active duty. But I got to Korea just when it ended, when the fighting stopped. I got there after it stopped. So I didn't-- wasn't participating in the fighting in Korea.

KP: You did not participate in the landing at Inchon.

WK: No. I wasn't at Inchon.

KP: Or at the border.

WK: See when I went back in and was accepted for a regular commission, that first thing they did was send me to advanced field artillery school at Fort Sill. So I went out there and from there I went out to the West Coast thinking I was going to go straight from there to ... Korea. Instead myself and a couple of other guys they put us in the corps artillery unit for further training which we needed like a hole in the head. Coming out there. So finally we then were ordered overseas and before we got to Korea, what was it about a week before we got there, it ended.

KP: So you never saw fighting?

WK: No, I didn't see any fighting in Korea. But I went in I was exec of an artillery battalion, Fourth Battalion, Eleventh Marines right up on the (Inchon?) and worked for General Chaison. John Chaison, ... he was a lieutenant colonel. ... In fact, I was his exec when he had a regiment in LeJeune before he'd made-- when he was full colonel, before he made General. But he ... was a bright guy. He had a mind like a trap. You know, complete recovery of anything. He was a Harvard football player, but he was a scholar. And he became lieutenant general,

assistant commandant of the marine corps, retired and about two weeks later died on a handball court with a heart attack. So, he was a great guy to work for. I worked for another lieutenant colonel by the name of Bud (Coffey?) who was the same way. He could quote you stuff from the manuals. I said to him one time, I said, "How the hell do you do it?" He said, "I just don't forget what I read." [laughter] I said, "Well, I'm so glad to hear that." They were both great guys that I worked for.

KP: How long were you in Korea itself?

WK: About fifteen months.

KP: And that was your first real contact you with a civilian population?

WK: Yeah.

KP: Because Hawaii was a territory and Japan was an occupied country. What was your impression of Korea?

WK: Korea was devastated. It was actually, Seoul was a wasteland and the villages were depleted and they had begun to rebuild them. They took all of these cardboard cartons, if we got stuff in that's what they used for siding for their places. And it was just completely devastated. It was really, when you looked at it, it was depressing and cold. The coldest place I've ever been in my life. God it was cold, because it's so moist, you know, and so wet. But they're being as resourceful as they are I guess they turned it around now, it's very modern.

KP: Are you surprised how well Korea has done?

WK: Came around? I am. I didn't think they would.

KP: When you were there you felt this was the most God forsaken place?

WK: Well, I thought the Japanese had subjected these people to brutality for so many years. I didn't know whether they had the will to come out of that and rebuild like they've done. But they did it. And, of course, that's part of the Asia culture. The Asians are used to doing this over thousands of years where they are devastated and they rebuild. Somebody invades them and almost depletes them and then they rebuild again. So for them it was just something that had to be done again. And it was amazing how they've done that. But, they were-- we did a lot for them. We built schools for them while I was there. The battalion I was in-- we built schools. We did a lot of things to help them get back on their feet. But it's still very primitive, I guess the way they farm. They have very little modern machinery or anything like that.

KP: You have quite a bit of experience in agriculture. What struck you about Korean agriculture?

WK: A lot of back work. Everything was done by hand. They, the only thing they would plow the field with an oxen, then they would plant the rice by hand. They would harvest the rice by

hand. They would beat the grain out of the thing by hand. They would put it in sacks and put it on their back and carry it by hand over these paddies to a central place where a truck would meet and put them on the truck. Everything was back work. You know if you wanted to farm in this country you had ... to have a strong back.

KP: Yes.

WK: It was so different than what we, our modern equipment. And the way we're so used to our agriculture. But it was tough.

KP: Are there any other impressions that you have of Korea? How much contact was there between your marines and the population?

WK: Very little. I was advisor for a period of time to the Korean Marine Corps Artillery Battalion and that was the closest I came to any of them. As the battalion commander we would, of course, we were in contact everyday. I would go up to their unit and we would go through training and inspections and do this and do that. And then before I left he invited me to come down to Seoul to meet his family-- his wife and children. And, see what happened in those days, ... restaurants were classified. Americans could only eat in a Class A restaurant. Which meant it was inspected by American medical officers and the food fit to eat and clean and so forth. So you didn't go around, like in Japan you could go anywhere and eat. It was safe. Korea you couldn't do that. So I went down and he took me to meet his wife and family and then we went to dinner in a Class A restaurant and then that was it. I left. And then I had a Christmas card from him for a couple of years, but then he didn't send anymore, so I stopped. But that was ... the only contact I had with Koreans.

KP: What about your men? Did they go into town?

WK: No, they weren't allowed. They just weren't allowed into the villages, because of the prostitution and all of the problems.

KP: So in a sense, you were very much in a separate world.

WK: The only thing ... they were allowed to go into Japan for five days at a time. They'd fly 'em over and fly 'em back free of charge. But that was it. There was no association with Korean nationals at all.

KP: Really, and Japan was really the recreation spot.

WK: That was their R&R. Yeah. You went over Japan for R&R. Of course, ... when you got there ... you could go into a restaurant and eat there and you never had to worry about the food. Japanese are very clean people. Very, very clean. Which was another thing that we found out. You know, they're very, very clean. And their food is prepared carefully. But our troops just never got to go and associate with the individual Koreans. We just couldn't, couldn't take the chance of the black market. You had to watch that make sure that wasn't going on. And then illness, hepatitis. That was one of the things with the food you had to be careful of 'cause you

could pick up hepatitis. And, in fact, a good friend of mine, he had no idea where he got it. He said, "Christ I never ate in a Korean restaurant. I never eaten Korean food." But he could have picked it up from one of the Korean houseboys or something like that who washed dishes or did something. He could have gotten it that way.

KP: So you did hire Koreans?

WK: Yeah, the houseboys. We hired them to work, like the bartender.

KP: And clean.

WK: Yeah, and clean the kitchens. They would do the pots and pans, that sort of thing. And then we had ... the colonel and I had a houseboy who took care of our tent and who heated water for us in the morning for us to shave. It was colder than hell. Boy when you get out of that sleeping bag, whew, it was cold. So he would heat water for us before we ever got up so we could wash and shave in the morning. That was a luxury [in] Korea.

KP: Heating your water for you.

WK: Yeah. [laughter]

KP: Now you taught high school after you returned.

WK: Yes.

KP: After World War II and you went back into the marines for Korea, but never saw combat. Had you intended to make the marines a career?

WK: I wanted to when I came back in. I made up my mind. I wanted a regular commission to stay in.

KP: And what were some of your highlights of your career after Korea? What were some of your key assignments?

WK: Well, I went back. When I came back from overseas I went down to Second Division. I became an artillery battalion commander. I had the Fourth Battalion, Tenth Marines for a year. From there, I got to think of this. I wasn't down there very long. See I was down there, ... '54 and then '55 and where did I go from there? I'm trying to think of where I went from there. Fourth Battalion, Tenth-- I went out to school to Fort Leavenworth, a special weapons school atomic-- to become a weapons employment officer for artillery and for the division. So when I get back, I went up to the division to be the employment officer. So if we ever went to war I was the guy that had to put the bombs, figure out what bombs we were gonna to use, how much, whatever, whatever the target was. And from there I was transferred up to headquarters marine corps into the recruiting branch. And I was in the recruiting branch for two and a half years. And from there I went ... down to Quantico to staff college as a student. And you put in a whole year as a student. And after I finished a year they kept me on to be an instructor in the artillery naval gun

fire, atomic weapons section. So I stayed there for two and a half years, then the Cuban thing came. And they needed an artillery officer down in the Second Division so they came and said, "Any of you guys want to go?" I said, "I'll go right away." I wanted to get the hell out of Leseune. And they sent me down to Lejeune and I went down and I was on the division staff for a year that's when I became the Exec of the MEU that was a deployment from June, I guess, through October. We were down in the Caribbean.

KP: October 1962?

WK: Yeah. And then from there I came back and then went down to the artillery battalion. [And] was a artillery battalion commander again for a year, Third Battalion Tenth Marines. And then I moved up to regiment to be the Exec of a regiment for six months to a year. And then I got a set of orders out of the clear sky to go to Washington to be the executive officer at headquarters, battalion headquarters, marine corps, there was a full colonel as CO, I was the exec. After one year he got orders to go to China and General Greene, who was commandant called me from across the ... street and he said, "You're going to take the battalion and you're going to keep it as long as you do the job." So I was CO headquarters battalion. Headquarters marine corps for two years. I came up. I was passed over for colonel. And one of the reasons I think was the five years that I was out. A lot of us that came back in didn't get promoted above lieutenant colonel, you know.

KP: It was that clear.

WK: It was that final shot at us. That final shot they got. We didn't go. So I was supposed to go to Vietnam. And I had an opportunity to come back up to Atlantic Community College to be the director of admissions. So I went across to see the Chief of Staff who was General Buse. Who was born in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania. In fact, he was on the same staff that Cates was on in Guadalcanal. Bill Buse. So I came over and told him the situation and so he says, "Wally", by this time I'm 48 years old. He says, "I'm quitting, too. God damn." We are too old. These are his exact words. "We're too god damned old for this war. Go over, have a letter typed requesting retirement and I'll approve it and we'll retire you." Which they did. We had a big ceremony and everything and I retired and came up to Atlantic Community College to be director of admissions. And the first thing I found out that in education, they're not good administrators. [laughter] Even organizational ability and my administration ability, I became a dean of students. So I was the dean of students until I had put in my twenty years in education and then I retired from there as a dean of students of Atlantic Community College.

KP: I guess I ...

WK: Oh, in the interim while I was at Washington for the three years that I was in headquarters battalion, I took graduate work at night ...

KP: At American ...

WK: At American University and got my master's degree at American.

KP: You mentioned that you had done some additional artillery training in atomic warfare?

WK: Yes, ... yes. At Fort Leavenworth where they had the atomic training program ... there. And, of course, the marines and the army went to that school, because see you had an artillery weapon that was the eight inch howitzer had an atomic round. Later the 155 they developed one for the 155. And, of course, in the marine corps, where we use our own air, we had air delivered so that marine officers would get the training in both the ground and the air delivery. So that if you're the weapons deployment officer at the division level you ...

KP: When you say you would never want to see another atomic bomb dropped, you have a conception of ...

WK: Yes. I know what it can do.

KP: When did you think, if I can use the term, the use of atomic weapons was nuts? Did you think that atomic weapons could or should be used in battle? What was your thinking towards atomic bombs?

WK: Well, as soon as I when I got finished with the school out there and knew what the devastation was and what can be done innocently to people who were not even involved in the combat situation, but would may be be on the fringes or something like that. I said, you know, this is not the way to settle disagreements. Look, warfare is the worst way to settle them to begin with. And you know, warfare, when you stop and think of it warfare is idiotic. The people who have the differences are never the people who are, ... they're not the people who get killed.

KP: Yes.

WK: Up here, these people have the difference and down here these guys get killed. It's stupid. You know when you stop, when you just stop and analyze it. It's stupidity. Warfare is stupidity. And you try, I always try to tell people, "Hey there's a better way to settle disagreements. Sit down and talk." But warfare is stupidity.

KP: After World War II the marines were concerned with their future. In an age of atomic weapons, even the navy had some concerns. You were in the marine corps in the 1950s and early 1960s how did people on your level feel about concerns over the future of the corps, especially when you consider what atomic weapons did to marine corps doctrine?

WK: Yeah. Well the demise of the marine corps has always been advocated by a lot of army generals and even some navy admirals, which is hard to believe. And that's been ... for years. The only thing that I can see which keeps us from that particular situation is ... our success. Our successes far exceed anything that you could come up with almost in comparing it like or other military units in the United States. That and the fact of the specialty. The world is still more water than it is anything else. In today's environment it becomes very difficult, because of all of the sophisticated weapons that now exist and the ability to look at people in satellites and tell where they are and what they're going to do and so forth. However, if you just look at what's happened recently in Somalia and what's going on in Haiti right now and what went on in

Kuwait, it was still through the ocean that we got most of our people there. The airplane gets there, ... it has to have a place to land. If it doesn't have a place to land, then forget it. So that normally most of your combat units are still gonna be moved by water. Your supplies and everything else. So in that sense I think you can say that you need a marine corps, because of one, amphibious capabilities. Well we can train the army. But the army also has to be trained for large land warfare, for special operations, and land warfare and so forth. So you can't have them doing everything with everybody. So it just makes more sense to have a special landing force which paves the way for large units to go ashore and conduct the land warfare. And, also you need the navy to get them there. The air force has a role in pre-invasion bombardment, re-supply, all of that sort of thing. Combat, developing enough air power in the area to keep the area free of enemy air and so forth. So I can see that all of them need to exist now. The big problem you have today is how much can you afford. You also have to say how much can we not afford, because the minute we get to the point that some other large unit like Russia for instance, we're not finished with Russia yet. Russia's still a very, very significant factor. The minute you get to the point where they know they can take you, look out. Things are going to happen. So you always have to be looking over your shoulder. It's like the first guy looked across that little creek, saw that there was something over there that he liked. He picked up a big rock, went over and killed the guy, and took what he wanted. It's literally the same thing is happening. So you always have to be prepared. Africa is a tinder box. I don't think they can ever get coordinated and sophisticated and modernized enough to become a factor for quite a while. But if they ever all decided to get together, they could kick the hell out of the rest of the world and you would have a hard time stopping them. So, but Russia is the one that I still worry about. That's still not over. Like the other day they just elected a guy president of the Ukraine who is a died in the wool believer that Russia should still be powerful and all, you know, above everything and encompass all of the other small countries. So, it's going to be a problem.

KP: You mentioned that you felt you were destined to go to Vietnam. How do you feel about not going? What are your thoughts on Vietnam?

WK: I would've like[d] to have gone just for the experience so that I could talk from firsthand of what was going on there. As far as missing all the other, I was going to be exec of the headquarters battalion of the Third Marine Division which the only way I could have gotten killed was with a sapper or a bomb or you know something like that. But at that point I'd had enough. Our kids, one girl was coming out of college that year, another one was going in, my ...

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

KP: You were talking about your reasons for not going to Vietnam?

WK: And my wife was tired of moving and I knew I wasn't going to get promoted no matter what I did over there. I would have had to win ... the rest of the war ... by myself to get promoted. So I thought it's time to go. Let some other young officer a lot younger than I go take the job and work on his promotion. So, I decided to call it. That was it. It was enough.

KP: Now, Vietnam was not one of our most successful war at least in the sense that our efforts were sustained. Although in terms of the battlefield, we really do not ...

WK: We won the battles, we lost the war.

KP: Do you have any thoughts on that, given the fact that you were a career military officer and serving during much of the war?

WK: Well, I watched what took place. I was on the commandant's staff at the time. We went to staff meetings once a week where you get a briefing from the top people in the marine corps as to what was happening. What literally happened, and it's unfortunate, and it didn't happen in Desert Storm which was why we did as well as we did. The President of the United States was literally running the war from the White House. I would hear statements, and this is fact, "The enemy has entered a Battalion into South Vietnam. We are going to authorize another battalion of ours to go." And I'm saying to myself this is insanity. That we sit here, and we really want to win this thing. If we sit here, we wait-- they put one in, we put one in, they put one, we put one. That's why the whole thing never got off the ground. The war was never turned over to the military like it was to General Schwarzkopf. He had complete control with the Secretary of Defense to run that war. Which is the way it is supposed to be. Once the decision is made by the Congress and if it is approved, then turn it over to the military and they run the war. President Johnson didn't let that happen. He literally kept his finger on stuff and as a result, Westmoreland who gets the blame for a lot of this, really never had a free reign to run that war the way it should have been done. And it would have been done a lot differently than it ended up. We just had a containment. That's what it ended up.

KP: So when you say you were on the commandant's staff, this was very apparent to you.

WK: Yes.

KP: Listening to the presidential orders.

WK: I would listen to that every week and couldn't believe what I was hearing.

KP: And you would get these orders from the White House?

WK: Yeah. That's where it came. And you didn't interject anything in. Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff could not make a decision to send a unit in without the president's approval.

KP: What about the sort of management of combat in Vietnam? How far could presidential down could president order go?

WK: Well, the way it was controlled was by numbers. See by numbers and control of where you could bomb. That was another thing. You know, you couldn't go up and bomb northern, Nixon got into all kinds of trouble, because he bombed the border into Cambodia where they were all coming down. Got into all kinds of trouble for that. So you really were never-- the military ... Joint Chiefs and the Defense Secretary were never really allowed to carry that war out the way it should have been. It wouldn't have lasted as long as it did. We wouldn't have had that turmoil

that we had.

KP: What was the thinking on the commandant's staff? What did they want done?

WK: Frustration was one of the things that everybody [felt]. And they believed as most of us that were in the military, that the only way you do this is apply like your doctrine, when, you apply the force that is needed to do the job and that's it. And we were never allowed to concentrate and apply that kind of force.

KP: So what were the kind of force would you have applied?

WK: They would've-- more would have been to bomb of North Vietnam. That, you know, to really bomb it. Close off the harbors so that nothing can come in and bomb where they were coming in from China. You know close that off and then you would have had a better chance of [winning]. Of course, one of the things that you can't overlook there was a corrupt government in South Vietnam and usually you can't ... work well with a corrupt government. It just doesn't work out.

KP: Did you sense that this at the time?

WK: Yes.

KP: Frustrating?

WK: Very frustrating. ... People were frustrated. And it dragged on so long that a lot of things happened to our military that shouldn't have happened like the frag program, you know these guys were fragging, you know NCO's and officers, that kind of stuff. ... Most of that is out of frustration, too. Because they were getting shot at and people were getting killed and they were getting no where. So that, all of that stuff reared its ugly head.

KP: During your service on the commandant's staff, what was your sense about how the marine corps had changed? How did the Vietnam War had affect the corps?

WK: Well, ... morale and discipline began to deteriorate. No question about it. You can ask any marine who served during that time who served in Vietnam. I had a first sergeant tell me, he said, "I couldn't believe what I saw happening there, the way the morale and the discipline had deteriorated." Drugs had ... come in so heavily. And it was only when the marine corps finally said, "Drugs you're out." That it finally stopped. Now, is it a hundred percent? I'm sure that there are some guys who are still [on it], but this had become rampant. In the marine corps discipline was beginning to deteriorate and which in effect was causing morale problems. And until they finally drew the line and said, "If you're guilty of using drugs, you're out. And you go." It finally, they finally got a handle on it and then they got everything back to normal. But that was ... so bad about that. Out there. The freedom. Drugs were everywhere. They could get their hands on drugs without any problem. And when ... people were under the influence of drugs, things were done that were not rational. And a lot of guys got killed probably because of that. Can I prove it? No, I can't prove it, but I'm sure it happened.

KP: What other memories do you have? You started out as an artillery observer and now you're on the commandant's staff. You had seen the marine corps both from the low end ...

WK: From the bottom to the top.

KP: And to the top,

WK: Well, one of the things that happen as you get higher in rank you realize that everybody puts their pants on one leg at a time. And when you were a young officer you were in awe of the senior officers. Then when you got to be a senior officer, you found out that these guys were just like everybody else. So you didn't ... stand there with your mouth open, you know, when the general came by or when you did this or you did that. And I think that generally is the greatest difference between when you are a young junior officer and when you become senior you realize. You become more comfortable, more relaxed with people of all ranks. The young enlisted, the middle, the NCOs, the staff NCOs, and the officers who were a higher rank than you were. You know, you thought a General walked on water. You found out that they don't. Even the President of the United States doesn't walk on water. So, but the job I had there, I had the opportunity to go to the White House, three times I guess. Once with Johnson, and twice with Nixon for ceremonies and so forth. We got pictures at home shaking hands with the general. Sergeant major called me up and said, "Would you like to have a picture of you shaking hands with the president?" I said, "Yeah, but how are we going to do this?" He said, "We already did it." I said, "How did you do it?" He says, "I'm not telling." Well I know how they do it. When your going through the receiving line, there's a hole somewhere where the camera takes a picture of you shaking hands. So here we have a picture of this taking place. And the sergeant major and I were always invited to ceremonies that took place in Washington that the Commandant was involved in. And General Greene was the commandant at that time and we would always be involved with those. And one thing that we did with General Greene or it was started before I got there. The sergeant major and I when a patient comes into Bethesda Hospital they're immediately picked up on the rolls of headquarters battalion. So every Thursday we would go to Bethesda Hospital, I would start at the top in the officers tower and visit all of the marine officers and he would start in one of the wards, and then I would join him. And we would go through all the wards and visit all of the marine patients that were there in the ward at the time. We did that every Thursday for ... two years.

KP: Were these patients from Vietnam?

WK: Most of them were from Vietnam, yeah. And then another thing we did we met every plane that came in through Andrews Air Force Base and we talked to all of the marines to see whether or not they needed underwear, clothing or whatever. And we would ... we would send a young officer and an NCO over and they would be given the underwear and that sort of thing. And that's something because a lot of those guys were literally picked up out of the jungle put on the plane and brought out and didn't have anything, clothing or anything. ...

KP: Which is interesting. One of the things that struck me about the Vietnam War compared to Korea or World War II is that people coming home from Vietnam literally are plunked out from

their individual units and thrown on a plane. And I wondered what happened to them when they got to the United States.

WK: No pay. No payroll or anything like that and no money. So we would make arrangements to where they were going. We would call ahead so the marine whatever the hospital was, we always had a marine there. And we'd say get these guys money right away. This kid doesn't have any money. He can't even buy toothpaste.

KP: Were you surprised how disorganized this was?

WK: You mean the way we did it?

KP: No, but it seems like you were trying to solve some of the problems.

WK: ... Yeah, we realized it was a problem and then decided something had to be done about it.

KP: Well what about marines landing in other parts of the country? Was there any set way to see them?

WK: Yes. All over. The commandant, General Greene, sent a message out to every hospital that took marines in because there was always a marine, a small marine detachment, maybe a NCO and two or three people. He sent a directive out to these people to be sure that the minute they got there, that all of these needs were taken care of. And he directed commanding officers of units that were close by to visit marine patients so that there was somebody there that they could talk to. Because some of these guys had no family. You always have to remember some of them have no family. So there's no one there that they know. So he would direct the marine to see that somebody got in there to talk to 'em. So they could see another marine and to talk to a marine.

KP: One of the critiques of the war, this is totally observational is that there was no set ceremony to mark the end of the war for soldiers coming home from Vietnam.

WK: Well, you know, they don't think. The only big ceremony that we had was that parade in New York at the end of World War II. It didn't happen anywhere else. Hell, I got off a boat out in San Diego, got in a bus went up to Camp Pendleton, waited for my orders, got my orders, and met my wife in a hotel in Philadelphia. There was no big ceremony. But these guys think that they watch that television or that news program, you know, of this big parade in New York City. What really happened was ...

KP: But you did come home with your unit?

WK: Yeah, but what happened was the abuse that they got. See, people who were frustrated with the Vietnam War took it out on the wrong people. They took it out on these poor guys who were just coming back from fighting it, instead of going to Washington and telling the Congress and the President to do something about this thing. And that was very unfortunate.

KP: Okay, you were a career officer, I remember talking to someone who was actually a marine. He was a marine during the Vietnam War and he was struck by the attitude, even expressed by World War II veterans, that he and other Vietnam veterans did not do a good enough job.

WK: Oh no. I think we always appreciated the job. I think the one thing that we, that in talking to other marines and other people who served in World War II, Korea, and maybe not during Vietnam like I did. They say, "What are they bitching about?" You know it was never a rose garden. It was never a tea party. But just stand up. You're here. You survived. You should be happy. Don't bitch about this. There are other things that are more important in life like your family and education and so forth. I think that's generally what it was. They, I think that whole situation where there was this great program of dissatisfaction worked its way into the minds of these guys to the point at where they can't see the difference between what they did and how successful they were in carrying out what they were supposed to do. And the Vietnam experience which over here was being protested and disagreed with. They could never disassociate the two. And that's ... the bad part of it. But, of course, I guess a lot of good came out of it. ... From now on we're not going to blunder into things like that that started out as a small advisory thing and just kept growing and growing and growing and growing. I know I went to a special school on advisory-- ... in case I was sent out in 1960. When the heck was it? In '64 I guess. I came up to Quantico to a special school in case I got out there as an advisor where we had ... the French guy who wrote the book. I can't think of the name of it, about Vietnam. What was his name? He came back and spoke to us about what was going on. About how they kill all of the officials, the educators. If they wipe them out then they can control the population. What was the name of that book? Can't think of it.

KP: You were in marine corps when it was being integrated. How did that go, from your perspective?

WK: Fine. I always told people we were giant steps ahead of the rest of the country in integration. Always giant steps ahead. ... I don't say there was never a problem, there was and maybe still every once in a while there is. But as far as working, the African Americans and all of the other nationalities in, we never had any problems with it. It worked well. Once the directives came it was done.

KP: In Korea, did you have an integrated unit?

WK: Yeah. We had an integrated unit and then both my battalions in Camp LeJeune were integrated and of course, in headquarters battalion ... we had a[n] Afro-American company commander who later became a general and first sergeants, and sergeant majors. And we didn't have any problems with it. We were way ahead of everybody else. Of course, you always have to stop and think, the competition for white against black or black against white is minimal in the military service, because it's based on rank, the job you do, the review that you get as far as your job is concerned, and so on. Whereas when you get out in civilian life, the biggest problem you have in civilian life is there is a group of white people who are concerned ... about the competition between the black people and themselves for the job. It all boils down to economics when you get down to it. It's all economics. There's this frustration and fear that this guy is gonna to take my job and put me out of a job and that, when you talk to people that's most of it.

It's this fear that they have that they will be displaced and that this black ...

KP: There are only so many jobs.

WK: Yeah. There's only so many jobs and this black person will take my job.

KP: When you were in the military the notion was that was not a problem. In a sense you might not get promoted as fast if you ...

WK: There's ... a finer line in evaluation in the military of how well you do your job. And blacks and whites understand that. That if you don't do your job, you'll, people will know it and that's the way you'll be evaluated. And in civilian life it doesn't work that well. There's so many other factors that enter into it-- politics, who you know, who you don't know, whether the contract going to be approved for the company that you're manufacturing things for. There's so many things that can, that are factored in that you don't have in the military that makes it a much more serious problem. As far as ... integration in schools and everything, our kids always went to integrated schools. Never had a problem with that kind of stuff. And-- because again, even though they went to a school on the marine corps base, Camp LeJeune, one kid's father was a sergeant, and my children's father was a lieutenant colonel it never entered into the classroom instruction or anything like that.

KP: So you spent a good part of your life on marine bases and in marine housing?

WK: Well no, not a lot. At Camp LeJeune twice. In Quantico we lived in a civilian community which was good.

KP: But you did quite a bit of moving.

WK: Oh, 33 different places we lived, 33 different places. [laughter]

KP: And how does it affect your family?

WK: Well it didn't affect the kids until they got to high school. Until they got to be teenagers, that's when they began to make friends that are friends, for a period of time. When they're little kids, you know, some kid is there in school next year he's not there, that's really a big deal if you're in third or fourth grade. But when you get to high school, where you now ... [begun] to develop friendships that are more lasting, it's a problem. It's a serious problem.

KP: What about this life of a career military person. Because I do know, for example, at least from your kids' credentials that they all did quite well in education and all of them got college degrees.

WK: They were all good students.

KP: Did you notice problems with other families?

WK: Yes, there are some. Not as many as you find in the civilian world though. We lived in Fairfax County while my kids were in high school, except one daughter had to go to Camp LeJeune for a year and graduate down there which was the oldest girl. But that worked out all right. She ... never resented it. But what happens is that the kids, I don't know how to say this. You find some families where if education is not stressed as a goal, there's problems in that family. Most of the senior NCO's stress education because they understand that had they been college students and so forth, they would have a different lifestyle. So they stress education. So their kids are usually pretty good students. But you'll always run into some who aren't. But when you get out into civilian life you don't find that same stress on education. Now we lived in Fairfax County all your neighbors are either military or worked for the federal government. All of which required a high educational level. So when you go into the high schools in Fairfax County, there is a desire to learn. Education takes place because they can visualize the goal and the end result. But you come back now, when we moved back to New Jersey 180 degrees. Now they had finished high school. The youngest, my son, had two years left. He'd gone to West Springfield for two years had to come back and go to high school here. A different world. Ninety percent, well maybe that's too high, 75 percent of the kids that go to that school have no illusions of going on to college. Parents they're biggest thing is to play football, baseball, or some sport which is going to make him a professional ... [athlete].

KP: Which high school was this?

WK: Oakcrest in Atlantic County. Oakcrest High School is where he finished up.

KP: This was in the mid 1960s.

WK: Yes.

KP: And it was very striking to you?

WK: Yeah. Oh, it was just we could ... sense it with the relationship with the parents, completely different. You had this high level of professionalism and interaction with parents in Fairfax County. And you came back here, and it's like, because I was born, we were both born and raised here so we could understand some of that. But it was just like day and night.

KP: When you were going to high school, was it striking to you the emphasis placed on athletics?

WK: No, no. You wanted to play ball. But usually you made that decision and that was your interest and not the parents' interest.

KP: And it was more just a sport ...

WK: Yeah. It was just a sport, something you did.

KP: You didn't have visions of becoming ...

WK: No, there were no visions of becoming professional ball player or anything like that.

KP: Whereas these parents have this vision that their kid's going to ...

WK: That's right. And they'll kill for it. Literally, you know, it's-- you say to yourself, life is much more than this. But you can't get that across. Now my oldest daughter, her two kids are good students. They understand. Her husband is-- was in the army as a private, made staff sergeant, went to Vietnam, came back, went to college, got his degree, ... and went back in as a commissioned officer, and then retired. Has a master's degree. He understands education. He says, "My stepfather threw me out of the house when I was seventeen and said 'go join the army I'm not supporting you anymore.'" He said, "I struggled. I know what education is." So his two kids are good students and they know they are going to go to college. So it's a difference of day and night. My son, he married a girl who's not a college graduate, but he knows and you can tell the way he handles his children, that they're gonna to go to school, because he understands the value of an education. But I from the time I can remember, my father, who only went to fourth grade, my mother had one year of high school, there was no question in their minds that we were going to go to college.

KP: Oh, really that was clear?

WK: That was from day one. My oldest sister went to Glassboro and became a teacher. I went, came to Rutgers. My kid sister went through nurse's training in Germantown Hospital and was a registered nurse, because that's what she chose. But there was no question that we were not going to quit or come out after high school and go to work or be whatever. And there's nothing wrong with being a carpenter or electrician or a plumber, but there's just something, there's a satisfaction in education. If you really want to ... learn and be an educated person, because it never stops. You continue on and on and there's a satisfaction there that these people probably never have. Although they're successful economically. They're successful. In fact some of the guys I went to high school with can probably buy and sell me. But that doesn't bother me, because I realize the experiences and everything that I had with my education I would not have had.

KP: And you ended up going this way, in fact you ended up with a career in education.

WK: Yeah.

KP: How did you end up going getting the job? What were the circumstances that led to your going with Atlantic Community College?

WK: It was a new college, ... [in] my home county. People knew me. So when I talked ...

KP: Even though you had been in the military for all these years?

WK: Yeah. Enough of the family back there that people knew me and some of the people that were involved on the board of trustees had known me from the time I grew up. So they, I knew that. So I approached them and said, "You know I'd be interested, because I'm going to complete

my master's degree. I'd be interested if there's a position." So they invited me up for an interview by the president and the deans and so forth. So when it was all finished, they said we'll get back to you. So I got a letter from them saying we'll offer you a position of director of admissions. Which since I had that master's in education with a guidance and counseling and all the other stuff. So I decided that that's what I would do. And when I got there I found that the admissions office was in chaos. The guy who subsequently stabbed another guy to death with a knife. I always felt he was a little weird. He was the director of admissions. Well they moved him over to do something else. I can't remember what it was. But I got in and I organized the thing. Really brought ... you know, brought ... order out of chaos. And I continued to do those things. And as the college went on and grew, I would take on more things and when able to, with my background organize and get things running and run properly.

So finally the thing came up to be the dean of students, so I thought well I'll throw the hat in the ring. And I did. And ... they interviewed four guys, one faculty, myself, and two from outside. And then I got a call the night after the board of trustees meeting that they selected me to be the dean of students. But there was a couple of things. It was a period of turmoil, as you well know. And community colleges were not exempt from this. There was turmoil at community college. We were getting an influx of non-traditional students. A lot of whom were Afro-Americans who had been used to intimidating people. Well, they found out that they couldn't intimidate me and I would always tell them, I said, "One thing I'll tell you right now. I'll tell you the truth and I'll never lie to you. And we'll always put the cards on the table, but you better do the same thing." And they knew that and they began, they trusted me. And I would say this is the way it's going to be, they knew that's the way it was going to be. Or I'll tell them this is how it has to be, because we have no control over it therefore, it has to be this way. They knew it.

KP: So what issues came out? What points of turmoil were there and where were they?

WK: Oh, the sit-ins, the ...

KP: So did you ever have a sit-in in your office?

WK: Not in the office, but we had it in the building, the same building. Then we had to camp-in outside in tents over ... I forget what that one was about. And the business of bringing students in who-- without some support being given and pre-education in certain, like English and writing and so forth. Wanting to put them right into the middle of English composition when they had no capability and no chance of success. Well, we fought that and said there has to be a beginning. The beginning is back here where we test you and we find out what your capabilities are now and then what you lack we will bring you up to date and then you will go. Well you had some people who were, "Oh, you can't do this. ... You'll shatter them. You can't do that to them. Just think of their ego." And I said, "Hey, ego has nothing to do with this. We're talking about what they're capable of doing and what we want them to do and how we handle it." And we prevailed. And it was the best thing to do because, we-- the success rate ... was acceptable. Had you not done that you would've just ... run them in one door and out the other door and it would have been just a revolving door situation. ... We had to stand firm. And the registrar and a couple of other people. And we prevailed and it worked out well. And they knew, see we were still at the stage where these guys were picking fights in the cafeteria. Well I would walk into the

middle of this, and when I think of it now, it scares the hell out of me, because today somebody would shoot you. I'd walk into the middle of it and poosh, separate them. Grab one, grab the other, "Hey we don't do this here. Come on in the office and we'll talk and sit down and have a rational discussion of why we don't fight in college in the cafeteria." But that's the kind of thing.

KP: You mean you would break up fights?

WK: Oh yeah. They'd call me all the time. "Professor, hey we have a problem over here." And I don't blame them, because that really wasn't their job to be there to separate people and discipline stuff. So I would go and separate them. You get over there and you get here even if I had to physically grab one and shove one here and shove this guy. But they knew I wasn't afraid of them. That was one big thing they knew. Because there was no intimidation going to happen. And we finally got an understanding. And after I had the job for three or four years the problems went away and they knew that my word was good. Whatever I said I would do. And I would defend those who were right and tell those who were wrong, you're wrong and you've got to suffer the consequences.

KP: You were a dean during the late 1960s and early 1970s? For example, you were not a residential college?

WK: No, community.

KP: Now there are some residential students at Atlantic.

WK: Some are residential, yeah.

KP: Because Atlantic Community has a culinary program

WK: Culinary that's, some of that is residential, yeah.

KP: Well what about drugs and other problems?

WK: We had drugs and I ... worked with the security people. I would call people in who I knew were involved and say, "I've always advocated giving everybody one chance. You've had your chance, you either clean it up and stop this or else you go." And they knew that I meant what I said. But I always gave them an opportunity. I said, everybody deserves one chance. But you don't deserve two when you're doing something wrong. So we had our problems with drugs.

KP: You had mentioned that you had come back to New Jersey and were struck by the attitude toward education. When you worked in admissions level and dean level how did that how prepared do you think many of your students were for college?

WK: Most of them not very prepared. See we got that, what they call that "non-traditional" student. Well, what we got were a lot of people who didn't do anything through high school and now suddenly decided that they wanted to go to college and weren't prepared. And as a result, a lot of them spent a year or so in preliminary subjects where they had to be successful there before

we could put them in at the college level. But then we had a lot of terrific success rates. We had people who graduated and became doctors. You know so your success rate was ... worth all of whatever you had to do to bring people through. 'Cause we had some really good successes. But then we had some, I ... would read the paper and find out one of our former students was killed, shot in Atlantic City in a drug deal. But you know most of those guys I was on good terms with 'em and I would tell them, "Hey, you're going down a dead end street. They're going to nail ya'. You're gonna get shot. You're gonna get killed." "Oh, dean don't worry." I said, "No, I'm not going to worry. You should worry, not me. You're the guy whose gonna get it." [laughter]

KP: Do you think young men should still consider the military?

WK: ... For the young men if they still want to go into military service, in other words, I would still advocate [the] marine corps. I think you get better training. There's more of a esprit de corps, a sense of belonging, sense of being able to accomplish things more than it is in some of the other military services. ... Each one has it's own pluses and minuses. But I always feel the marine corps has more pluses than minuses. The big disadvantage is separation. There's so many deployments throughout the world that some of these guys spend six months in the United States out for thirteen months. They're back for six and out for thirteen and that's very hard on a family, particularly a ... wife. She knows it takes a very strong woman to survive a career in the marine corps. Or I guess ... in the army in some cases, depending on what branch they're in. ... And if they don't understand that ahead of time they shouldn't do it, because the divorce rate is quite high. It's very high among the young enlisted's who get married at nineteen and twenty and married somebody who's seventeen or eighteen or so. And then the first thing that happens they move to Camp LeJeune and live in a room. And then he gets a set of orders to deploy him to the Mediterranean or out to the Pacific and he's gone for six or eight months. And unless she goes home, she gets in trouble because there's always somebody looking around there ... to get them in trouble. And that breaks a lot of those marriages up. ... They're just not together. They don't have the funds either to live in a decent place and to sustain ... themselves with a decent level of living. And they go out and one of the things, of course, they come out of an environment where it's instant gratification where you got to have a television set, and you got to have this, you got to have an automobile. And once they don't have that it's frustration and they part their ways, I guess many of them do, so. One of the things that's amazing is the, and it's being studied now very intensely, is the suicide rate in the marine corps. Nobody is quite sure why, because it doesn't seem to be a tie between a suicide rate and marriage or broken marriages. And they're having a hard time figuring out what it is that's causing this. But it's extremely high even compared to the Vietnam period and World War II. It's something that's being studied. But I don't know if they'll ever find out what it is, but it's very high.

KP: Really among officers and enlisted?

WK: Yes.

KP: Both ...

WK: Both. Higher among enlisted than officers.

KP: And this surprises you, too.

WK: Yeah. It surprises me because normally you can anticipate if you're working closely with these guys, you can anticipate if there's a problem or if somebody's unhappy or they're depressed. But it seems that what's happening here is there are no signs and that's what got them really concerned. It doesn't seem to be any signs to tell you that these things are happening. It would be interesting to see what they finally come up with. But I don't know.

Dorothy Kaenzig: I keep thinking, hearing the wives, this wife when he goes overseas. "Oh, he's gone eight months." You were gone two years.

WK: [laughter]

KP: Well, how did you deal with two years?

DK: Well I had a brother in the navy, a brother in the army, and he was in the marine corps and I wrote letters, letters, letters. And I had a very sick mother who passed away before any of them got back. It wasn't easy. And when he did get back and then the transfers, one school year the one daughter was in school in three different states, New Jersey, Oklahoma, California, in one school year.

WK: That was the oldest daughter. Who was a very good student.

DK: She didn't complain today like a lot of us might.

WK: She was a very good student when she first ...

DK: Fortunately.

WK: It was a minimal amount of problem because of that, but even then Wally was in, what, two schools in his fourth or fifth grade. See what would happen they'd be in one school where modern math wasn't being taught, transfer to another one in the middle of the year where modern math was being taught. And then you had this gap and this problem.

DK: Our one daughter had four years of French, one year of German, and gets transferred and the school had two years of French and two years of Spanish, so she couldn't continue that.

WK: It was her senior year of high school.

WK: She had that four years and the rest of the year in German, that ...

WK: So you run into this, of course, that's why there has to be a dedication to education on the part of the parents or kids will get lost in the system. That way they get lost. Fortunately, in most military families there is a desire for people to become educated and do well. I was telling him the difference when we got back to Cologne and coming back from Fairfax County and Wally going into the high school the difference in the attitude and that-- of the parents and the

students and the lack of a ... desire ... for higher education.

DK: Wally had that problem when you went to ...

WK: When I went to where?

DK: (-----).

WK: Korea? You mean when he was on the West Coast?

DK: I mean when we came back to New Jersey.

WK: Yeah. He was just a year and a half.

DK: ... He called up on the phone and he didn't really talk well. And this little bitty guy, when he heard this voice he took the telephone away to recognize the voice.

WK: I called him.

DK: He put the telephone away and looked up ... "I guess, that's dad!" [laughter]

WK: I called at Christmas time and talked to them.

DK: ...

WK: But, of course, I have a big mouth and my voice is unusual so. ... I forgot to tell you. I was also at Quantico. There was a team that went all over the world presenting a amphibious warfare incident or landing. And at the time. we were doing South Vietnam. Of course, we went to Europe. We went all over the United States and I was on the team mainly because of my voice and so I got the tour of Europe. We had our own airplane. We were over there a month. We, of course, went into England and from England to Paris and from Paris to Germany, Germany to Naples, Naples to Madrid and then from Madrid home. But we spent time in each place. So we would present in the morning and then we would have afternoons. You had an opportunity to get out and see some of the history. So I was able to see a lot of London. And then with the British marines, took each family. They took one of us and took us on a tour of places we wouldn't see. So a husband and wife would take one of us and show us around.

KP: What year was this?

WK: This was what year?

KP: In the 1950s?

WK: ... It was ... probably '61. Before I went back down to Camp LeJeune. So we had an opportunity ... in Spain, I went out to the Valley of the Fallen, got a bus trip out there as a regular tourist. In Naples we went down to the area where the ... army landed [in] Salerno. And

Germany I took a tour of the local area while we were there. ... I couldn't believe Naples when I saw it. They hadn't picked up any bricks from World War II. I couldn't believe it when I saw it. You went into Germany when we were up in Kiel and they showed a picture of what the thing looked like when it was devastated, and all of it was rebuilt. Beautiful. Really amazing what happened. But so that was an opportunity that I got all over the United States. We went into Canada, a couple of times to Toronto and all the bases, the large bases throughout the United States we would go spend three days for this and come back into Quantico. So I figured out one time. I figured out in the-- during my active duty period, I was gone six and a half years. Separated. So that's what you have to tell young people, you know. You got to expect this to begin, if you can't handle that. Then don't stay in the marine corps or don't get married. One or the other. But, anyhow, you got to work that stuff out so. But it was a good career. I told him the story about how I got in the marine corps instead of the navy.

DK: Yeah.

WK: [laughter] That was good. I don't know what else. Oh, a lot of little things happened to ya. When I was CO of headquarters battalion, I got a call two o'clock in the morning on a Sunday, Sunday to Monday, it was actually Monday morning. And I say, "Hello?" And the guy says, "Colonel, they've lost my wife's body." And I'm holding the phone out here and it was an instant before I thought of who it was on the other end. And I knew the sergeant. He was stationed out in Bethesda as the head of our section out there. And his wife had died of cancer and the body was being ... transported up into Connecticut for a funeral Monday morning at eleven o'clock. And this is two o'clock in the morning. So I said, "Where are you? Give me your phone number and stay there. I'll call you back." So I call the duty officer at headquarters battalion. And, fortunately, it was a supply officer and he knew the system. So I told him the story. He said, "I'll call you back in an hour." So he went over to Union Station found out that the car, one night a week, Sunday night, is sidetracked in the Bronx. Why, I don't know why. But one night a week, and it's always Sunday, and that's where the body was. So he called the mortician in the Bronx, got the railway people to open the car, got the body out of the car, put it in the hearse, took it to Connecticut in time for the funeral Monday morning at eleven o'clock. So that's the efficiency of the marine corps. I said, you know, that it was lucky because the supply officer, he said, "I know exactly what to do. I'll take care of it." So he called me back he said, "It's all taken care of." I said, "Fine." So I called the sergeant. I said, "The body will arrive in time for the funeral."

... And then I got a call one night from a wife who was intoxicated, that was also at two o'clock in the morning. She said, "Colonel, I want you to come out here and arrest my husband." So I said, "Who's your husband?" And she told me and I said, "Now I got to tell you, the marine corps does not have the authority to come into the civilian community and arrest anyone whether they're a marine or not." I said, "So I think if you're that concerned call the Prince Georges County Police and let them handle the situation." I said, "I cannot do anything for you." I get to work at seven o'clock the next morning and who's sitting outside my door but that, that husband is there. So he says, "Boy I'm embarrassed. I'm embarrassed." So I said, "Well the only thing that I have to tell you that if this is a problem, then you should get some help for your wife." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, the thing is over. But you better get some help for your wife. Because if she's done it once she's gong to do it more." But that's, those are the little things.

[laughter]

... I told him about Cooper who was one of the company commanders who made general. Everybody called him Gary but that wasn't his name. Gary Cooper. He came out of Mobile, Alabama. Out of an insurance company that his father owned. Wealthy. Went to Notre Dame University. Met his wife up there while he was there. She came from Chicago. She came from a wealthy Afro-American family. Everything went along fine. They had a couple of children. The next time I see him, which is about ten or twelve years ago, he's divorced from her. She evidently couldn't take the lifestyle. So he didn't stay on active duty, he went back into the reserves and made general out of the reserves. So you never know what happens with those cases. They're both wealthy people. She was a nice looking woman. A very nice looking woman. A nice person. And he was too. Real nice persons. He had a bronze star as a company commander. Yeah, I think this was the big thing. She couldn't take the marine corps life. He had a Bronze Star as a company commander in Vietnam, so he was no slouch. But I got to tell you a story about that one ... [laughter]

DK: We could be here until tomorrow.

WK: There were office hours, they're bringing the young marine. He called me up and said, "Have you got time for an office hour?" So I said, "Yeah, we got time." So he brings these people over. And as I always did, I would sit at my desk, sergeant major would be out in the back, the company commander would be there, and the first sergeant of the company was always here. And the accused would wait until he was called forward. So they would come in and they would explain the situation to me. I had the paper work in front of me. So this day it's Gary Cooper, who's black, his first sergeant is black, and the accused is black. So I read the charge to the young man and I said, "Now's an opportunity for you to say something and which we could decide that either you are innocent or guilty." The young black marine said my company commander and first sergeant are prejudiced.

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

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