RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT E. KELLEY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Lieutenant General Robert E. Kelley on April 5, 2004, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth …

Michael Miranda: … Michael Miranda …

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: … Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: General Kelley, thank you very much for coming in today and sitting down with us. To begin, could you tell us a little bit about your father and his background? He was from Stamford, Connecticut.

Robert E. Kelley: Yes. My father was born in 1893. … I don't know whether he was born in New Canaan or born in Stamford, but I think New Canaan. He attended Rutgers. … There's a little confusion with regard to exactly when he started, because he supposedly was in the Stamford High School Class of 1915. … New Canaan didn't have a high school in those days, so, they went from New Canaan to Stamford to high school. He set a scoring record in the State of Connecticut in football that stood for fifty years. He came to Rutgers and, supposedly, was in the same class with Paul Robeson. He's listed in varying places, in the Class of '20, in the Class of '19, but he left Rutgers in '19, the Fall of '19. What had happened was that the war, of course, occurred in '18, and I'm not sure when he left school and went into the Army. He never went overseas. There was some reference, my brother keeps up with a lot of this stuff … that Corporal Kelley came back and was practicing again in … the fall of, sometime, and he was behind in … academics. … So, they set up a program in the summer, which I think was the summer of 1919. Let's see, so, [if] he started in '16, '17, '18, '19 would have been his graduating year, but, if he's playing in '19, there's some confusion here. … He was supposed to be captain of the football team in 1919. He was president of his class. He was Cap and Skull. He was … a founder of the Kappa Sigma fraternity and he had been Second-Team or Third-Team All-American in football in 1917. They didn't … allow him credits … from a program that was set up for him at Johnson and Johnson [Company]. … Col. Loren Loree, who was a Rutgers trustee … and owner of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, said, "Don't worry about that, Frank," and so, he transferred to Yale and played football at Yale. According to one of the early Directors of Athletics here at Rutgers University, he was the only … individual he knew … that had been Second- or Third-Team All-American at two different schools. There's been a number of people that have been First-Team at two different schools, but he was … either Second- or Third-Team, and graduated from Yale in 1921. The interesting story about him is the one with Paul Robeson. … My brother's done a bunch of … research and … most recently, read Paul Robeson, Jr.'s book, in which he names Frank Kelley as the guy that stepped on his [Robeson, Sr.'s] hands. That's sort of an interesting story, but … all the other reports on that … don't name anyone. … According to my mother … Robeson and my father were very good friends. … As you know … my father is in the Rutgers Football Hall of Fame. If you've done your prelim work on this, I'm probably just singing to the choir here. … In fact, all the various reports in various publications … sort of wonder whether it ever happened at all. In fact, a guy named [Alfred] Neuschafer, who was on that team, I think he was [on the] 1915 or '16 team, said … he never knew anything about this story. … My father was a pretty tough guy, I think. … So, I'm inclined to go … either way, but I met Paul Robeson's son at a banquet here at Rutgers, when they honored … his dad at one of the Hall of Fame football banquets, which were a bigger thing than they are now.

… I went over and introduced myself to him and he was a little, I don't know how to say this, but, having learned about the way it was in … his book, I didn't understand, at the time, why he was sort of a little, rude, is probably the word I would use. I mean, he just sort of was [rude]. … You know, he probably … thinks more about it than I did, you know, in terms of the significance of it, but … Paul Robeson is a great Rutgers story. … When I accepted the … award for … my father … being inducted into the Rutgers University Football Hall of Fame, I said that Rutgers and Robeson and football were all part of my growing up. So, I may sound like I know a lot about 1917, but I really don't know much about it, except [that] Harry Rockafeller, of course, was the Director of Athletics when I was here and probably [was] the reason why I came to Rutgers. The only reason I came to Rutgers was because I … wasn't accepted at Yale. [laughter] That's the only place I wanted to go. I was accepted at Penn and Columbia and William and Mary. … I got a scholarship at William and Mary, Penn didn't offer me a scholarship, and Rutgers. When I came down and met Harry Rockafeller, he gave me an Upson Scholarship, and so, that's why I came here. … My mother had established the … idea that we would all … go to college, but … how you did that was up to you. [laughter] Mine was playing football and that was a big driver in my growing years. So, another point about my father … after Yale, he came back here and coached at Rutgers, under [George] Foster Sanford, who he had played for. … Then, he went to work for Loren Loree at … the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. … That's why I was born in Albany, New York, because that's where he was the trainmaster. He married Helen Parker, who was from Perth Amboy, New Jersey. The interesting thing about that, that you probably don't know, let's see if I can … check your history … of Rutgers. The first land given for Rutgers University was given by James Parker, from Perth Amboy, New Jersey. … One of my brother's daughters-in-law is doing some work on the Parker side of the family. The Kelley side, we know pretty well … going back to the Potato Famine in [Ireland]. I've been to Castlewellan … in County Down, where our family came from, but the Parkers, that's different. … Parker is a very interesting name in New Jersey, as well as in [American history]. … John Parker was one of the first … soldiers killed in the Revolutionary War, at Concord Bridge, but she [Helen Parker] also … went to a normal school [teacher's college]. She was a teacher. I'm not sure if it was Trenton State or one of the normal schools, and then, [she] did some study here, as did my brother's [father's] sister, Rose, … and my uncle, Larry, came here in 1928; I think he flunked out at Georgetown. … I think my dad got him into Rutgers and he played some football here, but he wasn't … at the same level as my dad. … I'm not sure he ever finished, but … he was here when Ozzie Nelson, [Rutgers College Class of 1927], was here, in the late '20s, along with … (David Morris?), who was a tackle, and then, later … a lawyer in New York City. He's dead now. He was a terrific guy. He was beaten up on the streets of New York when he was eighty; lived in New York for years, as a lawyer. … This guy, if you haven't … included him, from a history point of view, you should, because he … was very much involved with international affairs and represented a number of companies, both from South America and from Europe. … He was a cousin of David Werblin, "Sonny" Werblin, who I got to know a few years before his death. … My mother was from Perth Amboy and … I don't know what the sociology thing of it is … but they were … marrying sort of late. They married in 1928. My father … they thought he had tuberculosis at one time, and so, he was in a … hospital up in New York State at some time during his life, before high school. So, if you look at 1893, [when he was born], you know when he was at Rutgers, you know he was in his late twenties when he graduated from Yale in 1921, and they didn't marry until 1928. So, he's about, almost what? twenty-seven [or twenty -eight when he graduated from Yale]? … She was … [born in] … 1898, so, she was

thirty. … They had five children, of which I'm the third, four boys and a girl.

SI: Your father was a Roman Catholic. From studying the history of Rutgers, I get the impression that Catholics were not as openly accepted then. It was more of a Protestant school. Did he ever talk about that?

RK: Well …I have very few … memories of my father, just glimpses of my father. I'm sure I talked to him, but … I was only six when he died. So … I don't know if there was any problem … with religion. … [From] all of the things that were passed on to me from my mother, and there are a lot, … it was … [that] he was very well-respected and well-received. … I don't know if it was a problem at all. I'm sure there was, … if you just look at society at the time, there's no question about the fact that after … the immigration of the late nineteenth century that there was … continuing problems of assimilation. My grandfather was the first selectman in the town of New Canaan and, if you don't know New Canaan, Connecticut at all, it's a very affluent town about sixty miles outside of New York City. He … led the planning of New Canaan that established the size of the village, one and two-acre zones, and then, not more than two stories and colonial architecture. So, [when] you go to New Canaan … it's a very classic town. It's not on the main line, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad that goes to Boston. It's a spur that comes out from Stamford to New Canaan. So, there are not a lot of big highways running through it. [Interstate] 95 goes through Darien and Westport, Norwalk and Greenwich, and Stamford. … I have read one letter from my father to my grandfather in which the language in this letter was striking, in that he had just been promoted, I think to trainmaster, and so, he was writing him and saying how much he had appreciated his father's guidance. … It was so formal, that it really surprised me. … My grandfather had the nickname of "The General," which is sort of an interesting thing, given my background, but he really … ran things. … Of course, he came from a family of five sons, I mean, five brothers, and he had fourteen children, seven sons and seven daughters. So, my father came from a huge family, so, there probably had to be some formal order there. [laughter] … That's sort of the context in which it was done. My father … was the first … in his family to go to college, but not … in the extended family, … others were lawyers and teachers, etc. … You're Cap and Skull?

MM: Yes, sir.

RK: Nice tie. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Michael Miranda wore a Cap and Skull tie during the interview.]

MM: Thank you, sir.

RK: … My dad … was captain-elect of the 1919 football team and Cap and Skull and I was captain of the '55 team and, also, Cap and Skull, which is … a little unusual.

MM: Nice family history.

RK: Yes, but I haven't sent any sons to Rutgers. [laughter] …

SI: You grew up in Albany, New York.

RK: No. I was born there, in 1933, and I lived there until my father died in 1940. … Then, we moved to New Canaan, Connecticut in the fall of 1940.

SI: What do you remember about those early years? Do you remember anything about Albany?

RK: Oh, sure, of course I do. … We lived at 1027 Washington Avenue. … My godfather was Dr. Arthur Wallingford, who played football at Holy Cross, and … his son became a doctor as well. In fact, his dog had a litter of cocker spaniels and I got to pick out … our cocker spaniel. Her name was Lady and we used to sleigh ride on the hill next to us. I think it was, at that time, sort of out from [the city]. There weren't a lot of houses beyond … where we lived. … What do I remember? I remember my mother coming home and telling me that my father had died. I can remember sitting and listening to a football game with my father, because he was always interested in football. He played a little professional football under different names. There's a lot of different rules in those days, and so, he played [in] a lot of places. He and Dr. Wallingford, Arthur Wallingford, used to go off on weekends and play football, professionally. … But I don't know when or where.

SI: Do you have any impressions of what the Depression was like?

RK: My mother used to talk about that. The Depression really didn't affect us in the railroad [industry] for some reason. … In 1938 … I can remember going by train to New York City, to the New York's World Fair … on a sleeper, overnight, and we used to go up on ski trains to North Creek, in the winter, and we would go to Saratoga Lake in the summer, and to Lake George. … My father wasn't wealthy, by any stretch of the imagination, but I think he was … certainly well-paid and we lived comfortably. … My mother sort of gave the impression that the Depression didn't affect us, for some reason.

SI: Did you observe the effects of the Great Depression, say, in Albany? Was it the kind of place where people sold apples on the street?

RK: I don't have a clue about that. … A couple of other glimpses, … he worked in a high building, which is located right as the railroad came into Albany, across the Hudson River, and he was up on about the tenth floor, because I can remember going up all those flights of stairs to his office. … [laughter] The other place I remember is, there was a school there and it had sort of a glass [façade]. It … looked like a hot house. … It had glass walls. … I don't know what it was exactly, but … it was one of those things that stood out. I have no impression at all of the Depression. … I can remember we had a flat tire … on a bridge one Saturday night, and I was in pajamas … ones that you wear with the feet in them, [laughter] and standing on the bridge there for some reason. I don't know where we were going and I don't know how long we were there, [laughter] but I remember the flat tire, and I can remember going to get ice cream with my dad. … I still like ice cream. [laughter]

SI: Just out of curiosity, when you were a child, were you interested in aviation?

RK: That's sort of an interesting question, because, during the war … airplanes were always

flying over our house. … We'd count the number of B-17s, or the number of this or that, that was going over to Europe. … Grumman is now in (Bethpage?) … out on Long Island at that time, and we had an airplane crash in our town. … It went down about a mile … from where I lived, crashed into this house. Of course, we went down there to all see that. … I can remember … always being interested in the war, and in aviation, but, … when I was here at Rutgers, I don't think I … went out and flew in the Air Force ROTC program until my senior year, because I didn't have time, to be perfectly honest with you. … Then, I said, "Gee whiz, maybe … if I'm going to be a pilot, I'd better find out what it's like to fly." [laughter] But … the football team flew from Newark Airport … to Utica to play Colgate in my junior year. That's where I got this; you can't see this scar because Doc [Hyman] Copleman, [noted New Jersey cardiologist and long-time Rutgers Football Team doctor], did a great job, but I took a cleat up through [my nose]. We didn't wear facemasks in those days. I took a cleat up through my nostril and just ripped up my nose. … That's how I always remember Colgate. I don't like Colgate. [laughter] … Flying airplanes was not [that important then]. … I didn't go out and … get a private license, didn't do a lot of flying. We were all interested in flying, but, you know, we didn't know anything about it.

MM: Which schools did you attend before Rutgers? Did you go to the Peekskill Military Academy?

RK: Yes. Well, I went to all [the] public schools in New Canaan, and … in looking back at it, I was really ahead a year. I graduated from high school when I was seventeen and all I wanted to do was play football … in college. … That was the real driving and motivating force for me. So, … I sort of decided that I was going to take a post-graduate year pretty early on, … because I needed … to put on weight, grow. I was sort of a late developer. I was cut from the football team as a sophomore in high school. … I weighed 118 pounds and I was … probably about five-six or -seven. I also was cut from the basketball team in my sophomore year. … I did earn a letter in tennis, because I was a good tennis player. I started tennis early. The next year, I made the football team, but I really wasn't that much bigger. I probably weighed 145. [I] was … [the] number six man on the basketball team, and, then, I lettered in track and tennis. … The next year, I started on the football team, [and] was high scorer on the basketball team, and captained both the track and tennis teams. You won't believe this, but I jumped center on the basketball team. [laughter] … We won the Class C State Championship in football … but one of the guys had lied about his age. … He was nineteen, and so, we had to … take a loss in all those [games] and give back the State Championship, and [we] didn't get to go to the State Basketball Championship, which ruined my entire life. [laughter] So, I went to Peekskill Military Academy. … I … was thinking about going to West Point. … So, when I got there, and they changed the rules, … I couldn't play in all the football games or basketball games or lacrosse games … because they had a new rule that said post-graduates couldn't [play], even though I was only seventeen when I … started there. … You know, it's one of those things in which I don't know how to account for it, but I … was a year behind where I … should have been in age. So, I went to Peekskill Military Academy. … It was great experience for me. … I never had problems in academics. … So, that gave me a chance to really prepare, and so, it was a good prep year for me. … Dr. (Scott?) was great. … Every week, we had to write a précis of a piece that he gave us. … It was a good academic experience and preparation for me, and that applies for when I got to Rutgers, because, after being there a year, I said, "Well, I'm not sure I want to

go to West Point," and so, I ended up coming to Rutgers. … We were down here for early football and … 135 guys turned out, … all dressed out on the football fields out there on the Heights, and I said to myself …"I'll never make this team." One hundred thirty-five is an important figure, because, four years later, there were only nine of us still playing. … Most of them were gone after the first semester, some very good football players, but, academically, the attrition rate was incredible. … But, I didn't have any problems academically. In other words … I was prepared for college, compared to my contemporaries, and we matriculated a day early. … That … is the story I was going to tell you about, how I got in the Air Force. We're going through this line selecting courses, it's just a bunch of desks along a corridor … and … upperclassmen sitting behind the desks. I come to this one sign that says, "ROTC," and this guy said, "What do you want, Army or Air Force?" … I said, "I'm not sure I want either." He said, "Listen, kid, this is a land-grant college. You've got to have two years, required, ROTC." I said, "Oh." I said, "Do they drill?" Now, I'd been up at Peekskill Military Academy … so, I'd been drilling. I knew how to do the manual of arms, and he said, "Yes. They drill on Tuesday afternoons, over here in Buccleuch Park." I said, "Oh." I asked, "Do they carry rifles?" He replied, "The Army does. The Air Force doesn't." I said, "Put me down for the Air Force." … That's a true story, and that's how I got in the Air Force. [laughter] About four years later, I was the cadet colonel … the wing commander. ... So, I didn't do too badly, but that's another story, but my beginning was a little bit off track.

MM: You did not go in thinking that you would become a career officer.

RK: Oh, no. I went into the Air Force … after I graduated. I was a Distinguished Military Graduate and the outstanding ROTC cadet, and all that stuff, and so, I got to flying school … with the first group out of college in 1956, and that was important, because, … the service academies were really running the Air Force, West Point in particular, and so, the cutoff date for the Class of '56, for promotion, would be 30 June every year. … West Point would graduate on the 7th of June, just like we would, … but their date of rank would be the 7th of June. … Our date of rank wouldn't start until July. … So, all of the guys from the Class of '56 at West Point, good friends of mine, got promoted to captain a year ahead of me, or to first lieutenant a year ahead of me, because of that … cutoff. So, I entered the Air Force, I think my date of rank was the 7th of July, and I reported to Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas on the 13th. …

SH: After your father passed away, how did your mother take care of the family?

RK: … We moved to New Canaan, which was a tough decision for her, but that was where we had an extended family, and she used my father's life insurance to build us a house. My grandfather had a lot of land, and … gave us the land for this house. … The house was built in 1940 and we moved in the summer and all the kids were … farmed out to … uncles and aunts. … I was with my Uncle Johnny, which was right next to "the little, red schoolhouse," where I would go to school for the next … four years, and that's a story in itself. … From my grandfather's house to where we lived, across the lots, was probably a quarter mile, but he owned all the land between Carter Street, Silvermine Road and Clapboard Hill. … He was a landscape architect that did all the … planting on the Merritt Parkway; he and his brother, who owned a similar type of operation, a nursery operation in Darien, Connecticut. … So, to answer your question, I went to the Little Red Schoolhouse, which was a one-room school. … This sounds

like … we're in the middle of nowhere, something that …Willa Cather … would write. … The town of New Canaan … was very affluent … because of its location … and proximity to NYC. … The Little Red School was one of the last one-room schoolhouses in the United States. … In fact, they kept it open into the early '60s, because my aunt, my Aunt Mary, who was old enough to be the teacher of my father, was the teacher until she retired in the early '60s. … The school had a pot-bellied stove. I was … the only boy of four in my class. The … three girls were Virginia Fazy, Anna Mae Kelly, (not a relation), and Valerie Hiss, who was the niece of Alger Hiss. … His family home was in New Canaan. … There were about thirty students in the school … all from families in the area. … Tommy (McClain?) happens to be a guy who was a couple of years ahead of me and went to Yale. … I guess he did pretty well at Yale. Somebody said to him … "Where did you prepare?" He said, "I learned everything I needed to know at the Little Red Schoolhouse." [laughter] … One of the other [students], Anna Mae Kelly's younger brother, was a general in the Army. In fact, he was a civil engineer in the Gulf, in Kuwait, … after the First Gulf War.

MM: It is a small world.

RK: Yes, it is. … I went to … kindergarten and first grade in Albany … before we moved to New Canaan.

SH: Your father's extended family took care of you.

RK: Oh, yes. That's exactly right. … It was a very important … support factor, no question about it. Today, … given that mobility to a birthright, … you just don't have that kind of … support … but it was terrific and it made a big difference.

SH: Were you involved in the Boy Scouts at all?

RK: Oh, I was a Cub Scout and got all those things … Wolf and Bear and all that stuff, and Arrows and … joined the … Boy Scouts at eleven or twelve. My older brother was a Boy Scout. … I don't think he ever became an Eagle Scout, but … I know he was a Life Scout. I was a Tenderfoot, and I'm not sure I ever got to be a Second Class [Scout], but … that was the end of my Boy Scout career. … We were always … out hunting and what have you, … traipsing through the woods, playing and … catching snakes. We found a snake one time in … the brook behind our house. … My brother, Brian, and I were going to … school and there was a snake down there, a garter snake, and … it had … swallowed a frog. So, we captured the garter snake. We thought, "We … could use it for science project at school." [laughter] So, we took it … to school … which had an outdoor well, … a pump, and so, we're out there … trying to save the frog; squeezing the frog out of the snake. [laughter] My Aunt Mary didn't think that was such a good idea. [laughter]

MM: Were you able to save the frog?

RK: No. It had long since gone. [laughter]

SH: What do you remember about World War II? Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

RK: Oh, yes. … We were going to church. It was a Sunday afternoon and it was about four o'clock in the afternoon and I was sitting there, listening to the radio. … They interrupted the radio program to announce that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. … So, as I went out to the car … and said, … "There's a big announcement on the … radio about war. … The Japanese have attacked us at Pearl Harbor," and … the adults said, "What?" [laughter] … That's how I heard about Pearl Harbor and, of course, we followed the course of the war. … We were very conscious of it. … We saved dimes and … tin foil, cans, paper. … All of the mothers and women … did canning and … it was a big thing and, at the end of the war, there were parades … through the town … [with] the fire engines and … cars … exciting times!

SH: Do you remember rationing at all?

RK: … Absolutely, Spam, I can hardly believe … people … eat Spam today. [laughter] … We had so much … Spam [that] it would just drive you nuts, but … we were all that really involved in rationing. … It's much different … today. … Here, we have a war going on, and nobody knows that there's a war going on, … but during World War II, it was very much in our [lives] … gasoline as well as food rationing. [Editor's Note: General Kelley is referring to the War in Iraq that began in 2003.]

SH: Were any members of your family involved in the war?

RK: … I'm one of the youngest of … the generation that fought in World War II. … I was too young, I was twelve when the War ended. … I've always felt that one of the reasons … I volunteered … to go to Vietnam was that … I didn't get into combat in World War II. … But I had cousins in service. The oldest one of … my extended family was killed at Anzio. He was a lieutenant in the Army. David was a Marine. Dick was a paratrooper, jumped … all the major jumps … including D-Day. … He was a wild guy. … My uncle joked that he had zippers on his stripes. He went up to sergeant, down to private, back up to sergeant so many times. [laughter] … All those old enough, served in the Navy. … My Uncle Walter was in … the Merchant Marine; … attacked … by Allied [forces] … near Sicily or … Anzio, or one of those places in Italy. I've forgotten exactly where that was, and then, of course, he made a number of crossings … to England and to Europe with …

SI: Convoys?

RK: Convoys, yes. … World War II was a big thing and … we were all always following what was happening in the war.

SH: When they came back, did they talk to you about their experiences?

RK: Not really. … Most of them were older and they were getting on to their life or off to college. … You'd see them at [family gatherings]. … There was always on the Fourth of July … a big party at my grandfather's house, and so the whole family would come together. … The kids … were sort of separated from the adults, and so … I really wouldn't say that we knew anything … or very much about … their personal experiences … except vignettes. … Someone

in my mother's family used to complain, [he] was in on the staff … a typist or something, in [General Douglas] MacArthur's headquarters, and so, he had nothing good to say about MacArthur. [laughter] However, if you've read [William] Manchester's book … I'm not sure what chapter it is, but you can go through it and pull this out, [from] *The American Caesar.* … In there, it points out that more people were killed in the Battle of the Bulge, … were lost in the Battle of the Bulge, US, than all of MacArthur's battles in the Pacific combined. That's an amazing … fact to me, an amazing point. It says something about MacArthur. I've always thought he was a great [leader], … one of the truly great ones. ... It might be the time to say this. The military leadership from World War II, because … it was a world war, … the military leadership was very … respected. … I think you can probably trace the change in attitudes to the Truman-MacArthur problem in Korea. … We have created, in the Department of Defense, what I call "the layer of mush." If you're … really are interested in national security, don't go to one of the service academies, go to Yale or Harvard or Princeton, because you can get to be Secretary of Defense. … Even though the Goldwater-[Nichols] Act of … 1986 or '7 [1986] gives direct input from the Chairman [of the Joint Chiefs] to the President, it never … happens. The question is always, "What can you do?" not … "Should you do this or not?" and so, from a military strategy point of view, or from a defense strategy point of view, a national security strategy perspective, … military input is filtered by the civilian layer of mush. … We did a terrible thing when we got rid of firing squads. … If I were Secretary of Defense, I would shoot [Paul] Wolfowitz, [Douglas] Feith, [Richard] Perle and … the entire staff that's got us in this Iraq thing. … It's absolutely incredible to me, but I think it goes back to … Truman, as well as … President Lyndon Johnson, during the Vietnam War. Every … officer he had in a senior leadership position, he had something he could use against them. … The Air Force Chief of Staff … was an alcoholic, plus the fact that he had … a string of ladies. … Johnson had something on all of them. … No one resigned. … Ron Fogelman, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, … resigned in the '90s because he couldn't support the policy [of the Clinton Administration]. … It was like … "yesterday's news" … a twenty-four-hour news cycle and, "Phew, it's gone." In fact, you might not even know that he resigned. Most people didn't. … "Oh, he resigned? Well, isn't that interesting?" Well, at least there is a precedent for it now. Up to that time, there was no precedent, but the one thing that I would say about the Vietnam War is the fact that the senior leadership did not resign. They didn't stand up to the politicians. If wars are too important to be left to generals, the Vietnam War … proved that it was too important to be left to politicians! … The most serious problem … we have in our country … is our ability to attract competent, qualified people to government. I was asked to speak to … the Governor of Pennsylvania; … he wanted to establish some initiatives … to making state government more efficient. So, I went … to Harrisburg, … met with the Governor, and I said, "Well, now, Governor, what's your concept of running the state?" and there was a long pause. … He said, "No one's ever asked me that question before." … Isn't that a fundamental question? "How are you going to run [the] government?" One of the reasons that Condoleezza Rice [the National Security Advisor at the time of the interview] is in trouble is because they had no clue about how to run National Security. ...

SH: Is this the same man that is to be head of Homeland Security?

RK: No. … That's Tom Ridge. This is "Fast Eddie." [laughter] He has been speeding on the highway, so, that's why we call him "Fast Eddie." [laughter] He was called that before he … was

stopped for exceeding the speed limit, [Edward G.] Rendell, the Governor [of Pennsylvania]. … The thing is … you've got to ask those … tough questions, and most of the politicians don't have a clue. They don't have a clue about how the government works, and so, they take … a quick course and they're very smart people, but they don't really have an idea about, "How do you run things? How do you make it happen? … Are you an output-oriented guy? … Are you results oriented, or are you input [and] let it all sort of take care it itself? What is your strategy for … running the operation?" … Look at our government. One of our problems is that the government, the way was designed, the federal government, we didn't trust government, so, we cut it up and we put it in all different parts. … It was designed to be inefficient and ineffective and, here we are, two hundred years later, and we want it to be efficient and effective. … We've got to make some decisions about … "How are we going to do that?" and then, "How do you measure it?" If you can't measure it, you can't manage it, and so, … "What are the measures for your government?" I believe we have too much government, and … guess who's paying for that? You and I. Every day, the American people have to pay for government, and, we don't have a say in it, really. … You vote every four years, or … if you are interested in contributing to someone's campaign, you may have some impact, but it's a real problem, and it's a real problem in terms of national security policy. … Well, not a lot of people … understand the difference between important and urgent. They treat everything as "urgent." Now, in the case of Condoleezza Rice and the White House, they didn't treat terrorists as "urgent" and/or "important." [laughter] … Now, … we have a real problem. [Editor's Note: General Kelley is referring to the handling of pre-September 11, 2001, intelligence regarding Al Qaeda by the Bush Administration.] I'm off my track; go ahead.

SH: On the same track, going back to Vietnam, one of the Supreme Court Justices had the bombing targets laid out across his couches and desks and was helping LBJ make the target decisions.

RK: Yes. Well, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? … You want to go to the Vietnam War? Where do you want to go? … Tell me what you want to … know. …

SI: We can always go back to Rutgers.

RK: Well, you ought to ask me about Korea. … Take them in order, it probably will help you … later, trying to sort it out. At the end of World War II, I was twelve. … When I was a student at [the] National War College, a professor, Dr. Marion Levy came … down from Princeton, to talk to us. … He's the classic absent-minded professor, a great, big Afghan-scarf around his neck … orange and black [Princeton's school colors] … that always sets me off. [laughter] But, anyway, that's around his neck and he has an Afghan hound … with him on stage. He's … up on stage and the Afghan hound … laid down and went to sleep. He went to the blackboard. He took a piece of chalk and, "Swishhh," across the board, [he] stepped back and looked at his beautiful artwork, and then, he took it and he [made] a mark on it. He said, "The line is human history. The blip is the American experience. You all have to understand that you are the ones who are different. …

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

SI: Please, continue.

RK: We're the ones who are different. We stop at stop signs. We have an idea that … everybody has certain rights; along with those rights comes responsibility. You have rights as an American citizen. Whether you have an Irish name or a Chinese name, or whatnot, it doesn't matter. We may not have treated you as citizens … through our history, but we have evolved to a point where we think of ourselves as … citizens with equal rights. … Ask me about how your government is discriminating … today, against women. …

MM: The year you took command of the Air Force Academy [1981] was the year after the first coed class graduated.

RK: That's right.

MM: What were your impressions?

RK: … The point I'm trying to get at is the world view of "the Silent Generation." There's no US President from our generation. … A favorite line in college was the "big boys" … and the "big boys" were the vets. … They were still here when I arrived … and they had a dramatic impact. … We were sort of pushed aside and … they, the big boys, said … "Shut up, kid. … You don't have a speaking part." … Now, you go back and you say, "Okay, there's the World War II group." … There's a generational group, … they were born old enough [to participate in the war]. … The World War II group … starts in about 1926, and they … go to about 1945, and then, you get the Baby Boomers, from '46 to about '60, and then, you get, what is it, Generation X? and, now, you've got the Millennials. … The Millennials are going to be eighty million people more than the Baby Boomers and they've always had television and they've always had computers. … There is this expectation that you'll be leaders and achievers. That's great, nothing wrong with that, but … you have to understand the context of the times. … The '60s really changed this country and, in a lot of ways, for the better. … My generation points back and says, "An awful lot of things were going on in the '60s," … The '60s did some good things, because it wasn't all perfect back … in the pre-'60 period. … One of the worst decisions, international affairs decisions, we made, and I have to say this, and I'll defend it if you want me to, but I'll say it anyway, was Truman's decision to recognize Israel. … George Marshall … was against that, if you've read that portion of the history. … He said, "You shouldn't confuse internal politics with your economics interests." … If you go back and you look at … the Zionist movement, the anti-Semitism in England … they didn't vote for the recognition of Israel, but they supported the movement of displaced persons and Jews into Israel. Now, I've been there twice. I've met Menachem Begin. I've met [Yitzhak] Shamir. I'll tell you something; those are two gangsters. … If you don't know it, they were terrorists. … In fact, I had dinner at the King David Hotel and, … he [Begin] blew it up. … So, when you start to look at the Palestinian-Israeli question, … we … must accept responsibility for that … situation. … Have you read Karen Armstrong's book *On the Struggle For God: The Study … the Growth of Fundamentalism*, or something like that in the sub-title? [*The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2000)] It's an excellent book and it deals with Christianity, Islam and Judaism, going back to the Enlightenment period and looking at the growth of fundamentalism. … I think you'll find it [useful]. [It is] one of the most important books I've

read in ten years, because it does give you insight of time, … place, … group, and their ideas … in trying to understand what [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini was saying in the '78 revolution in Iran. … It's not just … [the] fundamentalist thing. … In the war in Iraq, we have forgotten the idea of self-determination and the rights of a group of people to choose their form of government. Now, I … believe that … every people gets the government it deserves, good or bad. … Now we sit in a situation … looking at this construct of the Middle East … of Iran, of Jordan, of Syria, and we … are acting just like the former colonial powers, British, French, German, Dutch; we're looking just like the British and the French after World War I. … So, here we are, losing some six hundred men, and women, for what reason? … We have to ask the right questions. … That's why I say, … go back to the fact that Truman wanted to get elected in 1948. … Everyone thinks Truman was a great guy, now, but that was a bad decision, and the consequences of that action, we're living with, you're living with, and you will live with. Now, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be involved in the world, but … we seemed to have lost our way with regard to our priorities in international affairs. It seems to me that the first responsibility of government is … security, national security. … But, listen, let's make sure we've got our own house in order; … that our ports, our airfields, our water, our chemicals, our nuclear plants, our infrastructure, are defended. Then, … let's look around our hemisphere. I bet you don't know there's a terrorist camp in Paraguay. "Terrorist camps in Paraguay. Oh, that's an interesting thing. I wonder if Condoleezza knows about that?" … After North America, our next priority ought to be South America. … Every President in the twentieth century has said, "We're going to … have better relations with South America," and we haven't done anything. … I learned about the terrorist camps when I was down in Uruguay and the CIA chief in the embassy in Montevideo told me about them, so, I can say that with confidence, that I'm not just passing on bad information, and that hasn't anything to do with what we're doing in Columbia. … So, [the order of priorities], first of all, United States, North America, Western Hemisphere; don't screw up the relationships that have been … built for so long with regard to Europe and the North Atlantic Alliance, and why not a partnership in the Pacific with the Chinese? The best thing they've [Bush administration] probably done is not attack [North] Korea and gotten us embroiled in something over there … and made a regional happening occur between China and Japan and South Korea. … We seem to have lost our way with regard to priorities, and that's the same kind of problem that existed in Vietnam. Okay, back to Korea; in Korea … I'm in high school and I'm the only failure from the 1950-51 New Canaan basketball team, because all of the other four went into the Marines, and then, they went into the New Canaan police force, and one of them became the chief of police. … Many in my class went to Korea and … for some reason … I don't know how to explain why I didn't, except that … I was already programmed to go to college, and so, "Bam," I was off to prep school and on to college. … The mental state was one in which … if you didn't get on the train and off at the right … station, it would get interrupted and you'd never get there. So, it was important [to] … stay on the track and to make sure [that] you … graduated from high school, went to college. … That's just the way it was … structured. So, … the war in Korea … had an influence on the fact that I wanted to fly fighters when I went in the Air Force, … even though there were all these guys telling me, … the bomber guys, … "Go to bombers." … I said, "Oh, yes, sir," and went off to do my own thing. … During the Korean War … the Air Force was in transition. … In 1947, it'd become a separate service … and we were building airplanes … moving through the engine development toward … the supersonic flight. … First, the F-86, which flew in Korea. It could go supersonic in a dive, but it had a pilot boom out here on the left wing. It would roll as you went through the mach and it

really wasn't a supersonic airplane. … We put a supersonic scoop and an afterburner on an F-100, North American [Aviation] did, and we went supersonic, [Mach] 1.25 or so, in straight and level flight, and then, "Bam," engine development goes ahead, again, and we're going Mach 2 in the [F]-104, a couple of years later. So, we're going through a revolution in engine development, but, what does this mean? … You've probably seen the movie *The Right Stuff*. If you read that book, it's not in the movie; my wife, (my first wife, she died in 1993) … was reading this book and she said, "You've got to listen to this. Someone's been following us around." … So, she's reading this story about this Navy pilot and his wife, who had gone home on a vacation, and they went to this party and they're driving back, and this is the conversation that they had, in which … the guy says, "Boy, … our friends have really changed. … So-and-So, … I just don't understand how he's changed," and his wife said, "No, no, he hasn't." … He pursued that and she said, "No, no, he hasn't." He said, "What do you mean, 'No, he hasn't?' You were at that party." She said, "No. We've changed. We've been going to funerals." … The point was that in every squadron that I was ever in, we always lost guys. … You didn't say, "It was the airplane." "It was Joe," because Joe didn't have "the Right Stuff." "It's not going to happen to me," because we're all going to go fly that airplane tomorrow, and the number of engine failures and the number of losses were very high. … Some statistical things, … the first six months I was the commander at Nellis [Air Force Base, Nevada], we lost ten airplanes and killed eight guys. Now, that's incredible. … If I had been the boss, I'd probably have fired me, but he didn't. He stuck with me and we stopped that, but, when you went back and looked at Air Force accidents, there were more people lost in training accidents. … In World War II, something like 34,000, more than all of the … loses in combat combined. So … we were taking people and sending them … very rapidly to combat. In fact, as I was leaving the [F]-104 program, in 1964, to go to the [Air Force] Academy the first time, … I was a captain. There was a farewell party at Apple Valley Inn, in Apple Valley, California, and a guy named Bob Worley was there. He was the Air Division Commander; … he was killed in Vietnam. … Bob Worley … was in the group and I was … saying, "We need to get more flying time." I'm making this pitch about … I was always wanting to get more and more and more flying time, and so, he allowed me to go on for about five or ten minutes. Then, he said, "Well, Bob, how much flying time do you have?" and I said, "Well, let's see, I've got about, almost a thousand hours in the 100 and almost a thousand in the 104. … [With] my training time, F-86s, oh, about two thousand, twenty-one hundred hours." He said, "Let me tell you a story. … It's December 8, 1941. I'm a first lieutenant, squadron commander, at Mitchell Field," out on Long Island, "and I get this message from Washington, from the headquarters. It said, 'Take your squadron and proceed to Bolling Field as soon as possible and set up the air defense of Washington, DC.' … I was highest man in my squadron, with three hundred hours. … Some of us older guys don't understand this business about, 'You've got to have enough flying time.'" [laughter] So, you've got to put it in perspective, and so, an awful lot of guys went to combat with no experience. I told a guy the other day, a Marine, … when I was down at Industrial College [of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair], I said, "The easiest year of my life was flying combat, because I was so well-trained." … I had just finished Fighter Weapons School, which is the Air Force Top Gun school. … The F-4 Phantom is my third fighter. … [I had] close to three thousand hours of flying time. Combat was a piece of cake.

SH: Do you want to go back and finish up on Rutgers?

RK: I'm just getting to Rutgers. … Okay, some of our instructors … had been in Korea and a couple of guys had been in World War II. …

SI: Before we discuss that, I wanted to follow up on something you just said. …

RK: Okay; go ahead.

SI: You said that combat was the easiest year of your life. I read through our interview with Gen. Frederick J. Kroesen, US Army. He also described a high level of training, in the infantry, going into Vietnam, but, as the war went on, the manpower needs of the infantry really precluded that same level of training. Was that ever the case in the Air Force?

RK: Well, in the fighter business, and before I went to Vietnam, I was instructing in F-4s at Davis-Monthan [Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona]. … When we'd graduate a class, the instructors would sit down and they'd say, "Okay, … all these guys have made it through, but are these guys ready to go to combat?" … We identified the guys that … would go to combat. … Then we identify guys … that needed a little more seasoning. So, we'd send them to, either … Europe or the Pacific for a three-year tour, and then, they'd go to Southeast Asia. … Then, there was a group that was almost as good as the guys that we said would go to combat right away, and we put them in a unit in the States and they would … go to Vietnam in about six months or a year. … Finally, there were some guys that we'd say, "You know, we ought to send them to be forward air controllers." [laughter] You know, they … shouldn't go into the fighter business. … These were … conscious decisions … about ability. Now, the training, of all of those people, was pretty good, but what I'm trying to say is that … there's differences in the people themselves, in terms of what they bring to the table. … Some people were coming right out of flying school. … I had … three fighter tours, so, I was … just in a different … category. … When you look at the time in Vietnam, we were doing quite a bit of night flying and that was a real change from the pre-'60 timeframe. … We started doing air-to-ground delivery at night. Before that, we just went out and scared ourselves at night. We were never proficient and, until you become proficient, you don't really realize how poorly you were trained. … [laughter] … Going down and doing low altitude work under flares is an interesting business. Today, we have refined the night. We've turned the night into day with the (Lantion?) system and we've done that through a lot of different systems, but, in Vietnam, we had some squadrons who were dedicated to [night flying]. All they did was fly at night … because we were doing twenty-four-hour operations. … There were an awful lot of guys who didn't like to fly at night because of this; they … avoided it if possible. … In fact, I spent a lot of time trying to convince the wing commander that we ought to designate a squadron to be the night squadron. … I did a study for him in which I took a year, a period of accidents, not combat losses, just accidents, and all of the accidents occurred at night. All of them occurred in two-seat airplanes. … The F-4 was a tandem cockpit airplane, pilot in the front, weapons system operator in the back, and you would think that … would have been safer than a guy who was by himself, but, when things "go to hell in a hand basket" the guy in the front has got to be able to handle it and all that crew stuff … just goes out the window. So, in fact, I was asked a question, when I came back from Vietnam in 1970, … the developers were wanting to know … what we thought, what we, the operators at Tactical Air Command, thought should be the right number of pilots in an airplane. … The Navy has three and four in some of them. … They came back and, … a message that I had to answer, … they asked TAC to address

the question of, "One, two or three?" … The way I answered that was, … based upon my study … was this: if the aircraft was automated correctly … and the engineering development and the ergonomics on the inside of the cockpit were developed properly, and your sensors were integrated, one person could do it, but, until that was done, we … probably needed two, particularly in the deep interdiction, night, all-weather-type systems. … That's what turned out to be the F-15E … and the [F]-117, which one of my sons flew in Gulf War I. … He flew the [F]-111 and then … came home, checked out in the 117. He led the mission that struck SAM sites in January of '93. … My other son is an F-16 pilot with the Colorado Guard. He flew in Gulf War II. In fact, he's going over again in June. … My point is that, at that particular time, Vietnam, I don't think [there was] sufficient night training. … We qualified … under flares, but that particular approach was ineffective. … Looking at the war in Vietnam … in military terms … you must go back to 1957. … You'll … find a book by [General Maxwell] Taylor called *The Uncertain Trumpet*. … In there, he's talking about … nuclear weapons and what ought to be done in terms of the construction of our Armed Forces. … Up at the Hudson Institute … what was his name? he's a brilliant guy, Herman Kahn, was really questioning the utility of nuclear weapons. In other words, "They're great for a deterrent, but how do you use them?" … I started off in a day fighter squadron in Germany, and then, in 1958 we transitioned to nuclear strike and I was … a special weapons officer. … In the early '60s period, our conventional capability was really [no different than in] World War II. We had … five-hundred and seven-hundred-and-fifty-pound bombs with 904 and 905 fuses, which had terrible reliability, and we … used them throughout the Vietnam War; … we flew thousands of sorties against the [Paul] Doumer Bridge [in Hanoi]. … Ten years later, we're taking it out with six airplanes, with the first-generation laser-guided bombs. So, what you see is an effort … to correct our conventional deficiencies, and so there was … a lot of testing going on over there; this weapon, that weapon, all kinds of stuff was going on, to develop … Electro-Optic and Infrared, laser-guided weapons. For instance, in air-to-air missiles, … I structured the weapons systems evaluation program for Tactical Air Command when I returned from Vietnam … because our performance of our air-to-air missiles in Southeast Asia was so bad. The AIM-7, which is a radar missile, there was a number of different versions, from C or B and C and E and E-plus and what have you, and, finally, an F, but the design spec for that missile was a .9. In other words, probability of a kill, given a hit, was .9. … The Vietnam performance was .12. A friend of mine, who was on the Fighter Force Modernization Study Group with me, John (Madden?), … should have had eight kills. He had five missile failures. He got three kills. … The point is that the weapons weren't working all that well and we were doing all kinds of things to improve our conventional weapons capability. … One of the benefits … was if you looked at Vietnam as a battle in the Cold War, what we did is … forced the Russians onto a track … to match us … in conventional as well as nuclear capabilities. … We ran them out of gas. … They … couldn't stay the course. We bankrupted them. A friend of mine … Charlie Hamm, later to be a superintendent at the Air Force Academy, was the defense attaché in Russia. … He told us about going to … a Soviet B-1 [Tupolev Tu-160] factory. He said, "Absolutely state-of-the-art, beautiful. Across the street's Tombstone, Arizona, wooden sidewalks." [laughter] … What a contrast. … They out spent all of their resources … trying to keep up with us; … finally bankrupted themselves. Now, was that our strategy? I don't think so, but … in the early '80s we were starting to think that it might work. … If you think about the Cuban Missile Crisis … I've written a few papers on the Cuban Missile Crisis and one of them … that needs to be written is, "What was the truth behind Kennedy's motivation in the Cuban Missile Crisis?" I've written on the Soviet motivation and

they didn't have any missiles. They had seventy above-ground, liquid-fueled missiles that we knew about. An Assistant Secretary of State … was speaking down in Chattanooga or Nashville and made this speech in which he signaled the fact that we knew, because of our over-flight capabilities, [that] they didn't have … much of a capability. The real reason they wanted to get those missiles into Cuba? … John F. Kennedy wanted to get reelected, of course, … which every President does. … When asked, … "Did we have the conventional capability to take out all the missiles and all the SAMs [surface-to-air missiles] that they had in Cuba?" Sweeney, [General Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., commander of Tactical Air Command], had to say, "No, we didn't have the capability to do it," and he was correct, we didn't have the capability to do it. So, that's another thing that's going on during all the other geopolitical things that's going on during Vietnam. … We are transitioning, and then, in the aftermath of that … people will talk about "realistic training," big, big keyword that shows up in the writings … in the '70s. Well, fighter pilots were always talking about realistic training. … I can remember the conversations when I was a lieutenant in Germany talking about … realistic training. … The way we got realistic training over there was that we just broke the rules, [laughter] and that's the truth. I mean, I can tell you about them. … General [H. R.] Spicer, who was Seventeenth Air Force commander, … sent out a message … it was read in the squadron meeting that morning, "There'll be no more air fighting between the various … countries' fighters unless … all the missions are pre-briefed." Well, if you don't know, the weather in Germany, in Europe, it's always gray and cloudy. ... A five-hundred-foot ceiling is a good deal. That's a great day. … If it gets to eight hundred feet, my God, it must be [that] something's going to happen. Well, that day, [there was] a Polish high, which meant a cold air mass coming off the Arctic, came across Europe, and it was clear, absolutely incredible. Well, if he had looked outside of his headquarters at Ramstein, all there were were contrails. [laughter] … I remember one of the guys, walking out of the squadron, saying, "Gee whiz, been an awful lot of pre-briefing going on today." [laughter] But the rule was that when you put your wheels up, … you should be ready to be attacked. … In fact, the Canadians, … they were flying the … Sabre [Canadair Sabre F-86], but they had an [Avro Canada] Orenda engine, and it was really a great performing airplane and they would take-off, four ship [formation], and they'd hold the lead onto the … deck, and then, they'd pull the thing up and they'd split and they'd be "checking six," [slang for looking behind you], as they came off the ground. I mean, … they were really good tacticians and it was fun. I mean, it was really a lot of fun being over there, but … the philosophy was, you weren't supposed to air fight, and, you know, I don't know a fighter pilot that's worth his salt who isn't, every day, trying to get out and get into an air fight. [laughter] …

MM: General, you spoke earlier about the factors that led you to enroll in Rutgers. Why did you decide to enroll in the School of Education? What influenced you?

RK: I wanted to be a coach. That's one of the things that was sort of always in my mind; that I was going to be a coach. I was very much influenced by a guy named Joe Sikorsky, who was my football coach and track coach at New Canaan, and I always thought I wanted to be a coach. In fact, the reason I went to the [Air Force] Academy in '64 was to coach. … I coached the varsity ski team, because I knew which end of the skis turned up, and then, I was the first varsity lacrosse coach. … I worked directly for the director of athletics and … I had great success, but learned that there was much more I wanted to do. … So, I went into [the] School of Education to be a coach.

MM: Are there any specific administrators or professors that stand out in your memories?

RK: No. [laughter] Dr. Lamont, in the English Department; now, the story about Dr. Lamont is that he was probably here when my dad was here. … He was around a long time. … The English House used to be down there on College Avenue. … Dr. Lamont, … one of those classic absent-minded professors, … was a tall guy, … maybe six-two or so, and he had this big overcoat. He had his overcoat on like this, off his shoulders. [laughter] He never could quite get it on, and so, he's standing out in front of the English House, and it's snowing out, and he's looking up and down College Avenue. … A student named Angelo Iannucci, who was co-captain of the '54 football team, along with [John] Brian O'Hearn, comes walking up the Avenue and he says, "Dr. Lamont, how are you today? Can I help you with something? You look a little confused." Dr. Lamont says, "Angie, I'm embarrassed." … He had a 1941 Buick, four-door, convertible. He said, "I know I drove my car today, but I don't know where I parked it, Angie, and the top's down." [laughter] So, I remember him. I took British and American Novels from him. He was really pretty good. I've been asked that question … [about administrators or professors that stand out] recently and … I can name all the coaches … and I can name some of the professors, but none of them that had [a major influence]. … The one thing that I have regrets about at Rutgers is that I didn't take advantage of the academics. ... I was just not turned on academically. … I mean, I had a rule; … I would go to every class, and I'm a morning person, so, I set up classes between … eight o'clock to twelve o'clock, I went to every class, went back to the Chi Psi House … at 114 College Avenue, and had lunch, would take a nap, go to practice, come back, [have] dinner, study, and, at ten o'clock, I was out. [laughter] I'm serious. … I'd fall asleep, just, "boom," and so, you know, academically, I just didn't put out at all.

SH: Were you in Chi Psi from your freshman year on? When did you pledge?

RK: Yes, freshman year, yes.

SH: Why Chi Psi?

RK: A guy named Gerry Gabriel, his dad was the director of athletics at Peekskill Military Academy, and he was up there, sitting around the cage one day, and I was talking to him and I said, "Oh, you went to Rutgers?" "Oh, how do you like Rutgers?" … I said I had applied there, my dad went there, and all that stuff, and so, when I came down here, I was invited over there. … Jim Monahan, who was the captain of the … '51 football team and an all-American baseball player, was a Deke [Delta Kappa Epsilon] and … my freshman backfield coach. … He tried to get me over to Deke. … The fraternities were very important in those days. They were different [than today] and I was from out-of-state. … We [Chi Psi] had a… higher percentage of out-of-state students. … All the social life [was centered there] and you lived in the fraternity. … You ate in the fraternity, you socialized in the fraternity, but you also had other groups … like the athletic teams. … On a party weekend, not a big weekend, but just a regular weekend, "We're going to have a party," and you had to get approval for a keg of beer from the Dean of Men. … [Cornelius] Boocock was the dean, but Kirkpatrick … was the tall, skinny guy, [who] was the guy that sort of checked up on the things. … Then, you would go to the various fraternity houses; so, from Chi Psi to Chi Phi, to Deke, to DU, to Zeta Psi, to the Beta House, to the Delta

Phi House, you know, you knew all those people. … It was very interesting. … At dinner each night you wore … a shirt and tie … and it was candlelight, and you sang songs. Afterwards, … you'd go to a party and you'd play some drinking games, … you'd chug-a-lug some beer and whatnot, and then, it was all singing. … They were great parties, fun. In fact, somebody said to me the other night … "What kind of party [did you have]?" … We were up taking my stepson to look at Yale and Trinity and Amherst and Williams, and we were with him … for dinner at Amherst. … [The host] was talking about … college life. She said, "Yes, the seventeen-year-old, eighteen-year-old guys just don't know how to put on a party. … They never have food. All they do is have beer, in a dark room, that's a party, and you can't hear anybody; there's a lot of noise." So, I don't know how the parties are today, but living in a fraternity was an important part of college, but, remember, Rutgers then was only three thousand students. It was a … small school, relatively speaking.

SH: You said that there were still veterans on campus at that point. Were they also involved in the fraternities?

RK: Yes, they were, but … the vets were … married, and so, they lived over in the Heights. I mean, here's an interesting story. Jack Jeffers, captain-elect of the 1953 Rutgers football team, … was a Chi Psi. He was married, so, he didn't live in the fraternity. He was from Schenectady, New York, and he was accepted to vet school at Cornell after his junior year. … He'd become a starter at quarterback that … year, and led the team to thirty-three points in eight minutes against Dartmouth. … [That] year we almost beat Penn State by, I think the score was 7-6. ... It was the 3-5 defensive. ... Anyway, Jeffers was captain of the football team for 1953, but he left and went to Cornell. He was down here as we were getting on busses to go to Harry's Farm, where we used to go for pre-season football. He came down to say goodbye to us, but, you know, it was one of those things that I didn't compute … but, for him, it was the right thing to do. He later did work on dogs and developed a procedure for replacing … retinas. … He's a pretty smart guy.

MM: What was it like to play under legendary, lacrosse coach, Al Twitchell in 1955 and 1956, two big seasons for Rutgers?

RK: Yes, two great ones. Twitchell had been a football coach and Twitchell … really characterized Rutgers. I mean, … his whole life was Rutgers, and his wife, Aileen, was a very loud, outspoken … woman. … She would come to the games and … cheer us [on]. … You have to understand what I brought to the lacrosse field. I mean, the way to explain Twitchell is, well, let me go back; Bob Andrews was a classmate of mine, and he was from Sewanhaka High School, and a great lacrosse player. I mean, he was the best lacrosse player at Rutgers. He … should have been first team, all-American. He was second team and I was first team, but … he was really the key. … Others would say … it was the combination of the two of us. We were both left-handers. … In those days, you used wooden sticks and you only went one way, left or right. You know, every once in a while, somebody would go right-handed, but it was unusual. The idea was … "Be as good as you can with your left hand." … So, that gave us great balance on offense, and the way to tell the story is this: Monte Montgomery was the captain of the '55 lacrosse team, … was co-captain with Tom Moffett. … Monte became a one-star general … in the Air Force … and, every once in a while, I'd run into him and we'd talk about … lacrosse. We

had to talk about lacrosse. … The conversation goes something like this, "… Twitch was really something." … "You know, we never had any plays." … "He never directed anything." … In my senior year, Monte, who had been washed back a year, was coaching with him. Now, he did set up something called a two-two-two, which we used … as … our basic offense, and then, on extra man … I would go in on the crease. … So, I would be playing on the crease [as] an extra man with whoever else was there, usually Jack Daut. … Well, in the Mohave Desert one night, I was with a guy named Dick Cavazos, and Dick Cavazos' father was the foreman on the King Ranch in Texas. His brother was Lauro Cavazos. They both played football at Texas Tech. Lauro later became the president of Texas Tech … and the Secretary of Education. Dick Cavazos went in the Army, was in Korea, overrun three or four times by the Chinese, and [was] a battalion commander in Vietnam. … When I met him, as a two-star general, he was the most decorated general officer in the United States Army, with six Distinguished Service Crosses and eleven Silver Stars, among others. Anyway, we're sitting there, we're talking about … "Who was the best military leader?" … Well, somebody liked Eisenhower, another guy liked Patton, and another guy, you know, loved MacArthur; … I think I said, "MacArthur." Cavazos said, … "Well, all those guys are good." He said, "But the best leader, I think, is the guy that, when people go back and ask about what kind of a leader he was, they say, 'What do you mean, leader? We did it ourselves,'" and that was Twitchell. We all felt we did it ourselves, but he was not … a lacrosse technician. He was a great leader. He allowed us to develop our own plays. In one of the plays, I used to flip a ball to Montgomery as he'd go behind me, and then, this two-two-two, we worked on that a lot, but … in terms of, "What did he teach me?" I don't think anything. I learned how to play lacrosse from Bob Andrews and I learned that … in my freshman year. … The other guys on the team had not played before, so, they are up there learning how to catch and throw the ball and he and I are shooting around the cage and learning how to quick stick [catching a pass and shooting the ball at the goal in one motion]. So, Bob Andrews taught me how to play lacrosse, and we didn't have a lot of [experienced] lacrosse players. We only had about four, four or five guys who'd played it before they came to Rutgers. So, we were very shallow and we lost a game, in my senior year, to Syracuse, and the reason for that was that Jack Daut, who was the year after me … and who was a great lacrosse player, also from Sewanhaka, he was in the hospital … with the flu. … When you took that one piece out … we didn't have the chemistry. … We were very strong offensively; we averaged something like sixteen or seventeen goals a game. We didn't know how to play defense. [laughter] … [Donald H.] Gucker was the goalie. He was pretty good. Art Robinson, who later coached at Williams, was on defense and he was a tackle on the football team, along with Dave Pooley, who was a center on the football team, and George Juergens, who was my roommate. … His name is George Abbot Juergens. He's the nephew of George Abbot, the producer, from Broadway, of *Damn Yankees, Wonderful Town, Pajama Game;* a terrific producer, lived to be 107. He'd still produced at a hundred … [which was] fantastic.

SH: Did you ever get free tickets from him? [laughter]

RK: We used to go into New York, but I don't remember if we got tickets from him or not. [laughter] … During those years, he was dating Eartha Kitt, at one time.

SH: Did most of the football players play lacrosse to keep in condition?

RK: … Yes. Well, … first of all, lacrosse was fun; football was work. Now, I even loved practicing football … so … I'm in a different category, but most people didn't like to practice. So, in the spring, if you were playing on a varsity sport, you didn't have to go to spring practice. As a freshman, you did. So, I would go to the lacrosse field with my football gear on. Then, [when] football practice would start, I'd put down my lacrosse stick and go over to the football field and practice football, but, in your upper-class years, sophomore year, junior year, senior year, … you didn't have to go to spring football. … That hurt football. You know, it's one of these things, that, today … you must specialize. You have to be working it all year round. … … It was a different world in the '50s.

SH: Was there 150-pound football then?

RK: Yes, there was and it was good. Jack Daut played 150s. … I'd come from the training tables. We would enter through the backdoor, because … dinner's going on in the dining room. … They were still serving, or singing, or something or other. We'd sit around the table. … I'll never forget, this guy named [David] Zeke Edwards played 150s and he and this other guy, and I've forgotten who the other guy was, maybe Jack Daut, would be sitting there and they'd be having dinner. Dinner would be a plate with a piece of lettuce on it and they'd shake the water off, because … they had to make [weight], and Zeke … weighed more than I did. [laughter] I mean, he was 175 pounds and he … had to play at 155, and so, he was dropping twenty pounds. … I mean, he's [salivating over food] and they'd do that until Friday, and they'd get on the scales. They'd make weight, or they'd have to … go in the steam room, and then, they'd come out [and] they'd just [gorge themselves], a wonder if they could run, but, I mean, … I just never could do that. … I used to look at it and say, "Oh, you guys are dedicated."

MM: In your junior year, General, you were tapped for Cap and Skull. You mentioned that your father was also a Cap and Skull. What did that honor mean for you?

RK: Yes. Well, because he [was a member], I mean, I knew what Cap and Skull was growing up. I mean, it was something everybody …

SI: Please, hold that thought.

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

SI: This continues our interview with Lieutenant General Robert E. Kelley on April 5, 2004, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth …

MM: … Mike Miranda …

SH: … Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Please, continue.

RK: So, it was a big deal. … I was a little disappointed the next year, when we chose the next class, because, if that was the pattern, it seemed to me it was one of those things in which they

tried to pick out … a representative group from various areas. … So, I guess I was the jock of our crop. [laughter] … They always had the president of the class and the student council, and all that kind of stuff. … I mean, I'm not sure it was as serious as I thought it probably could have been, now, and the reason I say that is that I was familiar with the fact that my dad was in Berzelius at Yale and he had been tapped for Berzelius, and then, tapped for … Skull and Bones. Now, the difference is, between Cap and Skull [and the secret societies at Yale], and maybe this reflects the fact that I didn't know much about Cap and Skull, in terms of what we were supposed to be doing, but a close friend of mine was in Skull and Bones and, before he was elected, he said, "Well, you know what they do. … It's a secret society and they sit down and they plan out their lives, and then, they discuss it … in a rather objective and brutal way, and say, 'Okay, let's all help each other do that.'" Now, you could say that's the classic "old boys" society, but, you know, both [Presidents] George Bush, Senior and Junior, and as well as [Senator] John Kerry, are Skull and Bones. … I thought that Cap and Skull sort of would be something like that and it wasn't. So, … it was a nice honor. I was glad to be in it, but I was disappointed with regard to what I thought it could be and expected it to be.

SH: Were you involved in any other activities on campus?

RK: Well …

SH: It sounds like you did not have a lot of time.

RK: Well, I didn't have a lot of time, but, … football and lacrosse obviously took up most of my time. … I played on an intramural basketball team for the lodge, Chi Psi. I was in the fraternity. I'm not sure … what jobs I had in the fraternity … as most of mine were outside the fraternity. I was running the Air Force ROTC program. I made a cadet colonel, but that wasn't all that hard. … I ran the drill on Tuesday afternoon, had to brief people and that kind of stuff, run parades. How else was I involved on the campus? I don't know. [laughter]

SH: Were there any convocations, lectures or concerts that you remember in the 1950s while you were on campus?

RK: Well, every year, at the end of the year, when we tapped for both Cap and Skull and Crown and Scroll, convocation … was held in the gym … so, the whole University got together at that time, and they gave out awards.

SH: Did you go on to Advanced Air Force ROTC?

RK: … Of course, I was in Air force ROTC for four years. … As I said, … from an academic point of view, and probably from a cultural point of view, I was probably sleeping when those things were going on. [laughter]

SH: What about politics on campus? You were here during an election year.

RK: Well, … from '52 on … [General Dwight D.] Eisenhower is President. The period of the '50s was pretty quiet … in terms of politics. … There's not a lot of … activity on campus in that

regard. … He ran against Stevenson in '56, Adlai Stevenson. … Who was it in '52?

SI: I think he ran against Adlai Stevenson twice.

RK: Twice, okay. Yes, well, you can check it out. [Editor's Note: Eisenhower defeated Stevenson in 1952 and 1956 presidential elections.] … There wasn't a lot of political stuff. I can remember one night, there was a panty raid down here near the Deke House. … We all … heard all this noise going on down there, and it was what you didn't do … "don't get involved in that" … routine. [laughter] I don't know who was doing that, but that tall dean that I have mentioned, or assistant dean, would be the guy that was probably in there, you know, taking care of it. … You know, activity, political activity, was very [limited]. It didn't happen. I mean, … there's an old saying about John Kennedy. … "What was significant about John Kennedy at Harvard? It's what he didn't do," because communism was the big thing going on at that time, but he wasn't involved in it. From a political point of view, around here, again, it was more serious about … "What are you doing in class today?" and, "What's going on this weekend?" or, "What team are you playing?" … that kind of business, more than international affairs.

MM: What was the attitude of other Rutgers students towards ROTC cadets at that point?

RK: We were all in it.

MM: Was the Advanced ROTC just considered something that you did for your last two years, just another activity?

RK: Everybody wanted to get into Advanced, because that gave you a deferment. The draft was on. The draft was not over until after I left. So, it was one of these things in which … if you're out of school, if you were drafted … ROTC was the way to stay in school. So, everyone; … when I say "everyone," whether it be the captain of the football team or the president of the class or the student council, … all of the leaders at the University were involved in the ROTC. … We had fifteen hundred [cadets] in a school of three thousand, fifteen hundred in the Air Force and about a thousand in the Army. So, are you in the ROTC?

MM: Yes, sir.

RK: You are?

MM: Army ROTC.

RK: Oh, that's too bad. [laughter] … You can transfer.

SH: How much information were you processing about what was going on in Korea?

RK: Well, Korea was over in '53.

SH: Right, but you were here then.

RK: Well, I'm here … as a freshman, and … I think the only thing was that … everybody was happy to get it over with. … It was one of these things … like Vietnam … "Why were we doing that?" … South Korea had been invaded, so, there was … a reason, but … even so, Korea … was one of these things [where] all the people coming back from it were not all that excited about it. … It was just one of those things that … was forgotten. … It didn't match up to World War II, which was heroic. It was one of these things that … "Well, I guess they have to be there." … Buddies of yours went and they came back and [you asked], "How was it?" "Oh, God." …

SH: Do you recall if there were any veterans from Korea coming back to Rutgers at that point?

RK: There must have been. … I'm trying to think of one, not many, but they were … here, but, I mean, when they say [veterans]… they were veterans of Korea, and not World War II. … They were married; they were living out in the Heights, in those green huts that they used to live in out there. … So, housing was sort of [at] a premium.

SH: In your four years here, did you note an increase in the African-American population on campus?

RK: There was Stevie Johnson, Choo-Choo Jackson, Johnson? [James Davis?]. Gosh, I'm not sure [that] there was more than a handful, and those are two football players. I don't know [if] there was one on the basketball team. … It was pretty white, Anglo-Saxon. We had a few guys that came in with "zoot suits." … It's a funny story, really. Jack Canal, who was an end on the football team, in fact, he was a Chi Psi, and he came … for dinner, and he had this powder blue suit with pegged legs that came down … around the bottoms, … and a ducktail haircut. … He was a good guy. He's a dentist now, I think in Tampa, Florida. … It took about two weeks and, all of a sudden, he had a blue blazer. ... College has always been a growing up period in this country … with regard to movement from … supervision by your parents to separation from family and sort of a growing period, and so, a lot of that went on.

SH: Who else do you remember from the administration here at Rutgers?

RK: … Harry Rockafeller was Director of Athletics, the President [was] Lewis Webster Jones and Mason Gross was the Provost. Dr. Jones had all of us from Cap and Skull to dinner, which I thought was a very impressive thing, … over at his house across the river, and a very nice affair. … He … just sat down and talked to us, but, … again, … listening to [the faculty, like], say, at Amherst and Williams this past week, the interaction with the faculty, we really didn't do it very much. We would invite faculty or coaches, or whatnot to parties, interacted a little bit that way. … I remember a guy, who was teaching American Civilization, that a couple of guys in the fraternity used to go and socialize with, but the interaction with the faculty didn't seem to be too great.

MM: What type of training or instruction did you have in ROTC? You said that the Army carried rifles, but the Air Force did not do much drilling.

RK: Oh, we drilled on Tuesday afternoon. We always beat you guys in competitions. [laughter]

If we didn't, I wanted to say that anyway. [laughter] … When I was at the Air Force Academy, whenever I had a guest … the cadets always paraded very well … but I always sort of underplayed it. I'd say, "We fly a lot better than we march," [laughter] but whatever. … What did they teach us? … We had parades, went out and drilled … and taught each other how to do that. I had been at Peekskill Military Academy, so … I probably knew a little bit more than the average bear. What did we learn?

MM: Did you have classroom instruction as well?

RK: Yes, we did. Oh, I think we had something on the Soviet Union. I know we had one course in terms of how to plan a base. We didn't know what we were doing, didn't have a clue. [laughter] We didn't know where to put [things]. … "How do you enter the base?" "Where's the runway?" You know, we'd never seen a base. We didn't know how to do that. … Generally speaking, … it was [viewed] as a "gut" course. … You'd go in, listen in class and get a "B." …

MM: Was there stiff competition for pilot slots?

RK: No, as long as you qualified … you took that stanine exam and they had "this little thing" where you had to tell which kind of position you're in [in an aircraft], and I did very well on it. So, don't ask me why, don't ask me why, [laughter] because there was this guy; the reason I say "this little thing," this one little guy must have heard about what you had to do. I was using my hands [to indicate the position]. He had this little, white airplane. He was [good]. [laughter] So, anyway, we all took that stanine test and, you know, I know I did well as a pilot. …

MM: It must have worked.

RK: It worked.

MM: Did you meet your wife at this time?

RK: Yes.

MM: How did that happen?

RK: How did that happen?

MM: She went to school in Virginia, I believe.

RK: Well, she did. She went to Virginia Intermont … which wife are you talking about?

MM: Your first wife.

RK: My first wife, yes. I can sing the Columbia High School *alma mater*, because we had so many guys in my fraternity from Columbia, from South Orange, Maplewood. … "Columbia, thou has taught us the way that we should tread." … So, anyway, Brian O'Hearn, who was … a class ahead of me and captain of the football team, was a close friend. … We all went off to

something in February. We came back and he had a party … up in his area and Tommy Moffett, who was, again, a year ahead of me, played lacrosse, captain of the lacrosse team with Monte Montgomery, had a date with my Marty Odell. … That's when I fell in love with her … but it took me about six months to finally get a date with her, and the rest was history.

MM: After graduation, where did you go for flight training?

RK: … You entered the Air Force, in those days, in San Antonio, Lackland Air Force Base, for about a month or six weeks, and then, I went to Bainbridge, Georgia. [I] had a guy named (Ivan Fagen?) as my flight instructor. … We had this big … room and these little, small tables … [and the cadets would] sit there. … Then, the instructors would come out and he was always the last one out and he always had this red face. I think he did a lot of drinking. [laughter] … They'd all been World War II [pilots]. They were all civilians at that time. … We flew the T-34 and the T-28.

MM: Then, they sent you to Germany.

RK: No, no. … That was just for primary, where you get about 150 hours of flying time in those two airplanes. … Then, you went on, to either, at that time, into multi-engines, [if] you're going to be a bomber or a transport pilot, or to single-engine jets, which was T-33s. I went to Greenville, Mississippi, where I … got my wings, and then, based upon your class standing, you get to select whatever assignments are available. … So, I was high enough to be able to get an F-86 [assignment] to Williams Air Force Base, [Chandler, Arizona], where I did what they called advanced training. … We flew that for about eighty hours and I did very well there. I was number one in my class, so, I got to pick my assignment, and so, I picked … Hahn, Germany. … After Williams, we went on to Nellis for … checkout in the F-100. … Maintenance was always bad, so, we got about twenty-three hours. … Then, survival school at Stead, north of Reno, Nevada and then, to Germany. … From the time that I left Rutgers, I graduated on the 7th [of June], played in the North-South game on the 10th, was married on the 30th, entered the Air Force on the 13th, and, two years later I was in Germany.

MM: In Germany, were you working with NATO or alongside other NATO forces? Did you ever work with any soldiers from other units or from other countries?

RK: Well, we were a day fighter squadron and our responsibility was to fly from a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour after sunrise, because we didn't have any radar in the airplane, the F100C. So, we just flew in the daytime, and to intercept Russian airplanes if they penetrated the ADIZ [Air Defense Identification Zone]. … We did work a little bit with the Army. Every once in a while, we'd fly down to Grafenwoehr [US Army installation in SE Germany] and provide close-air support for them, but we didn't really work with the Army very much in those days. The idea of joint-ness and [working] in cooperation like that was … just beginning. … So, after a year of that, we closed that squadron down, and we assigned all the other pilots to other squadrons in the wing. … We were part of the rollback of the Russian air defenses for the bombers that would follow us. So, we would load a Mark 7, twenty-eight-kiloton nuclear weapon, pretty early version, on our left wing and sit alert. My target was the airfield east of Krakow, Poland. … One afternoon a guy from the State Department or the JCS [Joint Chiefs of

Staff] visited because they're concerned about the fact that they thought that one of us might take off with a weapon and deliver it without an order to do so. … Later, there was something called a permissive action link that we went to with nuclear weapons. It required two people, two keys, all that kind of business. … We didn't have any of that [then], so, I … briefed him on my target. … I briefed the … routes and our planning, and how we were going to attack it from the east and use the LABS [Low-Altitude Bombing System] maneuver, which throws the weapon up to about fourteen thousand feet, and then, you escape and whatnot. … So, I finished that and the guy … from the State Department … said, "Well, that's a very good briefing, Lieutenant … but I hope you never have to do that." Gee, I was ready to do that that afternoon, if they wanted me to, and … I must have looked startled. He said, "In Krakow, Poland, there is one of the oldest and finest libraries in the world. … If we ever destroyed that, it would be a terrible thing." … Up to that point, I had never given a moment's thought to the consequences of my actions.

MM: Did you ever feel that there was a real threat that the Cold War might go hot?

RK: No, not really. We just were having a wonderful time, flying airplanes. [laughter] I mean, I'm telling you the truth. I mean, it was one of those things in which we were exercised, so … we knew our jobs. … In fact, I was telling somebody on this trip, when we were heading … to dinner, about that. They said, "Well, you know, it sounds like you just went to another fraternity," and that's what a fighter squadron is. … It was another fraternity. … We worked together, pulled alert together, partied together, played together, worked hard, played hard. … As an example of the kind of guys that were with me, one of them just had his seventieth surprise birthday party down in Naples, Florida. His name is Al Hoffman. He was a '56 graduate from West Point. He was courting this gal when he was in Germany, and I think she'd been married before and her husband was killed, he was a pilot, and she said, "If you want to marry me, you've got to get out of flying." So, he got out of flying. He went back to Harvard Business School, and then, moved out to Chicago and became one of the most successful builders in the Chicago area. Twenty-five years ago, thirty years ago now, I guess, in the late '70s, he retired and moved to Florida and became a polo player. [laughter] … He got thrown off and … got seriously banged up and … now he runs … WCI, West Coast International, or something or other. They build all these beautiful golf courses and condos on the west and east coast of Florida. … He was a fundraiser for George Bush. … He's a very wealthy guy. But, those were the kind of guys that were in the squadron with you. … We were just all out of college. … Some of them, some of the guys were not interested in staying in, but we were just having a wonderful time. … Flying airplanes, of course, in flying fighters in particular, … was just an exciting life.

MM: Did you get an opportunity to tour around Europe while you were there?

RK: Well, … yes, some. I've seen so many churches; I never want to see another church. [laughter] … My first wife … never wanted to go back to Europe again, because the weather was so bad. All she saw was gray, but, of course, every day, we'd go fly and we got above the clouds. In Germany, the clouds go from about five hundred to fifteen hundred feet, so, you're up above of the clouds. We saw the sun every day. … I went to Switzerland, to Italy, to Spain, to Belgium, to the Netherlands, to all over Germany, to the UK, to Libya. We used to have a bombing range down there in Libya, so, we would deploy down to Wheelus Air Force Base, outside of Tripoli. A funny thing happened when we were standing on a corner in Tripoli …

deciding on whether we're going to go … to the new section or the old section of Tripoli. … We're standing there and … one of us, he was about six-three, his name is Chuck Young, Class of '56 at West Point, crew cut, … very German-looking guy. … This kid comes up and he goes, "Want to buy a knife?" Sticks it in his gut, and he [Young] responds, "*Nein*," and the guy looked at him … thought he was a German. You've got to understand the context, again. There were many young Libyans without an eye. Their mothers would put out one of their eyes, so that they wouldn't have to go into the army … the Italian Army. … This young guy took one look and thought, "Germans?" … He had thought we were Americans, so he was going to take us for a ride, but Germans, nada. "Voom," he was gone. [laughter] So, you know, it's just interesting … the different ways people look at you, from a cultural perspective.

MM: What were your reactions to the Berlin Crisis? You were redeployed to Germany for that, correct? [Editor's Note: The Berlin Crisis of 1961 developed in June 1961 when the Soviet demanded the withdrawal of Western forces from the occupied city and drew to a close in November of that year. Berlin had earlier been a flashpoint for East-West tensions during the 1948 Soviet blockade and the subsequent US Air Force/Royal Air Force-led airlift.]

RK: Well, that's another story. … Yes, this was in the F-104. … We wished we could get into aerial combat … when I returned to Germany in the F-104; see, now, [in] the F-100, we … struggled against the Mk6s [Canadair Sabre Mk6s] … but, with the F-104 … we were all over the place. I mean, we could just really get up and go. … It was … the opportunity to start the build-up of conventional forces. So, an awful lot of people were called up, to go, for the Berlin Crisis (of 1961, not 1948) and it was a serious event, but was it going to start World War III? Only if somebody did something dumb. … I think both sides, Unites States and Soviet, decided that it wasn't worth fighting World War III about. … That became pretty apparent, and so, we did a lot of flying. … Went to the club and drank a lot, [laughter] played basketball, and, pulled alert. … The initial response was hoping something's happening, and not going was disappointing. … During the Cuban Missile Crisis [of October 1962], I didn't deploy to Florida and I was sort of disappointed. Again, you've got to understand that the orientation was you wanted to get [combat time]. The objective for a fighter pilot is to become an ace. So, "Who's the world's greatest fighter pilot?" … You're always competing, and while it doesn't make a lot of sense when you're an adult, [laughter] but, I mean, that's the way you think about it, is that you're a young guy that … didn't get to World War II. … Here's the classic story. [Major General Frederick C.] "Boots" Blesse, Class of '45 from West Point, … that was a three-year class, he graduates from West Point, the war's over, June of '45. He's assigned to Okinawa. He goes out there and he flies a P-51. He learns to air fight and he's fighting with all the guys in the squadron. He goes back after every mission and they say, "Well, Boots, you really did well today, but that's not the way you do it in combat." So, he's there for about three years, and he comes back to Selfridge, out in Michigan, and, all of a sudden, the Korean War kicks off. So, he walks into the office of his CO, … Colonel Francis S. "Gabby" Gabreski, who was a leading ace. … He got twenty-five or twenty-eight victories in World War II. [Editor's Note: Colonel Gabreski earned twenty-eight kills in World War II, thirty-four-and-a-half total in his career.] Blesse walks in and he says, "Colonel Gabreski, I've got to get to the war." He said, "Oh, relax, Boots. The big one's going to be over in Europe. You know that's just a little thing going on over in Korea. You don't want to go there." … "Look," Boots says, "Wait a minute now, you've been [in a war]." He said, "I've got to get over there and … find out what it's all about," and so,

Gabreski says, "Okay." So, he sends him out to Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, and he's checked out in the '86. He goes to Japan, and when he gets up to a base in Korea, no, I'm sorry. In Japan, they said, "The '86s aren't … there yet. Has anybody here checked out in the F-[51], flown the F-51?" Boots Blesse said, "Shit, this thing will be over before I get over there." He said, "Yes, I'm a '51 guy." He says, "Okay, you go over to K-14 [Kimpo Air Force Base, South Korea]." So, he goes over to K-14. He arrives; this flight commander sees him and he says, "Hey, … we're glad to have you here." … Go out and get a couple of landings in the F-51, get recurrent … because our flight's going to be on alert tonight." So, Boots goes out … flies the F-51 around the base, lands it, comes in, gets on alert. Well, … now it's night. All of a sudden, all of the heavens open up and it is raining. It's just pouring and Boots looks outside and he says, "We don't fly in this crap, do we?" … The flight commander says, "No. … Every once in a while, they ring the bell and we go out and sit in the airplane, but we never fly." So, two o'clock in the morning comes and the bell goes off, and they go out to the airplanes and they start up the engines, and … no one ever calls. They taxi out to the runway and they take-off. [laughter] They've got rockets. So, they go up north and they fire these rockets off, and then, they get the call to come back and return to base. It's all screwed up. They're getting this call saying, "Come on back and land". … "The weather's … really getting bad." [laughter] So, they come back and they didn't have lights on the runways. … All they had was smudge pots for lighting the runway. So, they come down through this soup and they missed the approach and, now, they're getting low on fuel … because there's no place in Korea to go, they might have to go to Japan. … They're beyond their "bingo fuel," [slang for the amount of fuel needed to make it back to base]. So, they finally come down. They make another approach, missed approach. Third time, they come down, and this is really getting serious, and so, the guy picks it up, gets lined up and he says to Boots, "Take spacing." So, the first guy lands, and then, Boots comes in and he lands. … He thinks to himself, "Boy, thank God." Halfway down the runway, there's these lights, and a truck comes over and hits him broadside; throws him upside down, off the runway, into a ditch. The thing doesn't burn, but, oh, he's [in a tangled wreck]. So, he starts [trying to move.] … He moves his arms and legs and he said, "I think I'm okay." Then, all of a sudden, he feels this trickle coming down the back of his neck. He said, "Oh, my God, I'm going to bleed to death before they get me out of here." Well, to make a long story short, behind the seat in a P-51 is a fuel tank, which ruptured, and it was avgas [aviation gasoline]. The only problem he had was fuel pooled in his helmet and it burned the inside of his ear. That's the only thing that was wrong with him. Now, fast forward, he flies a hundred missions, he shoots down ten airplanes, and he's up there in his brand-new, shiny F-86 with ten stars [representing ten kills] on the side, but he ran out of fuel and he had to jump out. [laughter] That's the way he began his hundred missions and that's the way he ended. So, the point is that … you are trained, and geared [for], and you are focused on getting into combat. It doesn't make any difference where it is. … When I was instructing F-104s, we were having a party. … I was instructing Allied pilots in the '104 program, the '104G, and a guy named Colonel Bertalasso, from the Italian Air Force, was one of the students, a handsome guy, light brown, curly hair. A guy named Montchello was another guy in his class, who had this blonde wife. … You don't think of Italian women [as] being blonde, but … up along the Alps, they are. Anyway, Bertalasso is there and … we were having a party for him before he goes home and he's talking about World War II. He says, "You know, I was down in Africa and I shot down a Hunter," a British airplane, "and then, later, we were repatriated. … A couple of months later, I'm out in a P-51, I shoot down an ME-109," and my wife said, "Colonel Bertalasso, isn't that confusing? You know, one day, you're on one side,

shooting down this airplane; the other day, [you are] on the other side." He turned to her, he smiled and he said, "Oh, no, young lady, war is fun." [laughter] So, again, you've got to look at the context and, you know it all sounds crazy, and maybe we are crazy, but, at the time, you're not [involved] in the political decision making about it. … It's like the movie *Catch-22* [(1970)]. You know, there's an awful lot of [truth in that] movie. I've seen guys in combat. One of the guys in my squadron at Da Nang; we'd get rocketed between about, I don't know, maybe May and August, and they'd throw these rockets in, they don't know where they're going, and they'd hit something. Sometimes they'd kill people, sometimes they don't, but he would go out with his steel helmet on, with a candle on top, and drink beer and watch the rockets. [laughter] I mean, people act crazy in these situations. It's strange. They're not all like that. I mean, we were serious [when] we were flying … but it just sounds funny.

MM: After the Berlin Crisis, your active duty commitment was probably almost up.

RK: Yes.

MM: What made you decide to stay in?

RK: No, my original commitment was up before the Berlin Crisis. … After we got to Hahn, Germany, I had always had the approach that I would keep my options open, and I loved flying. I mean, right from the beginning, I loved flying. One evening, we were at the Hahn officers' club bar and I was standing there, my wife was behind me talking to my flight commander's wife, and she asked Marty a question. … She said, "… Is Bob going to stay in the Air Force?" and Marty said, "I think so. We really love it," and I said, "Well, that takes care of that. Marty likes it, I like it, guess we're going to stay in." [laughter]

MM: Discussion over.

RK: That's right. It was one of those things … it just sort of happened.

MM: When were you sent to the Air Force Academy for the first time?

RK: Well, after I came back from Germany, in '61. [I] flew '104s for three years, and part of that was that deployment, the first six months. I'd just gotten back from Germany and went right back. … Then, I instructed the Allied pilots on the '104G. … I went to the Academy in '64, June of '64.

MM: What were your initial impressions of the Academy?

RK: Well, the Academy was all brand-new. Now, unlike Rutgers, or most colleges, you know, they're built in stages, the Academy was, "whoosh," all built at the same time. … It was less than ten years old when I arrived, and so, it was exciting to be there. We knew it was great for our kids. It was a new experience. That's one of the things about the Air Force, is [that] you're always going to have a new experience with new people, but, in February, Phil Smith was shot down over Hainan Island, [China], in an F-104C. [Editor's Note: Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Philip E. Smith's F-104C was shot down in the vicinity of Hainan Island, China, on

September 20, 1965. Smith was repatriated by China on March 15, 1973.] … We had been in the same squadron in the deployment to Berlin, and so, I thought, "What the hell am I doing here?" So, I went in to see the director of athletics and said, "I've got to go to the war," and he said, "Okay," and, "I understand," and … went into a staff meeting. … When he came out, I had to stay for two more years. The Director of Athletics said, "… This guy … has volunteered for Vietnam. What do we do?" … The superintendent said, "Well, I guess we've got to have a policy." So, they decided, the policy was, you could curtail your tour, mine was a four-year tour, at three-quarters … of your tour, so that it was now a three-year tour for me. … I had to stay for two more years, and so, I saluted smartly and said, "Yes, sir." … He brought me up to be his administrative assistant and I coached skiing and lacrosse, and it was a good three years. Then, I got to Tucson and I checked out in the F-4 and they decided; … they had a problem with instructor pilots and I had already been an instructor pilot in the fighter business, and so, it was decided, "We're going to keep you here to be an instructor." I said, "I've heard this before." So, I got up and I called my old boss and I said, "Is there anything you can do to help?" He said, "I'll call Moose Harmon, who's the DO [Director of Operation] at TAC [Tactical Air Command]," and so, he did. He said, "Oh, I'll take care of that." … My old boss, he said, "It looks pretty good." … The next day, he calls me back. He said, "Bob, I think you have to stay there a year, [laughter] because the commander wanted to get this thing straightened out," and so, I said "Yes, sir," and saluted smartly, etc. … Then, I decided I'd have to take it in my own hands. So, I volunteered for Fighter Weapons School, and there's a guy who flew 104s with me [who] was down in personnel. So, I called him and said, "Look, you got any … Fighter Weapons School slots, en route to Southeast Asia?" He says, "I can work that." So, he did that and that's how I got to [Vietnam].

MM: You eventually ended up in Da Nang.

RK: Yes, right.

MM: Which unit were you assigned to?

RK: … The 366th TAC [Tactical] Fighter Wing … in the Fourth Squadron [4TFS], but, when I got off the airplane, the guy who was the wing commander was a guy named … [General] John [W.] Roberts and … a very respected fighter pilot -- he won the first jet gunnery meet [Air Force Fighter Weapons Meet], as a matter-of-fact, at Nellis -- met me at the airplane, which is a little unusual. … [We] toured around the base. … There's a good story here, in that we're driving around and, all of a sudden, we come to this one area and it's all burnt out. … The ground is burned, the trees are burned. It looks like something out of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I said, "My God, what's that?" He said, "Oh, that's the VNAF area," VNAF being the Vietnamese Air Force area. Da Nang had Vietnamese Air Force. They had Marines on the other side, a Navy wing. It had a fighter wing, it had herbicide, the … [Agent] Orange spray birds [C-123s] were there. It was an interesting place, and I said, "My God." Well, two weeks later, a friend of mine is visiting. I'm in a jeep. We're driving around the base. He said, "My God, what happened there?" I said, "Oh, that's just the VNAF area." So, I made it a rule that, whenever you got to a place, always write down what you see in the first two weeks, because, after that, that's the way you've always done it. … "Oh, that's always that way." So, you've got to write those things down, or you won't get it done, I promise you. So, anyway, he took me around the

base and said, "I don't have an opening for;" I was a major. … "You're too junior to be a squadron commander, and there isn't any opening as ops officer, and I just made So-and-So the weapons and tactics officer," which would have been a natural assignment for me, coming from the weapons school. He said, "I want you to be my exec." He said, "You're really going to be the vice wing commander, because the Colonel I have is terrible and I'm trying to get rid of him, so, I need help," and I said, "Wait a minute." I said, "I came over here to fly combat." He said, "You'll get to fly as much as everybody else," … and I did. … I ended up flying a hundred missions in six months. It normally took a year. Roberts got promoted to one-star [brigadier general] and dragged me down to be his exec, down at the TACC [Tactical Air Control Center], which was not a bad thing. I got back to Da Nang and got another nineteen missions, but it wasn't quite what I expected, because there … weren't any MiG opportunity. …

MM: Prior to this, you had garnered quite a bit of experience as a flight instructor. You said that you felt that you were pretty well-prepared. What do you think was the biggest discrepancy between training and the real thing?

RK: On my record, it says 119 combat missions; I give myself credit for four or five, because those are the only missions that met my expectation of what combat would be all about. In other words, "Those other guys are trying to kill me." I mean, there … might have been other missions [where] they were trying to kill me, too, and I didn't know it, but I knew it on those four [or five]. … So, I would say the routineness of it [was the biggest discrepancy]. … There's always lull in wars. … It's not like every day is a full-intensity "Battle of the Bulge," … everything going to hell-in-a-hand-basket. So, it's … dealing with the routine, the idea that you don't have any control over what happens. As an example, the first four days of August, 1969, we lost an airplane a day, including the vice wing commander. I'll tell you, the pressure gets pretty heavy on the commanders in those kinds of situations, and you're always asking yourself questions. … The barracks used to be two stories and they'd have … a roof overhang … because of the rain; so that it wouldn't come in, they'd have another roof halfway down. … We had one rocket hit one of the barracks one night that killed a guy. Now, think about the probability of a guy, his name is Lawangatang, he was a Dutch national in the United States, joined the Air Force, he may have been doing it to get his citizenship or whatever, whatever his mindset was, he's at Da Nang; he's the guy that's killed. Twenty-six other guys are injured. I was having my teeth cleaned in Langley Field, Virginia, in 1971. … The gal that was doing my cleaning said, "Did you know Sergeant So-and-So, at Da Nang?" I said, "No, I don't think so." She said, "Well, you were the wing executive officer." I said, "That's correct." … "Well, he was killed in the rocket attack that hit the logistics computer." I said, "Gee, I'm very sorry, but I really didn't know him." … To contrast the conditions, Da Nang was in Vietnam, and we were flying a lot of airplanes out of Thailand, and we did flying into Laos. … You may not have heard about that, or weren't supposed to hear about that, but we were doing a lot of flying [there]. … Most of my flying was in Laos, as well as in the southern part of North Vietnam, at that time in the war. As well as in-country, South Vietnam, doing close-air support with the Marines or the Army, so, one day, we recovered into Ubon, Thailand, and, as we got out of the airplane, [we] opened up the cockpit and we were filling out the forms. … I'm standing there and I said to the guy with me, a guy named Larry Tibbits, I said, "You know, Larry, something's wrong here. Something's going to happen, because … it just doesn't feel right." … About that time, two airplanes, the runway is about half a mile away, took off and I realized that it was the noise, because at Da Nang, there

were more take-offs and landings than at O'Hare in Chicago, which has the highest [number] in the United States. Besides that … the vice wing commander, who replaced the guy that was killed, had a midair collision with a VNAF airliner that crashed [and] took out a town off the west runway. He got the airplane back and landed it. We had an airplane come in and hit one of the revetments and took out an F-4. … I'm taxiing, six o'clock in the morning; I'm going down to the headquarters. So, I go out to … check the runway and I'm travelling down the parallel taxiway to the runway and here comes a Navy A-4 out of this low (?) soup, because the weather was down very low. He hit the runway, bounced up into the clouds, ejected. The airplane came back down on the runway and continued to the end, and took the barrier. I went out and picked him up. He was taking off his chute; he wanted to go after his airplane. [laughter] … He'd come off a carrier. It's just crazy, I mean, crazy things. … The officers' club at Da Nang was called the DOOM Club, Da Nang Officers' Open Mess, DOOM Club. I mean … the living conditions were … just unbelievable. Well, for example, here's the headquarters; a little bridge went over this break, well, … it was over a big trench; it was an open sewer. On the … bridge was a sign, "No Fishing," with a picture of [then Secretary of Defense] Melvin Laird standing there pointing at this sign … crazy things that … you sort of … wondered about, but I had the opportunity to go down [to TACC]. … We were touring around South Vietnam. When General Roberts went down to be the director of the TACC, the commander of Seventh Air Force at the time was … [General] George [S.] Brown and he told Roberts … to visit all the in-country bases. So, we visited all the air bases in every [Corps]. … Vietnam was broken into four corps, I, II, III, IV; IV Corps down at the bottom end, and so, we visited all of those, and I flew with him. … So, we went to visit the guy who was … the Vietnamese commander in I Corps and they took us over to a Vietnamese hospital. You wouldn't believe the conditions. You wouldn't believe the conditions; … feet, arms, missing … [an] absolute tragedy, and you say to yourself, you know, "What in the world are we doing?" … "How [do] wars get started and who starts them?" … We've got to get better at this, and we aren't any better at it now. … Here we are, over there [in Iraq], doing the same thing again. It's just crazy. …

MM: You said that you only experienced four or five combat missions, as you expected combat to be. What went through your head the first time you realized that the other side could shoot back?

RK: Well, it's sort of interesting, because that was up in Mu Gia Pass, and it was about my seventh combat mission, seventh mission in-theater. … We had been diverted from road recce in Laos to Mu Gia Pass, by a guy named Mike (Lynch?), who had been a cadet at the Air Force Academy, … who was a Wolf FAC [Forward Air Controller], high-speed FAC, out of Ubon. … He called us and said, "Hey, I've got some targets for you," and then, he said, "I'll just make a pass down here and you'll be able to pick up the target." So, he goes, "Vroom," and, boy, the whole place opened up, and they were out there fixing this road through the pass. … It looked like an anthill and just guns all over the place, and so, we went in … to take out the guns. … You're very detached. It's one of these things in which tracers … are going to go over the cockpit, and I'm on my seventh mission and the guy in my backseat is a lieutenant who is on his ninety-eighth.

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

SI: Please, continue.

RK: So, the leader gets a little [lost]. … I dive on the targets first, and I come off and come back up, and he still is sort of lost up there someplace. It's … late in the afternoon, like, maybe six-thirty or so, the sun is going down, so, we're … highlighted, and there's clouds and whatnot. … So, I make another pass … dropping these things, and these guys are shooting off at me, and so, we come back up and I get him [the lead jet] and take him around to where the target is. … To the guy in the backseat, I said, "Give me a setting for strafe." I'm going to go in and strafe these guns. He said, "Major, you don't want to do that." I said, "Yes, I do." [laughter] … I did. … I mean, it sounds crazy, but … war is fun. … I mean, I can't express to you anything more than that's what it was. … There's a basic attitude that fighter pilots have, [which] is … "It's not going to happen to me." … "It can't happen to me." But it doesn't mean that you don't prepare; it doesn't mean that you aren't trained well. … It's not just doing the best you can. … It's one of these things in which you just do your job; … you do the job and the training takes over. … We're taught to be [aggressive]; we train … our pilots, our fighter pilots, to be aggressive. If you aren't aggressive; … aggressiveness almost takes care of you. … You're thinking ahead of everybody. … As an example, a guy named Bart (Craywitz?), … a colonel working for me at Nellis where he ran studies on analysis; he has a PhD in nuclear physics from Lawrence Livermore [National Laboratory].

MM: Smart guy.

RK: Smart guy. So, anyway, he's going back to Washington to work for the head of DDR&E, [Department of] Defense Research and Development [Engineering], and so, I said to him, … "Bart, have you ever flown in an F-15 or F-16?" He said, "No. I'd love to do that." I said, "Well, sure, I'll set it up," and so, I got him [up]. [He] came out and he flew in the Fighter Weapons School in the backseat with a F-15 guy, a guy named Bill Hamilton. So, they go up there and they fly this mission. He comes back down. I go down and see him and I said, "Well, Bart, how did it go?" He said, "Fantastic." He said, "Bill Hamilton's the smartest guy I've ever met." I said, "Bart, you've got to be kidding me, I mean, … he couldn't carry your bags." [laughter] He said, "No." He said, "Listen, give me a desk, give me a problem, give me two or three hours, I'll be able to solve that problem for you." He says, "He makes decisions like this." [Editor's Note: Lieutenant General Kelley snaps his fingers.] He says, "I can't even [keep up]." He said, "He's made ten decisions before I even understood that … there was a problem." [laughter] So, [in] the context, air fighting and flying in fighters, time is compressed, and everything … slows down when you're doing it, and then, we've developed ways to be able to improve our performance. In fact, we have what I call a quality control system; where we plan, brief, execute the mission, go back and debrief it, and we've become very brutal at that, I mean, absolute honesty. … As a result, you review missions in depth [and] those people that can't cut it, they go. … We've complemented that with technology, like heads-up displays. … We had … tape recorders in Vietnam that we'd carry in the cockpit, but we now have them that give us a presentation of the radar and the other scopes, as well as the heads-up display. … So, … you're computing it differently, because … you live in a two-dimensional world; a fighter pilot lives in a three-dimensional world, and so … things are happening. An F-104, if you're going to do a max performance climb to, say, thirty-five thousand feet, you're sitting here, still, you put up the power, full power, light the afterburner, release the brakes, and, two minutes and eight seconds

later, you're at thirty-five thousand feet, and you're over the runway still. So, you know, you're going up pretty fast, [laughter] and so, your whole mindset of time is something that is, it's hard to explain it exactly, in another world.

MM: Was this your first tour away from your wife?

RK: Oh, well, I'd been TDY, I mean, temporary duty, on other occasions, whenever I went down to Wheelus; when we went to Germany for the Berlin Crisis, but, other than that, yes.

MM: Was there any difficulty in that respect, as far as leaving your family?

RK: Well, it's always a difficulty, but, … we're all ready for it, and … the wives are the ones that … sacrifice in the military, … the wives and families. They sacrifice when you're away, they sacrifice with regard to moving around, they sacrifice with regard to schools. … I had three kids who went to five different high schools, and most of the high schools in America aren't very good, I can tell you that, because my kids have been to most of them. [laughter] … [On] athletic teams, you're "the kid from out of town," … but, they all have done well. … I have no complaints about it. … My son, Mike, … who served fifteen years in the active force and flew the F-111 in Gulf War I, and the F-117, and now is an F-16 instructor … in the Texas Guard. ... He got out because he wanted some stability for his family. So … he … understands having lived through it himself. Plus, the fact that my family is spread out all over the country; I've got a daughter in New York, I've got one in San Diego, one north of Los Angeles, one in Las Vegas, and a son in Denver, and one in San Antonio. So, we're spread out. … They sacrifice much more so than we do … and the wives really grow from that experience, because they make all the decisions. … There's really an adjustment, not only when you leave, but an adjustment on return, but … you work through those things.

MM: While in Vietnam, did you have any chance for R&R? Did you get to see any USO shows?

RK: … Yes, I went to Hawaii and met Martie there for a week. It was great.

MM: Did you have any chance to see a USO show or anything of that nature?

RK: I didn't go. … There was one going on, on the other side of the base, for the enlisted forces, for the Army and Marines. I didn't get involved in it.

SH: You mentioned the debriefing process. At any point, did you make the decision to send somebody somewhere else? How often did that happen?

RK: … It happens all the way along. If you think back to when I said I was at Bainbridge for primary, … there was a decision there, with regard to whether you went to multi-engines or single-engines, and that was made primarily by that civilian instructor, based upon your flying, as well as what you wanted to do, and his assessment of you. … Then, when you went to basic, as it's called, in my case at Greenville, in T-33s, single-engines, it was based upon your standing, your academic and flying evaluations, in terms of where you went next. So, the guys down at

the bottom aren't getting … the best assignments and, in many cases, they'll opt out. In other words, they will just [quit]. … There's a guy named Dick Castle. … We went through flying school together. He was a great guy. … I think he was from Otterbein [College], or something like that, in Ohio and he was a Distinguished Military Graduate, as I was, and the same thing happened to him. He didn't get a regular commission. Here at Rutgers, they said, "We'll take care of that down at San Antonio." We got down there and they said, "Oh, we'll do that at Bainbridge." Got to Bainbridge, and they said, "Well, we've got a new program." This was 1957, and things were changing. "You've got to take a test." So, we went down on a Saturday morning. We had to take the test and we walked out of the test and I said, "Well, Dick, how did you do?" He said, "Well, I think I did okay," and I said, "Well, you know, I haven't had any physics since high school, I didn't do any studying at Rutgers, I'm not sure I did very well." So, we went on to flying school. He was number one in our class. He went to F-84s; I went to F-86s. Together, we're back together in F-100s at Nellis. … We were both promoted to first lieutenant at the year-and-a-half point … an automatic thing, anyway, I said, "Hey, did you get your regular commission?" He said, "No. Did you?" I said, "Yes, I got it down at Williams." I said, "There must have been some mistake." Well, anyway, Dick Castle … went to F-105s at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, in North Carolina, but didn't get into the 105, and, after three years, he got out of the Air Force. He loved the Air Force. He traveled around, when he got out, and traveled to all the bases that he had been at with his wife. He went back to college and got a PhD in physics. [laughter] How can you account for it?

MM: What were some of your experiences in coming home from Vietnam? Did you encounter many protestors at that point?

RK: No. I was down in Saigon and I volunteered to lead a flight of F-4s back. So, I went up to Yokota, picked up I think it was an F-4C, and there was another four or five, and … I led them down to Guam. We air refueled into Guam, and then, we flew from Guam to Hickam, eleven hours and thirteen minutes, a long flight, about six air re-fuelings, into Hickam Field in the Hawaiian Islands, and then, into George Air Force Base in Victorville, California, and then, … they took us in a car down to LAX. ... We were just moved, "Whoosh," through that, and I was in Tucson and my family was there, and so, I didn't see any of that stuff.

SI: Did you know what was going on back in the United States?

RK: You mean the protests and whatnot? I don't think we were as aware of that … and its impact until later. … When we were … in Vietnam … we didn't.

SI: There was no morale effect.

RK: No, I don't think so, unless … there may have been on some people that didn't enjoy what they were doing. [laughter] … I'm trying to be funny. I didn't enjoy it all that much, particularly when I was down working on the staff.

SI: What kind of group dynamic was established between the pilots? I am still thinking in World War II terms, where fighter pilots talk about how they relied on their squadron mates for their lives.

RK: Well, fighters come in bunches, so, you normally fly in flights of two minimum, that's the basic element, or a flight of four, called "finger four," we got it from the Germans. … You're very close with your squadron mates. … You trust them explicitly. It doesn't mean that they're all perfect. It doesn't mean that they all don't screw it up at one time or another, but, no, I mean, it's one of those things in which you are immersed. … It's just like being on a team. … In any … population, … you don't know everyone. … We didn't know all … three thousand when I was here at Rutgers. So, you're … on a team. You know everybody on the team, but, even with that team, you know those guys who were in your class that you were closer with, that you've been with a couple of years, and so, … you have buddies and whatnot, but they're all very close. I'm not sure … if I'm answering your question.

SI: I believe you answered it, that there is a bond, a variation on the *Band of Brothers* theme.

RK: Well, you know, the *Band of Brothers*, [a book written by historian Stephen E. Ambrose about Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, in World War II] … I think that's a special group of people. … There is an activity at the Air Force Academy that, when I got there, we went out in summer training and they're in a valley where they're sleeping out in tents, and what have you, Army type of thing. [laughter] Anyway, they're out there and they've got these lacrosse helmets on and these two pogo sticks with the things on each end and they're all fighting against each other. … I said, "What are they doing?" and I looked on the schedule, and they've got this on Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon and a Wednesday thing, and they're doing all kinds of this stuff. … I said to the Commandant of Cadets, his name was [Robert D.] Bob Beckel, a one star Brigadier General, then, I said, "Bob, what is that all about?" He said, "Oh, we call it bayonet training." I said, "Bob, I've been in the Air Force for over twenty-five years and I've never ever held a rifle, except, I think, maybe in … primary, or when we first came in the Air Force for qualification, and I know I've never had one with a bayonet on it. … Why do we do that?" He said, "I don't know." … He was in the first class at the Air Force Academy, Class of 1959. He said, "I don't know. We did it when I was here." I said, "Well, go back and look in the files, you know, maybe they've got some rationale for doing it." … He went back, and he came back a few days later, and he said, "I can't find anything about that stuff." I said, "Well … maybe we ought to drop it, because … we're doing an awful lot of it and … we ought to have a rationale for everything we do." Well, fast forward three or four months and a guy, who was a TAC officer in 1955 and now he was Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, came out to visit and we're having breakfast in my quarters. … Bob Beckel's sitting there, and he's sitting there, and I'm sitting here, and I said, "General [Jerome F]. O'Malley, you were here as a TAC officer. Bob and I have been talking about some of this training that we're doing out there in the summer, and they're doing this bayonet drill." … I said, "Do you know any reason why you'd do that?" He said, "Absolutely." I said, "Great. What is it?" He said, "Well, we wanted every guy," there were only guys in [the Air Force Academy at] that time, "that came through the Academy to understand that the business that they were in was killing people, and, if they … couldn't handle that, they shouldn't be here." I said, "You know, that's a pretty good rationale. … We should be able to tell them that that's what they're learning, too," [laughter] but, you see, the rationale was there, and that's part of the business. … Some people never come to grips with that and you have to sort of … go through that yourself. I mean, it's not something that … is automatic, "Oh, … that's what we're doing," because we use terms

like "battle management." We … use the Harvard Business School lexicon and we apply that to this business that we call "war." … I can tell you that it's not nice, and … the people that get involved in that, that do that for us, I have very high regard for, and respect for what they do, and they are not appreciated, but, as Thomas Hobbes said about two or three hundred years ago, "Until mankind and human nature is better than it's ever likely to be, we will need some kind of military force, … hopefully, under a properly constituted government."

SH: You talked about survival training. What did your survival training entail at that point? Is it any different now?

RK: Well, I don't know how or if it has changed, but I don't think it's very much different. What it entailed was … classroom work about … "Don't eat this and don't eat that," or, "Try this and try that," … to prepare you for living in the wild, and to … use the stuff that you had, and to prepare you psychologically … to understand the situation, when you're shot down behind enemy lines. One of the things that's not really recognized often, but, in the fighter business, in particular … in the combat … flying, most of it is behind enemy lines. So … you're … prepared for that, just because of the character of the mission that you're flying, but, the idea that you get shot down is a traumatic experience, jumping out of an airplane. I've never had to eject. I am a parachutist. I did go through jump school at Fort Benning and that's fun. … Survival school … we go out … in an encampment and they give you a rabbit and … you've got to forage and get your own food. … They give you these pemmican bars that are awful and we had a guy in our group who was at Yale Medical School. He [an instructor] said, "Well, here, you know, kill the rabbit." He says, "No, not me," you know, he didn't like the sight of blood. Guess who had to kill the rabbit? You betcha, and, then, part of that was because … I guess, I had been a Boy Scout, but I had been brought up in Connecticut, which was really pretty rural at that time. … It's not like being in Wyoming, but … we were out in the woods a lot, and so that wasn't hard for me. Then, I found out these guys were squeamish. So, we're going down to the meadow to dig up onions, and … on the way back … I grab a gecko, and … make a big thing out of it. One guy was designated the cook. I said, "Now, put this in there … we'll get a little more protein in our diet," and so, we're eating there that night. … He didn't throw it in there, I don't think, but, anyway, the first bite, I said, "Hey, here's a piece of that gecko." Four of the guys wouldn't eat. [laughter] … People are funny, but, you know a lot of it is the way you were brought up and … I guess I was just brought up in a period of time … during the war [when] we had to eat that Spam. … I can eat anything. [laughter] So, then, they have an escape-and-evasion … event. … We were prisoners and we were supposed to be interrogated, but they also told us that there was a place that you could probably escape … and you're always supposed to try to escape. So, I got on the escape committee and got down to the latrines and found a tunnel that had been put there and led two other guys out. Fortunately, there weren't rattlesnakes in there. I didn't think about it at the time, thank God. [laughter] I got out and I escaped, and you're supposed to get a meal if you escape. They caught the other two guys. I didn't get a meal. So, I don't trust anyone. [laughter]

MM: Did you have any friends or know anybody that actually was shot down behind enemy lines and taken prisoner?

RK: Yes. Well, one. … A guy named [Captain John Cooley?] "Buzz" Ellison … a Navy pilot

who was on exchange with us in F-104s. A F-104 has a refueling boom that sticks out in front. You stick it into a basket for air refueling. … He was flying down near Twentynine Palms, [California], one day and he hit an electric cable, before they had those big orange balls on them … to designate them. He hit it; it snapped, came through the canopy and cut him across the face and the cockpit glass went white. He had a little hole about this big, four inches in diameter, to peer through. He climbed up to altitude and we sent another 104 up and he landed on the other aircraft's wing [the other F-104] flying formation through that little hole. Buzz got shot down thirty-five miles northeast of Hanoi and he went into a prisoner of war camp. … When I went through survival school, snake school, in the Philippines, a sergeant showed me that he had him on a list, but he didn't come out. … We had a number of guys that were … shot down. … There weren't any that I knew of when I was … at Da Nang; I don't know of anybody that was shot down at that time. We did lose guys. [Major] Tommy [Ray] Warren got shot in the head, a couple of others. John Dramesi, from the Rutgers College Class of '55, was a prisoner in the Hanoi Hilton.

MM: General, after Vietnam you had the opportunity to go to the National War College where you studied with members of other branches of the service, just at the time when the combined arms theory was really taking hold. Did that in any way affect your career in the Air Force?

RK: Well, the National War College is a great experience, because it's about … twenty-five percent Army, twenty-five percent Air Force, twenty-five percent Navy/Marine, and twenty-five percent other agencies of government. … So, you're really dealing with national strategy and geopolitical affairs and my area of study was the Middle East and I went on a trip to the Middle East, which I'll tell you about, if you want me to. … I was very parochial and I used to think that … when you say "parochial" … it doesn't sound good … that the services are fighting, but the war in Washington is about money and that war never stops. … It sounds like people are fighting over nothing … because the budget … the defense budget, is about a third of a third of a third, Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine. Now, they've got it to about twenty-five percent for each service and twenty-five percent for the Department of Defense, because they're running so many programs up there. So, you're in a position of fighting for … your resources. With regard to shaping the Air Force, I don't think that there was anything very much going on in regard to working with the Army [at that time]. I later ran Blue Flag [a realistic training program] as the Vice Commander of the Tactical [Air] Warfare Center down at Eglin [Air Force Base, Florida], in 1978, and that was probably a place where I saw … integration, … working together, but, you know the idea of working together … is affected by a number of things. It is not just the doctrine. Doctrine is sort of those things that have [worked], the ideas and concepts that have been put together that have worked in warfare and you codify those things in doctrine, to be able to pass those on, so [that] people are able to build on those as new systems are added. … Now … National War College was a learning experience for me about political-military affairs. … I took a masters at George Washington University at the time, had some great instructors; … [Henry] Kissinger and [Alexander] Haig and Elliot Richardson, and, of course, that was '73 in Washington, which was an interesting time in our country's history, and then, the trip to the Middle East. … We all wore civilian clothes, except on Wednesdays, we wore our uniforms. … Each morning you go to a lecture at nine o'clock; … great lecturers like Marion Levy, who I told you about. … Then, after that, you have coffee in the rotunda. … Elijah Root … was the designer … and he was Secretary of the War [Department] and he created the War College. …

So, you have coffee, and then you go into another hall, the Arnold Amphitheater, and you have more questions, and then, you break up from that into your seminars and one [student] from each one of the seminars goes with the speaker, and, then, a smaller group goes with the speaker for lunch. So, that's sort of the construct of the day, and then, you write a thesis, and … you play some sports and you do that stuff. … So, you're learning about the other services from your classmates. … One is a Navy Commander on a destroyer and another has been running … a company, or … another has been in the CIA, etcetera. A funny story; we're at a cocktail party and I was talking to this guy in the class and I said, "Well, you're not in one of the services. What agency [do you work for] or what do you do?" He says, "I'm with the government." [laughter] I said, "Oh." So, immediately, I said to myself, "Oh, CIA." So, I went home and I was thinking about that, and I said, "You know, I'm with the government." So, at another party, a couple of weeks later … I said to him, again, I said, "Oh, by the way, you're with the government. What agency are you with?" He said, "Oh, Agriculture," which I thought was funny. [laughter] You know, it was just the way people said it. Washington is a city of strangers, because people come from all over the place, but … they don't know each other; most don't live there all the [time]. That's not completely true, but it's an awful lot of people that are strangers there. … The War College is a great experience, because of the people you're with, and then, where you go. I mean, on the trip to the Middle East, we went to Tunis, Athens, Istanbul, Ankara, Teheran, New Delhi, Islamabad, Rāwalpindi, Bahrain, Riyadh, Amman, Jerusalem, to Tel Aviv, to Madrid. We met [Ariel] Sharon, Indira Gandhi, [Zulfikar] Ali Bhutto, King Faisal, [King] Hussein, Golda Meier, Menachem Begin, not a bad crowd to have met. Of course, most of those are dead, so, you don't want to know me too well. [laughter]

MM: Did many of your classmates also have combat experience?

RK: Oh, yes, most of them did.

MM: Did those experiences in any way shape the direction all of you felt that the service needed to go in? Did you find any inadequacies?

RK: Well, you have this idea that … all of this crowd is thinking about taking their service in some new direction. Well, there was a lot of fighter pilots in that crowd, and … the fighter pilots in the Air Force are probably more lined up with the Marine and Navy pilots than they are with the bomber pilots in the Air Force, because, obviously … at that time, we were starting the transition to fighter generals taking over the Air Force. One of the really interesting historical questions is, a couple of them are … "Why didn't we use all our power in Vietnam?" … Also, "How did we transition during the '70s?" and, "What happened with regard to the transfer of power and control of the Air Force from the Strategic Bomber Force to the Tactical Force?" and … "Why were we able to modernize at the end of the Vietnam War, modernize the fighter forces, and didn't modernize the bomber force in the '70s?" Those are interesting questions, and they had to do with … factors that were beyond the Air Force and beyond the Department of Defense. … When you think about the people that are in charge; … I described those "layer of mush" for you; civilians come and go. They come, and go, with each … administration and … they bring certain ideas and some of them … are just in there trying to learn … what it's all about, and years later, … they move up to positions of importance and responsibilities. After they've gone out to business, some of them come back and become the secretary, and I'm not

trying to paint them as bad people; all I'm saying is that it's not an efficient system, and … Air Force, Army, Navy, civilians, [career government personnel] provide continuity. … How do you, in fact, teach the civilians the problem set, unless they've got somebody out here in some think-tank that is giving them an agenda? It seems that every appointee gets a note saying … "Don't trust those military bastards. You're going to have to … get control of those guys." [laughter] …

MM: Sir, as the first non-Academy graduate to serve as the Superintendent of the US Air Force Academy, you have experienced both the ROTC and the Academy as officer-producing programs. Do you feel that one is stronger than the other? What are the merits of both?

RK: Well, … I have five years invested in the Academy and … I strongly … support the institution. … During the time that I was in the Air Force, let me give you those numbers so that you can [compare], because I can't give the ones that exist today, because they're reduced. … One task I had assigned to me, … when I was Chief of Fighter Force Plans, was to provide a briefing to the Chief of Staff on how to cut the Air Force from 666,000 to 500,000. Now, the Air Force is down to something like 380,000, or something like that, so, … it's even come below 500,000. The original law … enacted for the Air Force called for a force of 502,000. So, the 500,000 question that I had to answer was really about, "How do you do it, not what should be in there?" … In the Air Force, … thirty percent are forces, … that is … fighting forces, and about seventy percent support, which I think really describes a modern organization, and what the Air Force brought to the table was things like, you know, communications and speed of operation, as well … as ideas of centralized planning, controlling and direction with decentralized execution, which … sort of eliminates layers. So, the construct of the Air Force and the management philosophy of the Air Force, even though it has not been consistent, … it has changed over time, there are basic elements driven by the character of the airplane. There's an old story about … an air liaison officer up in a helicopter with a division commander and he's over this fight down below and there's an Army lieutenant down there and he's in high grass, and he's got enemy up in front of him and he's got some forces over here behind him, but he can't see anything. … The commander, up in the air, in the helicopter, says, "Well, okay, Lieutenant, what are you going to do?" … He doesn't know what he's going to do, because he can't see, and he [the division commander] turns to the air liaison officer and he says … "I ought to tell him what to do. I can see it a lot better than he does," and that's … one of the pictures that the Air Force has that, I'm not saying that they have perfect knowledge, all I'm saying is that they have a different perspective. … In the Air Force … there are basic missions. … "What does Title 10 US Code say?" … It says, "These are the missions of the Air Force, and … regarding the Tactical Air Forces, you have responsibilities for air superiority, air defense of a theater, you … do interdiction, you've got to do close-air support, you've got to do tactical reconnaissance, and you've got to do tactical air lifts." Now, those are the missions that you have. … The question is, "How do we do those missions?" If you went back and looked at it historically … there has been … evolution of mission. … In World War I, we were doing air superiority, we were doing reconnaissance … and we were doing some deep interdiction. … We didn't have very good capabilities to do that, so, we built the capabilities, and so those ideas that were turned into concepts, into systems, … they manifest themselves in terms of a doctrine. This is … Air Force Doctrine; AFM 1-1 assigns our missions; AFM 2-1 … operational; AFM 3-1 … is tactical doctrine; 3-1 provides methods of doctrine; … how you do it in an F-4 or an F-16 or an F-15. …

Leadership must be directive; … the Chief of Staff shapes the Air Force, along with the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Operations, Personnel, Logistics and Requirements, and the Requirements … of the Air Force of today and tomorrow. … Today's war and tomorrow's war, so … "What … about training?" … When I was in the Air Force … we were bringing in about eight thousand new officers a year, and all of our pilots are officers, so, some of those are pilots; of those, eight thousand went to pilot training. The goal for the Air Force Academy was to graduate a thousand officers. That means that in the Air Force, thirty-five hundred came from ROTC, thirty-five hundred came from OTS [Officer Training School]. So, a very small percentage of the … Air Force Officer Corps is coming from the Air Force Academy, percentage-wise. … The average SATs [score] going into the Air Force Academy this year was 1300. Now, I don't know what it is at Rutgers, but I don't think it's that high, but that's not good enough. It sounds good, 1300's better than Rutgers, but … Harvard turns away five or six hundred with perfect 1600s, so, we shouldn't be satisfied. … I think the Air Force Academy … we are reinventing the Air Force Academy. … The Air Force Academy when it started in '55 the people that started it, like [Brigadier General Robert F.] Bob McDermott, … the first Dean of the Faculty, … moved it well beyond West Point, but it has so many other anchors to West Point, and to the Naval Academy to a lesser degree, that I think need to be re-examined, … like the bayonet drill I mentioned earlier. It has its purpose, but not every day for two hours. … We introduced women in 1976. Before the women arrived, we had Air Force female officers … setting it up and looking at what had to be done, etc. Now, understand, first of all, the Air Force didn't want to admit women. The services, West Point, the services didn't want women. … It was directed [by President Ford], so, they did it … under protest, so-to-speak, and there's always going to be some people, in a large organization … still that way. … When I look back at the Air Force Academy, I didn't realize it, but I was really trying to … transform the Academy. As an example, I'm there two weeks, and the freshmen … called "doolies" … "plebes" at West Point, and I don't know what they're called down at the "Southern Maryland Small Boat and Craft School," [laughter] but the doolies came over to my quarters. … We had about fifteen, half women, half men. We had … volleyball nets up and we played … volleyball, and the superintendent's quarters has a pool, so, we went … swimming. … I got changed and the male cadets are at the pool. … My two daughters who were in high school at the time … were there. I looked around and the female cadets were missing. So, I said to my daughter Diana, … "Diana, where are the gals?" and she said, "I don't know." I said, "Well, go over to the changing room and see if they got locked in or something." So, she goes over and she comes back out; … they're not with her. I said, "What happened?" She said, "It's the bathing suits." I said, "Bathing suits? What's wrong with the bathing suits?" She said, "They're awful." This is 1981. I said, "Well, look, I'll brief these guys. No one, of these guys, will say a word about the bathing suits. Go over there and tell them to come on out and we'll do something about these bathing suits, but I've got to see them." So, they come out. Esther Williams, have you ever heard of Esther Williams? She was a movie star and swimming champion in the '30s and '40s; she would not have worn these for practice in 1935. Now, this is 1981. They were wool. They hung down. I mean, oh, they were awful and, when they got wet, they were even worse. [laughter] So, I went into my staff meeting the next day and they said, "How did the doolie dining out go?" "Oh great," was the reply. … I said, "Have any of you guys ever seen the women's bathing suits?" … They all sort of looked at each other because they hadn't seen them and they didn't know what the problem was. … "Well, we don't need to discuss this." … Bob Beckel, … the Commandant, … "By the end of the day, I want every woman at the Air Force Academy in a brand-new Speedo swimming suit, and I think, our colors are blue

and silver so, some combination of that might be nice." I talked to a graduate in San Antonio, because I was speaking at this F-16 graduation down there last Friday night, or a week ago Friday night, and I said, "How are the bathing suits?" She said, "Well, they're not too good." I said, "Oh, are they Speedos?" She said, "I don't think so." I said, "Are they wool?" She said, "Oh, no." I said, "Well, good." Well, you never know how these things get turned around, but … part of the problem is, "How do you run an academy that's part of an air force?" I should say that the two most important words in Air Force Academy are the words "Air Force," because that gives us our reason to exist, and I used to meet with the heads of the departments; having been in the Athletic Department when I was there in the sixties, I knew about the competition between the military and the academic departments. So, I was really working … what they called "Terrazzo Gap." … I went to the Dean of the Faculty and said, "I want to lecture in the Department of Aeronautical Engineering, if they'll have me. And, I want to meet on a monthly basis with the permanent professors." So, one of the first times I sat down with them, I said, "You're physics, you're history, you're English and you're something else, languages." I said, "What is it that we want a graduate of the Air Force Academy to have that's common to all, of this group?" … "Oh, that's a hard question," they said. "Well, think about it." … So, I went back and I thought about it and I finally came back, at another meeting, and I said, "I think I've got an answer." I said, "I want every graduate of the Air Force Academy to be able to think, to be able to think their own thoughts, and, be willing to accept the consequences of their actions." … "Make it happen." I've also asked … the same question of the military side. In … military … academics, I said, "What do we want our graduates to have?" Answer, "Oh, that's hard, General." So, I came up with an answer and that was that I wanted every graduate of the Air Force Academy to know Air Force doctrine; I wanted our graduates to know where the ideas of air power … came from. … An idea for air defense … you study the Battle of Britain. There's a good book I've just read … *Fighter*: [*The True Story of the Battle of Britain* (1977)], by, what's his name? Len Deighton, or something like that; it's really well done. Anyway … if you know what the ideas and concepts and experience was, in an in-depth way, when you have a new system, you can see how to add it to the doctrine. If you've never been exposed to the doctrine, and, of course, I hadn't been when I was in ROTC; … that was … a deficiency at that time. … Cadets have the benefit of living within a military structure, but I'm not sure that's as important as someone who's out earning his own money and making decisions on his own. … So, Al Hoffman, the guy who was the big money guy from Harvard and Chicago and Naples, [Florida] was in the 53rd TFS squadron with me, and … I was being moved from the personal equipment officer over to be special weapons officer … and he was going to replace me. So, we met to discuss his responsibilities. … Al Hoffman asked, "Is there a regulation or manual for how you run personal equipment?" and I said, "I don't know. Do we have a reg, Sarge?" and he said, "Oh, yes. Here's the regulation." He pulled it out. … So, he opens up the manual and everything that we'd been doing is in the manual. [laughter] Now, … I told this friend of mine who was going to be talking at this birthday party, … "Remind Al Hoffman that the difference between an ROTC Rutgers education and West Point is that the West Point guy knows that there is a manual. He may not know what's in it, he may not be able to get it done, but he knows that there's a manual. That's the difference." [laughter]

MM: Earlier, sir, you talked about discrimination on the part of the military towards women.

RK: Yes. In 1981, I asked the question of the Director of Admissions, (I fired this guy after

about a year) … "How did we arrive at the number of women in each class?" He said, "Well … it's dictated by the Air Staff and they try to approximate the number of women that are in the Air Force." … "What is that percentage?" … He said, "Fifteen percent." … We just had this big scandal out there at the Air Force Academy. [Editor's Note: In January 2003, information surfaced that the Air Force Academy administration did little to prevent or investigate sexual assaults against female cadets.] … I called … the Director of Admissions and asked, "What's the percentage of women now?" "Seventeen percent." I said, "Oh, we've increased two percent in twenty-five years. … Why? How do you arrive at that number?" He said, "The Air Staff gives it to us. It approximates [the percentage of] women in the Air Force." … I sent an e-mail to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force … [General] John [P.] Jumper, who was the exec at Langley when I was the Vice, and I said, "I think part of the problem at the Air Force Academy is we don't have enough women." … He came back and he said, "Well, we try to … keep it approximately the same [as the] number of women in the Air Force." I said, "Well, last time I heard, ninety-nine percent of all the jobs in the Air Force are open to women." He said, "We can't recruit them." I said, "The Coast Guard Academy has thirty-five percent." … "Also, how do you answer the question when someone from the press says, 'Why do you discriminate against women at the Air Force Academy?'" … He wrote me an e-mail back and he said, "You're right. Our formulation is rather mindless." So … we shouldn't be surprised that the men at the Air Force Academy, when asked the question, "Do you think women belong here?" say, "No," because the institution has said, "Women don't belong here." So, that's why I make that assertion; that we have been discriminating against women and we didn't even know it, and therein is where our problem is. … I hold myself accountable, as well, in that … I never served with women. I mean, it wasn't that there weren't women officers, but they were never in the fighter squadron with me. … You know, there might be a woman, but very seldom did you ever see one.

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

SI: This continues an interview with Lieutenant General Robert E. Kelley on April 5, 2004, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth …

MM: … Michael Miranda …

SH: … Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Please, continue.

RK: … When someone answers the question [with] … "Women don't belong here,"… they need to go back and read the Constitution … and the Civil Rights Act, and then you must understand that rape … is a crime. … I don't have much tolerance for … discrimination … but I learned this after I left the Academy: … The Commander of Ninth Air Force … [General] John [L.] Piotrowski's … daughter, Denise, came to the Academy in my first year … and she stayed through the summer, and then, left. So, when I got to TAC, I … engaged him with regard to … why she left. … It was just sort of a casual question. He said, "Do you really want to know?" and I said, "Sure." He said, "Well … there were a lot of things she didn't like. She said one of them was when they handed out birth control pills in Jack's Valley," … that summer training

program, … "the first week they were there." I said, "They did what?" Now, when I was the commander at Nellis, I used to say, "If I knew fifty percent of what was going on, I was having a hell of a day." [laughter] At the Air Force Academy, … maybe it was ten or fifteen[per cent], but, nonetheless, … I called the Superintendent, Skip Scott, and I told him that. "Well, someone was probably trying to protect those young women," but what were they saying? … The law of unintended consequences; they were saying to them, …"If you're going to be sexually active, you'd better protect yourself," or maybe the young lady was hearing, "You'd better be ready to be sexually active, because that's what's going to go on." The other part of the question is, "Were they handing out condoms to all the men?" … I wasn't even smart enough or quick enough to ask that question. … [However], you understand, the institution is not [evil]. I don't consider … the institution to be evil; it's [that] the institution is just uneducated, unknowing, and that can be worse. … One of the things about education is you don't know what goes on behind the door after the door closes, and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. … This isn't [George Orwell's] *1984*. Maybe some people would like it to be. I don't want it to be, but … you … need … to know what is really happening. … You … supposedly admit some of the "best and brightest." Now, I think I've proven to you that it's not a high percent of the "best and brightest," they're only [scoring] 1300, but … there should be some value added, and there is value added … in some cases; … it was really disappointing. For example, a commandant's wife said to my wife, … "Aren't they so cute? This one guy came up to me and he said, 'Mrs. Beckel, who's going to tell us what uniform to wear when we get to flying school?' Isn't that cute?" and my wife said, "We're not going to graduate him. What's his name?" [laughter] Can you imagine, a senior … at the Air Force Academy? … He was probably just feeding her back what she wanted because they're smarter than that, … most of them. … As another example, we were supposed to graduate a thousand. When I was there, it was seven hundred pilots, it's now down to much lower than that, about 300 to 400 … in a class. … I was invited to a cocktail party at the officers' club for those who are competing for Rhodes, Marshalls, and [other] graduate scholarships. I went over to the officer's club. The faculty advisors were trying to make sure that the cadets had civilian clothes and … knew how to say hello and introduce themselves, and all that kind of stuff. … It was very nice and these were impressive kids, and so, I said to the Dean, … "I was really impressed with those kids. I'd like to have a dinner party for them in my quarters. I want to talk with them some more." So, I did that … along with their staff, their faculty sponsors. They came over and I was even more impressed. In fact, one of them was Heather Wilson, who's now the Congresswoman from Albuquerque. She was a vice wing commander and she became a Rhodes Scholar. She talked a little bit like a sergeant, but … I wrote that off as … it just sort of comes with the territory. I didn't think it had to, but it did at that time. … I met with the Dean on a weekly basis and we'd sit there and go over … what he thought, was thinking about, and what I was thinking about. I said, … "I'm really impressed with … those cadets that are competing for scholarships, … but there's something that bothers me about it. … I don't know the answer, yet, but I'm going to think about it some more." So, a couple of weeks later, I had an answer and my conclusion was this: that there were too few. There were only about twenty. … "It seems to me that if we bring in a thousand of our 'best and brightest,' there should be a hundred that are competing for graduate scholarships. … There are three pillars to the Academy, the academic, the military, and the athletic," and I said, "These kids are … building a resume to compete for a Rhodes Scholarship." … At that time, you were supposed to have been an athlete. It's not that way anymore, because [President] Bill Clinton got one, but; I just had to say that. [laughter] … "They're succeeding in all three areas. There should be a larger

population that succeeds in two out of the three and a larger population still that … excels in one of the three, and a small percentage that's holding on by their fingertips." Problem is most of them opt out of the competition. They stop competing, because it's … pretty well straightened out fairly early on. … "How do you create a situation in which people are able to grow and develop?" and we used to make a big thing about a "commitment to excellence." … My question was, "Do we really give them the opportunity to be excellent? … Have we filled up their time so … they can't even try to compete?" … I remember falling asleep at ten o'clock; … what these kids were doing … made me look like I wasn't doing anything. So, to answer your question, I think we're lucky to have a blend. I have even toyed with the idea that the academies ought to be graduate schools.

MM: That would be interesting.

RK: I don't think you need to take … kids at seventeen, and ask them if they want to be a career officer. … Of course, they'd answered, "Oh, yes, sir." … You ask a seventeen-year-old a question, you get a seventeen-year-old answer, and they don't have a clue what it means when you say, "Do you want to be a career officer in the Air Force?" … They may stay because they've been conditioned … and they stay longer than the ROTC guys, because the ROTC grads probably have a broader perspective. … It's a good education, but it's not for everybody, and I try to counsel people that ask me about the Academy just that way. … You must decide that it's something you want to do. If you work well within a framework which is disciplined, ordered, structured, that's the place to go, and, oh, by the way, everybody's on scholarship, and we pay it, too, … but you give up something to do that.

MM: If the Academy had been open when you enrolled in college, do you think you would have gone?

RK: In my senior year, they asked me if I wanted to go to be in the Air Force Academy and I said, "You've got to be kidding?" I mean, I had been to Peekskill Military Academy; "I don't have to go through that twice, do I?" [laughter]

MM: Besides, you had lacrosse games to play against Jim Brown at Syracuse.

RK: That's right. … Maybe that game was already behind us. [laughter]

MM: After retiring from the Air Force in 1986, where did you go? What was your next venture?

RK: Well, I retired [after] a little over thirty years, because … I had run the general's group in the '70s [during General Kelley's tour as assistant for general officer matters in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel], and I had seen the chiefs that don't make chairman, … the fours [four-star generals] that don't make chief, the threes that don't make fours, the twos that don't [make three], and they all considered themselves failures, and I decided that wasn't going to happen to me. … [General] Larry [D.] Welch, who had … been competing with me all the way along, but, after the Academy; … I did a lot of good things for the Academy, but they didn't like me. … The West Point crowd in Colorado Springs … particularly didn't like me because I'd

said, "It wasn't tough enough." I had one kid who was the son of a guy who … worked for me in Tucson. He was killed in A-10s over in England, but young (Thompson?) came to the Academy and he was number one or two in his class. At the end of … the first semester, he was one or two and decided he'd leave, and so, I talked to his [mother], (BJ?), and I said, "You know, I'd like to talk to him about it." … So, she said, "Oh, don't try to talk him out of it. He's already made a decision." I said, "I'm not going to try to change his decision; I just wanted to talk to him about it." So … he came over to my office and we sat down. … "Okay, tell me why you're leaving the Air [Force] Academy." I said, "Tell me about it, I mean, I'm not interested in your decision, … what's not right here?" He said, "You really want to know?" I said, "Yes. I really want to know." He said, "It's not tough enough." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I thought, when I came here, that they were going to be … the very best people in the country here." He said, "There's an awful lot of people that don't belong here." He said, "I'm going to Stanford," and he did, but that convinced me that our program was not tough enough, and so, I studied SAT minimums. At West Point, in 1982, it was 450-450, verbal-math. Do you believe that? At [the] Air Force Academy, it was 450-500. At Navy, it was 550-600. I said to the Director of Admissions, "Why is it so high at Navy? Why can't we be like Navy?" "You can't trust the Navy, General." I said, "Oh, yes, I know that. I've been in the Pentagon." I knew that. [laughter] … I set on a course to improve that and, now, they've gotten rid of the minimums and they're … up close to six hundred on both of them, and now, the average is 1300. … So, the lower end guys are coming in at, probably, 575, something in that kind of a ballpark, but … the point is that nobody was asking those questions. … In fact, one of the guys who ran the Falcon Foundation, a retired Air Force three-star, his son was struggling there and, when I made that comment "not tough enough" to him, you know, he said, "Oh, you've got to be kidding." [laughter] …

SH: How much of a role do politics play in admission to the Academy?

RK: Well, you must have an appointment. An appointment comes from your Senator or Congressman and … each one of those can have five cadets at any time, and they can nominate ten candidates for every vacancy. … Yes, every one is appointed. … Airmen from the services can get appointed by the President. … It's important, but most of the Congressmen and Senators have been smart enough to have boards that make the selection for them. I'm not convinced that they've done that right. In fact, I think that there's another place where we're discriminating, because you're asking the same guys that don't believe that … women belong there [to conduct the] selecting [of the kids] to go there. … Just for the record … the last two or three wing commanders, that's the top cadet, [were] women. [In the] last class, top eight, or eight out of the top ten, were women.

MM: They are obviously succeeding.

RK: No question they're succeeding. Oh, this year, for the first year, women have gone over fifty percent in the law schools in America. They've been at over fifty percent in the medical schools for some time. … My stepdaughter swims for Hamilton and I was up at the NESCACS, … the North New England Small School Championships. I mean to tell you, those women are impressive and the guys, I mean, you guys are in trouble. [laughter] I am not kidding. You may not believe it, but you guys have really got a tough [road ahead]. … It was much easier when I

was growing up, let me tell you. They are smart, and they are confident, and they are physical. … They are impressive.

SH: Competitive.

RK: And competitive. … You probably already know that, because you're at Rutgers. …

MM: Can you tell us a little bit about your work with Kids Voting USA?

RK: Waste of time. I'm very anti non-profits, and you know from my résumé that I've been involved with two of them, and so, it's first-hand experience. It's money that is being [wasted]. … Kids Voting is one of these causes that says, … "We're going to get more people to vote, and so, we're going to take the kids there and it's going to develop a habit, a pattern, etc." … The statistics just don't bear that out, and so, you're spending … money, and the people that are on the boards are getting … puffed up with psychic income, because they are, quote, "Doing some good." I'm very anti-it, and my time with the Freedoms Foundation … was another idea that didn't work. They had a business model that didn't work. … It took me a year, it took me too long … to find out that they had had a three-hundred-thousand-dollar rolling debt for over twenty years. … I could document it for twenty years, and I inherited a budget of about 2.8 million dollars and twenty-eight people, and I had to cut the staff to seven and make the budget which we … earned at about seven hundred thousand [dollars]. It was a waste of time. It was; … "Where's the beef?" … It was a camp, and, where should you be learning about … the history of the United States of America? In our schools! … It still goes on. Be careful with non-profits; I give you fair warning. … Of course, universities are black holes for money, too! …

MM: Can you tell us about the events leading up to your being named a Loyal Son of Rutgers in 1984?

RK: Well, there was a guy who was running development in the early '80s, and, I guess, I had contributed every year, not very much money, … then, I got to be the Superintendent, and so, … one followed the other, I think. …

MM: Have you continued to stay involved? Have you felt connected to the University since?

RK: Well, I felt pretty connected. I was always trying to help in the Athletic Department. … … It's funny … [college ties] … when you get kids going to other schools, and … the Air Force Academy, and I've got … a step-son that's looking at schools, and I still haven't gotten over not being accepted at Yale. [laughter] … I'm on the board over here at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences and I'm trying to help them write a long range plan, that's why I was up here today, writing a strategic plan for them; in terms of how they're going to grow and become a college or a school or whatever they're going to become. I come back and … it is so different. It is so different that I just don't … even feel like I was ever here. … The stadium has changed completely from my day, of course, and that's good. Football program isn't any better. … It's getting better; it's not any worse. The lacrosse program, I try to stay connected with that and I hear from Coach [Jim] Stagnitta … and I think he's doing a good job. I think he's a good man. … The other aspect of it is, … the year after I retired, I lived … in Sea Bright and I used to come

up here … more often, but I think the fact that I am not from New Jersey [adds to that] and I think that Rutgers … needs to … become the State (not in name) University of New Jersey … in terms of its long term progress and growth in becoming a first class state university. … I really do get left-handed when I see the *US News and World Report* [college rankings], because I think Rutgers is better than that, and I don't know how to explain why we're not. … New Jersey is a great state, but the people outside of the state don't really know that. They don't know … New Jersey very well, and I think one of the tragedies is that the people in New Jersey, probably … now more than ever … have not really thought of Rutgers as their school. … There's always been that tug between Princeton and Rutgers. If you're going to send … your son or daughter out of state, would you [rather] send them to Princeton? … And the answer is always Princeton. …

MM: The drawing power, I suppose.

RK: Well, I suppose it's drawing power. … I've always believed that … if you improve the football program, [it will help]. … Bill Walsh, the coach of the [San Francisco] '49ers, is a friend of mine and … when Terry Shea [was hired as coach], I helped get Terry Shea … here on Bill's recommendation, and Dick Vermeil called me, too. … I believe that if I were the Governor of New Jersey, I would put pressure on the President at Rutgers to improve the football program and to build pride in New Jersey. … It's one of these situations in which … we have to be honest about the fact that … there's no such thing as a scholar-athlete anymore. … I think back to my time, and I can't qualify as a scholar-athlete; I mean, I'll be honest with you, I was not a scholar; I was an athlete. I was good enough to be able to earn my degree with … very little trouble, but I was not a scholar, and I didn't get turned on intellectually, I'll be honest with you, until I was probably twenty-eight or thirty, and I'm still, you know, educated beyond the capability of my intellect, but … I still have stuff to do. [laughter] … So, "How do you do that? … Why do we have a football program? Do we have a football program because we started it in 1869?" "No," I don't think so. … It is part of the public relations program, so … accept that and don't try to make it something else. … Do what you have to do and try to get … football players that can win. I mean, there's some very bright guys that are playing Division I football and they're not necessarily at Rutgers, so, you do your best to get them. If you get one or two and they become Rhodes Scholars, and there have been guys like that, but … get it up to the point where you've committed yourself to a winning program. I think of the NIT, [National Invitation Tournament], I think people feel good about that, I mean, any time people succeed. [Editor's Note: The Rutgers Men's Basketball Team advanced to the championship game of the NIT in 2004, losing to Michigan four days prior to this interview on April 1st.] So, maybe the place is to do it with the women, [women's basketball]. …

SH: Have you ever thought of serving on any of the boards at the University and trying to effect a change?

RK: Well, I told you, I'm on the Marine and Coastal Science Board. [laughter] … The people that really have to make it happen are the people that are here, and I'm very sort of turned off about boards. I don't think that boards on companies have done the job that they should. They have abdicated their responsibilities. I wrote an article for the *Directorship Magazine*, up in Greenwich, on the subject. … Most board members don't know what a business model is. They don't know how the cash flow works. They abdicate to the leadership and they stamp these

obscene salaries. It's the same problem with our government; … the people … we attract down to Washington, DC, they're on ego trips, as opposed to really trying to make it better. So, I think you have to go to the inside. I mean, I think you effect the change from the inside; but, … better men than I have tried here at Rutgers. [laughter] …

MM: As a career officer who has observed officers in different positions and jobs, what advice would you give to an ROTC cadet who is considering a career in the military?

RK: Work hard, be there before everybody else and stay later, learn as much as you can, work nights, … be honest with yourself, find out where … you are weak, … what's your strengths and weaknesses and build up those weaknesses, so that you … know your job better than anyone else. … I was always competitive and that competitive business always helped me in the flying business, and I think it's helped me everywhere. In other words, I'm just a "Where's the course?" and, "What's the record?" and, "Let's get after it," [type of person]. … That's all I can say … "find out, learn." Someone told me very early on, I think it was at Peekskill Military Academy, I think it was the headmaster, … "Bob, it's not just who you know, but what you know, and what you know is more important than who you know. It's not that who you know isn't important, but it's not the only thing." … John Roberts, who was the commander at Da Nang, was my sponsor. … Sponsor sometimes denotes an "old boy" type of thing. Sponsors will only sponsor you as long as you are able to walk through the door after they've opened it for you. In other words … "If you can't hack it … you're out of there."

MM: I have one more question about politics. Do you see any comparison between Iraq, Operation: IRAQI FREEDOM, and Vietnam?

RK: Oh, absolutely. … I was against us ever going in. I think it's a terrible mistake and … that's why I mentioned that book to you, about [Karen] Armstrong. … We do not understand the Middle East and, again, I go back to, "What are our priorities?" and I think we have to, as a people, … rethink those things in the world in which we live. We can't be out there being the policemen for everybody. Nation building? I haven't seen that work, ever. So, I'm skeptical about it, and … guess what? seems like Vietnam's doing all right and we aren't there.

MM: It has become a popular tourist destination.

RK: Well, I think the war was very ill-advised and I think that … the people that are responsible for national security, … like Rumsfeld saying, "Well, … there aren't any good targets in Afghanistan, so, we're going to Iraq," now, that's as dumb as dirt. I mean, it's just ridiculous. I mean, it … infuriates me, but … what it really reflects is … the guy who's the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an Air Force officer and he worked for me at Nellis and he's a good guy. He's not the sharpest tool in the shed, let me tell you, but part of the problem is that the talent leaves, because the talent is smart enough to be able to say … "I don't have any say here." … [General Richard B.] Dick Myers is a good guy. … Don't repeat what I said; but … we're just going down a dark alley in Iraq, and even in our country. … Look at fundamentalism, as Armstrong looks at it … in our country, it's a serious problem. … I don't know what your orientations are with regard to religion, but … I am shocked by it. I ran into a young lady who is a graduate of the Air Force Academy who almost knocked me over in San Antonio with regard

to where she had found her role. She's now a mother of two children and she's staying at home and she's married to this guy who's in my son's squadron. … He is a major, or lieutenant colonel, and she's happy because she's finally found her role. I said, "My God, we really screwed it up. We didn't educate this gal at all." … I mean, it's as if somebody made her a *Stepford Wife*. I just can't stand it. … I've lived in the West a lot, so, … I have a lot of biases and I don't mind expressing them, but … I probably won't be around … you will have to live with this, so, … be aware of the fact that there's a lot of work to be done.

SH: Extremely polarized.

RK: We are, but … it says something about our education. I mean, when you say you can't teach evolution; what's happening? …

SI: In Georgia?

RK: It's a couple of states down there. … That's a serious problem in which we are … limiting the education of people, but what we're saying is … "You've got to literally interpret the Bible; … there's no discussion." When someone says, "I believe," they say they don't know! They believe that this is right; they don't know that it's right. … I'm not an atheist and I'm not anti-religious; I've been very religious all my life. I sometimes wonder why, but … I was brought up that way, and so, I am sort of that way, and, at the same time, I would like people to at least … think their own thoughts … and to be able to say, … "I would like to see everyone treated with respect, whether … you're a Hindu or a Shinto or, you know, a Shi'a or Sunni." … There's a group that … lives outside of Nablus, in a mountain, [Mount Gerizim]. They are …

SH: The Samarians?

RK: No. … Is it Samarians?

SH: I believe so. There are only about three hundred.

RK: That's right, exactly right, but it's not Sumerians, is it? …

SH: As in "good Samaritan"?

RK: Samaritans, Samaritans, that's right, it is the Samaritans. … It means that they hold onto the religion or hold onto the faith, or something or other. … In the Bible, "The Good Samaritan" … is a story about the group that they sort of pushed to the side. … We think of them, in Christianity, as a good guy, but, in Judaism, they were the bad guys.

SH: The woman at the well with Jesus was a Samaritan. She was described as unclean.

RK: Yes, … exactly, … they were shunned. Am I free? [laughter]

SH: We have kept you forty-five minutes over. Thank you so much.

RK: Any more?

SI: Is there anything else you want to say here on tape?

RK: You haven't gotten the idea that I can talk for a long time? and I can't talk as long as my brother. [laughter]

MM: Thank you very much.

RK: You're welcome.

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

Reviewed by Patrick Clark Barnes 3/8/05
Reviewed by Miles Lipsky 3/25/05
Reviewed by Justin Jernigan 11/5/06
Reviewed by Alexander Toth 11/5/06
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/1/07
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 3/25/07
Reviewed by Robert E. Kelley 7/10/07