RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICK J. KROESEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

G. KURT PIEHLER
and
LYNN MARLEY
and
LEIGH ANNE MAHR

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
MARCH 16, 1998

TRANSCRIPT BY

LYNN MARLEY
and
LEIGH ANNE MAHR

Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with General Frederick J. Kroesen on March 16, 1998, in Alexandria, Virginia, with Kurt Piehler and

Lynn Marley: Lynn Marley.

Leigh [Anne] Mahr: and Leigh Mahr.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you a little bit about your parents, beginning with your father, because your father, in fact, served in the First World War.

Frederick Kroesen: Yes, he did.

KP: He also served, not on the Western Front, in France, but in Russia.

FK: Yes, he did.

KP: In which part?

FK: ... In Siberia.

KP: In Siberia, as part of the expeditionary forces.

FK: Yeah. There were two expeditionary forces into Russia and one went to Siberia and one was up in, what's the port on the Arctic Ocean?

KP: I want to say Murmansk.

FK: Yes, in the Murmansk area. ... So, there were two expeditionary forces. He was with the one in Vladivostok, Siberia. My father was a Muhlenberg college student in 1917, much as I was in 1942, and he left after one year of college to join the Army and ... go to war in World War I. And, much as I did, he somehow got [into] Officer Candidate School at Fort Myer, Virginia and was commissioned there, sometime in 1917. Now, I don't know much about his military service or his World War I service. I know he ended up in Vladivostok, Siberia and served until about 1920. And, ... I think ... that operation ended about that time. ... He was released, somehow, overseas and he spent another few months traveling around the world. From Vladivostok, he went down into ... Japan and China, and around through the Indian Ocean, stopped off at Ceylon, as it was called then, and back to New York through Europe. So, he had ... a little view of the world that most people didn't get in those days.

He joined the New Jersey National Guard in the 1920s, became a battery commander of a field artillery battery in Trenton, at what is now the Lawrenceville Armory. ... Fortunately, for me, he decided to build a house right next door to that place. ... When I was ten-years-old, we moved to Eggerts Road in, what is now, Lawrenceville. ... I grew up with the New Jersey National Guard right next door, and with about 150 horses who were part of that, maybe 200, at that time. ... So, I grew up being a horsemen and I used to call myself an assistant horse trainer, because I worked for the horse trainer at no pay, most of the time. But, when I would get home from school, it

would be immediately to rush off to my horse trainer duties. I would exercise horses and help him break and train the remounts that they got every year. I became a fairly decent rider, and polo player, and so forth. [laughter]

KP: It sounds as if you were almost a cavalryman in the making.

FK: Well, of course, I certainly would have preferred to join the cavalry when I joined the Army, because of that horse background. But, infantry was the ROTC class at Rutgers, and I became an infantryman, and I've never regretted it. Those people who were horse cavalrymen in World War II didn't have a great future in the Army. [laughter] I shouldn't say that, completely, because people like George Patton were horse cavalrymen, at one time.

KP: And, they were very fond of their horses.

FK: Yes, they were. And, I was, too. And, yet, ... after I joined the Army, I don't think I rode a horse again until the war ended. And, ... since that time, I've only been on a horse two or three times in my life. I never kept up the ... contact with horseflesh that I had had. And, I always said, ... one of the things I learned was that I will never own a horse, because horses take twenty-four hour a day care. ... I never wanted to own a horse or a boat, both of which are maintenance problems that I did not wish to take part in.

KP: You mentioned that you do not know a lot about your father's military experience. Did he ever tell you any stories, particularly, when you were getting older?

FK: My father died when I was seventeen, when I was a senior in high school. And, we never talked about his experiences in the Army. We never talked about his family. ... I never knew much about my ancestors until many years after he died, when I became interested in the genealogy of my family, and with some help from others who were doing the same thing, got to learn more about ... where I came from. My ... male ancestors were among the first settlers of New Amsterdam. ... I had one ancestor, my male ancestor was born in 1639, in the Netherlands, and came to this country in 1660. The lady he married was born in this country at about the same time, 1640. And, her parents had come in the 1630s to New Amsterdam. My ancestor was one of the first owners of 160 acres of Staten Island, which he divided between his two sons. ... They sold that property and bought 160 acres of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. So, I'm related to very early settlers of Staten Island and Brooklyn. His first son moved to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. My mother's family, German, came to the same area in the early 1800s.

KP: Do you know how your parents met?

FK: Yes, they were high school sweethearts, and they married when he came home from Siberia. They were married in 1920, or '21. '20, I guess.

KP: Was your father active in the American Legion or any other veteran's organization?

FK: He was a member of the American Legion, but not active. He had been active in things when he lived in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. When he moved to Trenton, he did not continue his

association with those things, except that he was still a member. But, he didn't attend meetings and conferences, whatever was going on in the local area. He was a Mason, but he was a Mason only in Phillipsburg and, when he got to Trenton, he never really joined the Masonic orders of that area. He ... spent his extra time at his National Guard duties. So, he spent a lot of time working in his ... other profession.

KP: It sounds like your father very much enjoyed military service.

FK: Oh, I think he did. Yes.

KP: Did you wonder ever why he did not choose to stay in after the war and make it his full-time career, instead joining the National Guard?

FK: Well, as with many of my contemporaries, after World War II, the question was, "What is the future of the Army? Why should I stay in?" He used to talk about that, a little bit, and say, sometimes, "I wish I had stayed in the Army," because he ... did enjoy it. It was ... one of those hindsight things, "I could have stayed in the Army. I could have gotten a regular army commission." I'm not sure how he knew that. I don't know whether he could have, because the Army was, as we say today, downsized after World War I, the way it is after every war. ... So, the opportunity to remain was, I would think, questionable in the first place. But, he used to voice, once in a while, regrets that he hadn't pursued a full military career.

LM: In your Carlisle Interview, you talked about your interest in West Point and the exam. I was curious if you wanted to elaborate on your desire to go to West Point.

FK: Well, having grown up with the National Guard, my ambition, I suppose, at that age, was to become a lieutenant in the National Guard, so I could play polo. [laughter] You had to be an officer to play polo with ... the team of the 112th Field Artillery, or the teams that they had around the state. So, that was kind of the beginning of my interest in military affairs. But, I spent time going to Pine Camp, New York, which is now Fort Drum. From the time I was about twelve or thirteen, I went to summer camp with the National Guard, worked for the officers there. I kept their tents clean, and I polished their boots, and made their bunks, and those kinds of things. And then, I would sneak out on the range with the troops and ride along on a caisson, or get my own horse and accompany them. And, I was tolerated as a real mascot, almost, for that unit for about four or five years. And ... so, I had a decided interest in things military. And, my father was interested in me pursuing that, if I wanted to, and he said he would help me get into West Point, ... if I wanted to go there. So, ... we had plans. I took the examination for West Point for our congressman, whose name, then, was D. Lane Powers. And, Mr. Powers had contested ... the appointments, I guess, and I came in about third ... or fourth place, and never got the appointment that year. My father had said, if I did not get an appointment, he would send me to a prep school. And so, when he died, I wrote to the prep school and asked if there was a way I could still attend when I couldn't pay for it, did they have a scholarship program, or whatever. I never heard from them. ... They didn't answer my letter. And so, I, then, took the state exam for a scholarship to Rutgers and earned one, somehow, and decided I would go to Rutgers, because my tuition was paid for. And, I could study something that might lead me to either a military career, or, I thought about being a veterinarian, because of the time I had spent with horses. And, I was quite

interested in that. I spent one summer living with a veterinarian who took care of the horses at the 112Th and I traveled with him to the farmlands of Hunterdon County, and Mercer County, Somerset County. He had a wide range of clients and I got to see a lot of what a veterinarian does to make his living. So, that kind of interested me and, when I went to Rutgers, I signed up for the Ag School, so that I could use those courses toward a veterinarian course, if I ended up pursuing that. But, the war came along, and the ROTC program took priority over all those other ideas.

LM: After your father passed away, how did your mother support the family?

FK: My mother went to work. She was very fortunate, in that she was offered my father's job. He worked for the State, at the time. ... He had been relatively close to the governor, because, at one time, my father worked as the superintendent at the National Guard installation at Sea Girt, New Jersey. ... He ran that place for about three years, I guess. And, of course, that's where the governor's summer home was, in those days. So, he became known to the governor, and, when he died, the way politics worked in those days, I guess, redounded to her benefit and she was offered his position. She didn't know much about what she was going to do, but she had some very good help from other people who advised her, coached her, and helped her go to work. So, I guess, she went to work within two or three months after my father died, and, she was able to support herself. She did not have to contribute to my education, because of the state scholarship, and I worked and saved enough money to pay for my own expenses. So, she made out quite well and was able to put my ... brother through high school, and he went on into odd kinds of educational experiences, including some at Rutgers. [laughter] He never graduated. He went in the Army, also, at about the same time I did, and he became an Air Corps pilot, Army Air Corps. He was commissioned two days before I was. So, as a second lieutenant, he outranked me, although he was two years younger. I met him when the war ended. I was in Germany and he was in England. He was flying B-17 Flying Fortresses in those days, and I obtained a one week leave to London, and went over there, and surprised him. He didn't know I was coming. ... I walked into his organization and found him walking down the street, at which time, I was a captain and he was still a second lieutenant. So, he never got to ... exercise command and control over me. [laughter]

KP: What was your father doing when he passed away?

FK: He worked for the Unemployment Compensation Commission. It was one of those, I guess, welfare kinds of things that were started ... under Franklin Roosevelt in the New Deal and governmental organizations which were spawning the ... unemployment compensation that was being paid. My father had been in private business. ... He was in the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, in Trenton, for a few years, then, went into the full-time National Guard service, in order to serve at Sea Girt for three years. And, when he left there, he left there to go into business with H. Norman Schwartzkopf, who had left the New Jersey State Police in the late 1930s, and the two of them bought a transportation company. It was called Middlesex Transportation Company. It owned about three trucks and they were in business for, I guess, about two years. ... Johnson and Johnson bought the truck company and, when they did, they kept Schwartzkopf in a position in the company, but my father, who had been the so-called executive vice-president, was let go. And so, 1938 was not a very good time to be looking for a

job. He ended up with a state job, probably because of the experience he had in the National Guard, and his connection with state officials. So, he got appointed to this Unemployment Compensation Commission. And then, in much the same way, my mother was appointed to the same position when my father died.

KP: How long did your mother hold the position for?

FK: I can't remember, because I was away from home, and she remarried about five years later. And, I don't know whether she worked all that time or not. I'm pretty sure she had to have something to do during that period. So, I would presume she continued to work until she remarried. But, I'm not sure of that.

KP: One of the things you talked about in your interview with Carlisle was your experience with Boy Scouts.

FK: Yeah.

KP: It sounds like that was also very important.

FK: [laughter] Well, at the 112th Field Artillery Armory, the superintendent was a man named Lyman Burbank, First Lieutenant Lyman Burbank. And, he got this idea of having a mounted Boy Scout troop. Now, the idea grew out of a one week expedition where a National Guard captain took eight of us kids on about a ten day horseback ride around New Jersey, from North Trenton, from the artillery armory there in Lawrenceville, over to the Delaware, across the river into Pennsylvania, back up Bucks County, and back up into, ... what's the county above Trenton, above Mercer, on the Delaware River? Is that Hunterdon? Anyway, we did a ten day trip. Most all of us were sons of the National Guard officers who ran the 112th Field Artillery, or were in some way associated with it. I was the youngest kid there. I think I was nine-years-old. The oldest were thirteen, fourteen, but we had a great time, and that gave Lt. Burbank the idea that this is a good thing for kids to be able to do. And, he started, on his own, the Boy Scout Mounted Troop, which became recognized, got licensed by the Boy Scouts of America, and ... it was going to be only for older scouts. You had to be a First Class Scout, and you had to be fifteen-years-old, and then you had to apply for, and get on, a waiting list, if you wanted to become a mounted troop Boy Scout. It was about 100 boys, well, no, I guess not that many. Maybe fifty was the limit, fifty boys who could be mounted scouts. Now, Lt. Burbank had a son who was only twelve, and who was not quite a First Class Scout, and then, he had me as a next-door-neighbor, who was only ten, and not even qualified to be a scout, because, you had to be twelve-years-old, in those days, to become a Boy Scout. But, he wanted the two of us to be members of the Boy Scout Mounted Troop, because we both knew how to ride well, and we both could kind of show these kids that horses were not something that you had to be afraid of. ... So, I became a mounted troop Boy Scout at the age of ten, and I was still one almost to my senior year in high school, at which time, I was almost fully qualified to be a Boy Scout in the mounted troop, but, not quite. But, I spent that time, and that was every Saturday morning the Boy Scouts met, and rode horses for the year, all year long, except for when the National Guard went off to summer camp and took the horses with them. We had a Boy Scout Mounted Troop meeting every Saturday morning, and I made most of them. So, that was an interesting kind of

organization of a military unit, which is the way Lt. Burbank ran this organization, just as he would have a cavalry troop. And so, I got an understanding of things military from that, also. All these contributed to a background that made a military life kind of attractive to me, I guess. When I had the opportunity to stay in after the war ended, and applied for a regular army commission, it just seemed like the natural thing to do. And, I was the only one of my ROTC class who did that. I'm the only one who stayed in the Army. So, the Army's not for everyone, even those who had the same kind of initial training, and initial introduction, to the Army that I had.

LAM: I read a *New York Times* article that mentions your wife and it said that she was from Trenton, also. When did you meet your wife, in high school?

FK: Yes, in high school. ... I was in Trenton Central High School, as a senior, and she came as a sophomore that year. We only had three grades in Trenton High, in those days. I don't know what it is now, but she ... came into high school as a sophomore, and I just met her and we started to date. I guess I met her, finally, about March of my senior year, ... from September to March, we didn't know each other. And then, in February or March, I finally met her and, before school ended, we were a thing, I guess. We have been together ever since.

KP: I am curious about your education before Rutgers. How well did Trenton High School and your earlier education prepare you for college? What were your stronger subjects and what were your weaker subjects?

FK: ... I was not a good student, because I didn't study very much. But, I learned easily in grammar school and in high school. My worst subjects were things like Latin, where you really have to study, in order to have a vocabulary. And, I did not do well. I got Cs in Latin, I suppose. I always got very good marks in mathematics courses, good marks in history, geography, and the science courses, and I thought I was well prepared to go college when I graduated from high school. I was not an outstanding student. I've always told myself that's because I didn't work at it, but, I graduated high enough up in the class that I didn't have any trouble being admitted to college. And, I thought I had a very nicely rounded academic preparation to go to college.

KP: Did you play any sports in high school?

FK: I played football in high school. I liked many other sports. I liked to play tennis, ... baseball was probably my favorite sport, still is. But, I started to try to get on the football team in my sophomore year, my first year in high school, and ... I was not a very successful football player. I made the varsity in my senior year, got my letter, and all those things, but I never was a first string player. I would have to stay after school and go to practice. ... In those days, in Lawrence Township, they ran buses to school in the morning and they ran a bus home at three-thirty, quarter-of-four in the afternoon, and if you didn't make that bus, you were on your own to get home. And, I didn't ... like spending money on another bus trip down into town and back out to Lawrenceville. It took a lot of time. I did a lot of walking and I lived about five miles from the high school to my home in Lawrence Township. I walked it on occasion. I hitchhiked rides whenever I could, and, by the time football season ended, I was so sick of the routine that, when the basketball coach wanted me to play basketball, I just said, "The heck with that. I'm not going

to sign up for more of that punishment of trying to get home, particularly through the middle of winter, ... for a basketball game." And, I've never been that fond of basketball, anyway, and still am not. When baseball season would come, and tennis, the football coach always had spring practice, and I had visions of being a good football player, so, I went to spring practice at football, instead of those other sports. ... I never realized that my senior year on the football team, I was still only sixteen-years-old, and I was playing with kids who were eighteen and nineteen. I never realized the difference in physical maturity that occurs between sixteen and nineteen. Wasn't until I got into the Army that I really grew the physical capabilities that I had from then on. But, I decided, when I got in college, that there's no future for me in football, the way I played it in high school, so, I decided to row on the crew instead. And, I spent my time at Rutgers on the crew. Once again, you can't row in the crew and do anything else. You're too tired, in the first place. But, there's no time ... to play baseball and those other spring sports when ... you're rowing.

KP: One of our research assistants on the project is on the crew team this year. She gets up very early in the morning.

FK: That's right, and it's hard work, and you don't do other things when you're rowing on the crew. And, I was quite fortunate. I made the varsity crew in my sophomore year and I've always been proud of that.

KP: Did you take part in any other high school activities? Yearbook? School newspaper?

FK: None. Nothing. I belonged to a club called the Clionian Society and I still don't know it's purpose. [laughter] You know, you have your club meetings once a week, or I don't know how often, and we would gather, and have fun together. I was never an officer in that. I never got elected to anything. I was never elected to any of the offices in the high school. In junior high school, my homeroom teacher nominated me, without telling me, ... for one of the elected student offices in my class. I had to get up on the stage and make a campaign talk about why people should elect me, and it was one of the most terrifying experiences of my life. [laughter] I became fearful of public presentations for many years after that.

KP: It sounds like you had a wonderful childhood and teenage years, with the horses, and the Mounted Boy Scouts, and the camp. What else did you do for fun? Did you go to movies at all?

FK: Oh, sure. I went, well, on dates with my girlfriend. We either went bowling, or we went to the movies. So, there was sort of a regular movie thing every weekend. I went to the movies on Saturday afternoon at the Strand Theater, on Hermitage Avenue, in Trenton. I got aquatinted with that place when I went to junior high school, Junior #3, in West Trenton. And, Saturday afternoon, [that's] where all my classmates ... spent their time. And, I learned to go there and enjoy it. I don't think of much else that I did, besides my interest in horses, and interest in what went on at the National Guard Armory. That was my other interest in life, outside of school.

KP: You mentioned working for a veterinarian in the summer. Did you have any other jobs?

FK: Well, I worked for the horse trainer one summer, and then, I worked for this veterinarian for about a month, ... another summer. ... I didn't work in high school, particularly. Odd jobs, here and there. I never was a paper boy, didn't do things like that. When the war came along, when I went to college, I had to work. ... I went to work in an airplane factory called Fleet Wings, in Bristol, Pennsylvania. I worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad, at the freight transfer center in Trenton. I worked one summer for ... the New Jersey State Employment Service. I got a job as an interviewer for people who were out of work and I did that for one summer. So, I had different kinds of jobs, none of which are very meaningful today. When ... I worked at Fleet Wings, I carried airplane parts. When they would go through production line, and a piece of wing, or an aileron, or rudder piece would end up at the end of the line, I would pick it up and deposit it where it was supposed to go for shipment, for whatever. Not a very challenging position, but, better then being a riveter who had to sit there and punch rivets all day. ... I worked for the Thermoid Rubber Company, one time. ... I ran out of money early in one year in school. I guess it was the beginning of my third year. So, I went to work at Thermoid and I worked the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift, while I was going to college. And, my job there was one of swinging a sledgehammer, one-hand sledgehammer, all night. I worked on the furnaces, where asbestos was being baked into brake-lining. And, the brake-lining would be put on these forms, and the forms had to have a lid put on, and the lid had to be wedged closed. And, I swung the sledgehammer that ... put the wedges in both sides of this form, and then, would hang the thing on a big hook to carry it through the oven. Hard physical labor, and one that I stayed with for three months, and quit, because of coughing. At 7:00 a.m., I would get off of work, and get in car, and drive to New Brunswick, and go to class at Rutgers, sometimes until four in the afternoon. Go home and sleep, somehow, between five o'clock and ten o'clock, when I would have to get up and go to work. Somewhere in there, my mother would feed me. After three months, I had been breathing asbestos during that working period, and I started to cough, so that the time that I was supposed to be sleeping, I spent coughing and being awake. And, I finally just ran out of any kind of ability to stay awake in class, or to do anything else. And, I decided that the money wasn't worth it, I had to quit. I had paid all my bills. I was up to date, but, I think my last paycheck was all the money I had left when I quit that job. That, and trying to make three dates a week with my wife on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, who was not my wife yet. That was when she was ... still at home at that time, before she went off to college at Penn State.

KP: You had a lot of experience with the National Guard and the military that most teenagers would not have had before that. How aware were you of events in Europe and the Far East in the 1930s? Looking back, it was easy to see what was happening, but, at the time, to a fifteen or sixteen-year-old, what did you know of the world?

FK: Well, ... I was lucky enough to have a father who expressed himself in regards to the international situation on many occasions. And so, he was quite prescient in predicting the on come of war. And, that's why he was so serious about his National Guard duties, because he could foresee the need for military forces, and so, I was aware of that. He was also far-seeing about Communism and was quite the spokesman, in regard to the threat of Communism, that he had learned about when he was in Siberia. And, the ... ruthlessness of that organization, and the way in which they expended people in order to have things their way. So, he warned me early about Hitler, and he warned me early about Josef Stalin and the Communists of Russia. So, I was aware, I suppose, of the international scene, and I wasn't surprised when the war came along

and when we got involved in it. I was surprised at the way we got involved. It wasn't the Japanese that I thought were going to attack us. Nobody, in those days, would give any credit to the Japanese being able to do such a thing. So, that was a big surprise. I was walking down College Avenue in ... New Brunswick on December the 7th. I don't know whether I was on my way to the chapel or not, from the DU house, and somebody yelled out the window of somebody's fraternity house along College Avenue, and said, "The Japanese have just bombed Pearl Harbor." That was our introduction. So, I guess I was as interested in international affairs as teenagers are, even today, which is not very much.

KP: I asked, also, because you had a lot of involvement with the National Guard, and I did a short biography of Jonathan Wainwright, who was the head of the National Guard in the peace-time army. I think what you were alluding to was that there was were officers who were concerned about the next world war and were preparing. The peace-time army, as well as the National Guard, was more than social club. War was, for a lot of officers, a very distant and inconceivable thing, from what I have read.

FK: What, going to war you mean?

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

KP: War is inevitable, but, I have talked to a lot of officers that were in the inter-war army, and it was a very slow life. The promotions were slow ...

FK: Oh, yes.

KP: And, there was a lot of spit-and-polish, and your father really thought that there was a real mission that was going to be sooner, rather than later.

FK: That's right. Now, the New Jersey National Guard, in those days, there was a club-like atmosphere among the people who were a part of it, particularly the officer corps. And, Sunday polo was the big event, and it went on all year, indoors and outdoors. But, I developed my own appreciation for people in civilian life who were willing to devote time and effort to an avocation here called the military. And, I've always respected that element of the National Guard and the US Army Reserve, who dedicated so much of their time and effort to that avocation. They are people who appreciate the need for the military, but they would rather do it in their own home towns, and their own home areas, and as a adjunct, instead of as a full-time commitment, the way we, the professional army, does it. But, ... they can be very professional in their own right. It's impossible to think of them being able to be as fully prepared, and as capable, when they only get thirty-nine days a year with which to do that. But, ... they have a nucleus of capability there that can easily be expanded and relied upon in times of crisis. So, I've always had great respect for those people who are willing to do that. I know there are a lot of dead-beats among them. There are a lot of those people who joined the National Guard, in those days, just to play polo. As I said, that's what I wanted to do. But, at the same time, ... there's an element among them ... that's very dedicated to that avocation, and my father was one of them, because he foresaw ... World War II on the horizon without knowing, really, what it was going to be.

KP: You experienced New Jersey as a rural, agricultural area. You have probably driven through parts of the area around Trenton and you probably could not believe that it was ever farmland.

FK: That's right.

KP: Could you maybe just talk about some of the areas you traveled through and what you remember, particularly, when you were working for the veterinarian?

FK: ... I can only say that I haven't the slightest idea where we went. I got in the car with him and we drove to this farm, and he took care of that hog, and, the next day, [we] got back in the car and we drove to somebody else's farm, and he took care of somebody's cow, heifer, went to another place and shot a horse that ... had to be destroyed because he ... was diseased. All those kinds of things that I watched, and helped perform, and so forth, were all over farmland that, to me, was just the normal kind of habitation that we had in that part of New Jersey. Central Jersey, on the west side, between Trenton and Phillipsburg, in those two counties there. And, there were some beautiful farms. There were some horse farms, there were cattle farms, and there were crop farms. I can't recall more than corn fields and wheat fields, but, I don't know what other crops were being grown in those areas, in those days.

KP: You mentioned that your father had seen the world. Before you went to college, or maybe I should ask, before the military, how far had you traveled? You mentioned going with the National Guard up to New York. Had you traveled anywhere else?

FK: Went to Texas once, which was a great experience, because, with all of my experience with horses, I thought of becoming a cowboy, also, ... as a profession, rather than going in the Army. And so, my father and mother were aquatinted with another couple who had been in the New Jersey National Guard, and he was a regular army officer who was reassigned to Kelly Field, in San Antonio, Texas, and invited my parents to come down and visit. My father decided we would do that for Christmas vacation, one year. And, I guess it was 1938, or something like that, and we drove from New Jersey to Texas, and spent a week in San Antonio, and drove home. So, I saw a lot of the country and it was a time when I was sixteen-years-old, I guess. ... I wasn't old enough to have a driver's license, but, I had gotten one in the State of Pennsylvania, where you could be a year younger, and I used my uncle's address. They lived in Easton, Pennsylvania. And, I got a Pennsylvania license and my father let me drive on the trip to Texas and back. That's where I got my first thrill of operating an automobile. And, I saw a lot of the country, because ... you didn't make great time, in those days. Forty miles an hour, ... if you averaged that, you were making high speed. ...

KP: There were no interstates?

FK: No interstates, and we went two different routes. One, kind of a southern route, going down, and a more northerly route coming back. So, I saw a lot of the country that I didn't know anything about and didn't remember much, anyway, when I finished, but, at least I had been there.

KP: But, it sounds like Texas left a clear impression.

FK: Well, not as much as I thought it was going to. San Antonio turned out to be just another city, ... but, it had a lot of Spanish kinds of architecture, but, I didn't ... get to hobnob with the cowboys at all. [laugher] I did get a view of the Army Air Corps at Kelly Field and at Randolph Field, that I had never known before. That generated some idea that I might like to be a pilot, someday, and join the Army Air Corps. So, I thought about that when ... the war first started. That was a thought in my mind, that I would enlist and try to join the Air Corps. It never came to fruition because too many people talked me out of it, told me to stay in college. "When the Army needs you, they know where you are, and you'll get your turn." There wasn't any hurry, so, I acquiesced to that.

KP: It sounds like your brother had the same idea, and he joined the Air Corps.

FK: He did. He graduated from high school in '42, and ... immediately enlisted, rather then wait to be drafted. Because, he thought he was going to be drafted, and we were drafting a lot of people in those days, at that age.

KP: You mentioned taking the state scholarship examination. Had you thought of trying to go to any other colleges besides Rutgers? Was Rutgers your only choice, or were there other schools you were thinking about, or had actually applied to?

FK: The only other schools that I even thought about were Cornell and Pennsylvania, both of which had veterinary schools. But, I didn't do anything about it. I never applied to them. It had just been kind of accepted, by me, that my father and I both thought that, if I could go to West Point, that would be great. And so, our interest was in, initially, ... how do I get prepared to go to West Point, and if it takes a year in prep school, okay. And, that's as far as I got until my father died, and then, I had to start making different plans. ... He died in May, and the state exam took place in June, I think, or the 1st of July, thereabouts, or right at the end of the school year. So, I just took that when I got it. I never thought about going anywhere else.

KP: My students, the entire class knows quite a bit about Rutgers during the war years, in the 1930s and 1940s. They all have to take a semester's worth of *Targum*s, and read them, and figure out what life was like.

FK: Oh. [laugher]

KP: So, I am going to let them ask some of the Rutgers questions. They know, in many ways, more then even I do.

LM: When you entered in 1940, it said that you were the freshman crew captain, [Interviewee's note: I was not crew captain. We freshman did not have one.] and we were curious, what your thoughts and remembrances of Chuck Logg, Coach Logg? He was often found in the papers. What was his personality like? What did you think of him?

FK: Well, I think the world of Chuck Logg. He was a great coach. In fact, I suppose the reason I stayed with the crew, for the three years, and didn't mind not playing baseball, and didn't mind not playing tennis, or any of those other sports, was because of my sense of loyalty to him. I don't like to say he needed me, but, he needed kids to be interested in crew, and I was. ... So, it kept me interested for the entire time I was there. ... It's because of his personality and his interest in us. I think I told you, I ... didn't live at Rutgers my first two years. I commuted from home, and, often, my car was not working too well, and I would end up without a ride, and he would drive me home. I was always catching a ride with him, certainly down to his home, in Princeton Junction. Sometimes I would have to make my own way from there, by hitchhiking, or whatever, but, I got to know him, because I traveled with him in his car that way. I thought, he was a taciturn man. He didn't brook foolishness. He wanted people who worked, who would dedicate themselves, who were interested in doing things right. He kind of cultivated that among the members of the crew. I admired him because he had been a very good oarsman himself. He was a varsity man at the University of Washington, when Washington was the most dominant of the crews in the country. He, I thought, was a very good coach. I don't know how he would measure up with the coaches of today, if he had all the kinds of equipment that they now have. We didn't have ergometers. ... I mean, he had to do all this himself. ... Our boathouse was nothing but a warehouse at the Middlesex Transportation Company, an open bay kind of place, where we hung the shells, and rickety facilities, if there ever were any. And, he operated on a shoestring. And, yet, he was able to do that and keep the interest of the kids who were trying out for the crew, and, I thought, made a pretty good crew out of us. In 1942, I think, we had the best crew in the East, but, the war came along and half of our races were canceled, because of the war. So, we never got a chance to prove how good we were. The Poughkeepsie Regatta, in those days, was the big end of year meet and it was called off. ... We never got our opportunity to demonstrate how good we were. But, I thought he put together some ... very good crews in those days.

LM: Another thing about the crew, I know you defeated Princeton and some other major schools. I was curious about the rivalry that existed between Princeton and Rutgers. How had it affected the teams? Did people pull any pranks?

FK: No, we didn't engage in those kinds of things. ... Crews didn't do that kind of thing. The football teams did I think. [laughter] And, ... I don't have to explain the Princeton-Rutgers rivalry of those years, but I was on the first crew ever to defeat Princeton, the varsity crew. The 1942 crew was the one that beat Princeton for the first time. Now, the ... '41 crew would have won the race, but their coxswain steered, what we would call, an aberrant course, and they had to row longer, and they ended up losing by a deck length, or so. And, it was the same crew the following year, except for the bow and number two positions, and we went back to Carnegie Lake and defeated Princeton rather soundly that day, and that's the first time Rutgers had ever won. Rutgers had only had a crew for something like nine years. It started in '33 or '34, and so, it was the first, I would call, big time win. And, of course, we don't beat Princeton very often, still. [laughter] So, that was one of our proud moments.

LM: Did you still exchange the shirts?

FK: Oh, yes, we won. Our greatest shirt coup, every year, would be the Dad Vail Regatta, and the Dad Vail Regatta started sometime in the late 1930s, and the Rutgers Varsity won it every year, until it was ... canceled, for wartime years. But, when we rowed out there, we always rowed against about eight, maybe nine, other crews. ... The freshman, I won as a freshman, collected rowing shirts from seven or eight other crews, and then, next year, as a varsity, we won again, and we won again the year after. And, I had those crew shirts for ten years after World War II, I think, some of them.

LAM: You were obviously in Delta Upsilon, and, from what I've read in the *Targum*, it seems like it was the biggest, most prominent fraternity on campus. What was it like to be a part of that?

FK: [laugher] Well, we used to think we were the best on campus, though, there were a number of others who argued that point. I didn't join a fraternity until my third year, my junior year, and so, I only had six months of fraternity life. But, it was very enjoyable. I enjoyed living with a group of men like that. ... I had certain responsibilities in the building for work you get done, things you supervised, ... and, a lot of camaraderie that is associated with being in a fraternity in those years. I've been quite distressed, since that time, and going back, and finding out how fraternities have changed. I mean we were a big club of kids who got together, who enjoyed being together, who did things together, and who took care of their property. My first experience back, after World War II, was the twenty-fifth reunion of my class. Now, that would have been 1969, I guess, and my class of '44 headquarters was going to be the DU House. And, I couldn't believe the shambles that place had become.

KP: Even as early as 1969?

FK: Yes, it was absolutely a wreck. And, it looked like it was a wreck because it had been purposely, purposefully, destroyed. I mean, people who had carved up the banisters as though they'd swung an ax at it, just for fun. ... We had beautiful panel walls in the basement when I was there, and they were shredded almost, and nobody seemed to care. ... That's just the way it was and nobody took care of anything. The carpeting looked like it hadn't been cleaned for twenty-five years. And so, I was distressed to see what happened to the fraternity idea, I guess, during that interim. But, I enjoyed being in the DU House. I enjoyed the people I knew. I still have contact with a few, but only sporadically, same as I have contact with a few of the "Black Fifty." And, we still have our reunions. We are still the nucleus of the Class of '44 at the five-year reunions. I enjoy seeing them all back there.

LM: At the fraternity parties, I know it was customary for the men to leave the house and the women to stay for the night, in many places. What was your observation of the drinking that was occurring then and what the chaperones did at these parties, what their attitudes were towards it?

FK: Whenever we drank, it was done surreptitiously. ... I mean, you thought you were getting away with something, and so, ... you didn't make bold practice of it. If it went on, it went on without the fraternity's hierarchy acknowledging it. Our president, for the year, or whatever he was called, I guess we had a president, and we had a house manager, and those kinds of things, and they did not acknowledge that it was happening. You knew you were being a bad boy if you

sneaked in three bottles of beer to drink at the party with your female guest, and you kept it hidden, and you ... drank it surreptitiously, and you didn't want the administration to find out about it, because it was something that they were going to castigate the fraternity for allowing to happen. So, we were teenage kids like all of them, and we got away with what we thought we could get away with, but ... nobody drank to get drunk, I mean, that kind of thing.

LM: On the note of more social aspects of Rutgers, when you entered Rutgers in 1940, what was experience with class hazing from the sophomores to the freshman, wearing green ties and all the practices that we read about?

FK: We wore beanies, [laughter] ... but, hazing was not [common]. We didn't really have hazing. The only time I ever got even close to what I would call hazing was in the fraternity house, when you went through hell week, and it was a punishing kind of period for the kids going through it, and I know that, in some fraternities, that they overdid a lot of things. But, again, it was done, I believe, surreptitiously. You did bad things that you hoped you wouldn't be caught doing. I got paddled enough by the upperclassmen. Everybody had his turn at those kinds of things. Drinking some concoction that they put together out of all the stuff in the kitchen, and called it some fancy name, as punishment ... for some rules you violated, and those kinds of things. But, it was done in fun and it was done without serious consequences for 99.9% of the time. And, I don't recall any of my classmates ever taking umbrage over what he was forced to do or anything else. That was all acceptable. ... See another nice thing was, you didn't have to have the administration running ... the thing. You didn't have all kinds of rules and regulations. We had people who had a sense of responsibility for themselves, and for their friends, [so] that we didn't have to have all the rules, and the controls, and the announced policies that we have today. Lots more freedom in ... that society of students, but, I think we behaved ourselves much better than what I read about, anyway.

KP: But, Dean Metzger was there when the occasional student did get out of line.

FK: Oh, yes.

KP: He seems to have left an impression on anyone he came into contact with, [laughter] even if it was just simply chapel. His brief sermons seemed to have left a lasting impression.

FK: He's another one. He's like Coach Logg. He had expectations of how people would behave, and how they would accommodate to the rules and regulations of the institution, and he didn't have any trouble expressing his demands, in that regard. But, ... everybody just kind of accommodated to those things. It was expected of you, and that's the way you responded.

KP: What about chapel? That seems to be very distinctive, compared to modern-day Rutgers. You were required to go to chapel. What did you think of the experience of chapel?

FK: It was just something we had to do, and we did it, and nobody made an issue of it. And, the Jewish kids went along with the Christian kids, and it was all one of those ceremonies that you were expected to participate in. ... There were people who liked to sneak out of the formation. ... You were allowed so many absences, anyway, and, if you could sneak in a few more absences

and not get caught, why, people tried to do that, you know. We were bad kids. [laughter] But, it was like physical education. Who the hell liked to go to physical training in the gymnasium? ... If you weren't on a sports team and that kind of thing, you had to go to gym. And, I want you to know that I still have a withhold grade in PE, because, in my junior year, I rowed on the crew, and we rowed in the fall, practiced in the fall, until November, until Thanksgiving. Then, we didn't start rowing indoors on the machines until February. So, for December and January of that year, I was supposed to go to gym class. And, I said, "I'm not." You know, "The hell with that. [laughter] I work hard enough on the crew that I don't think I need to go to gym class." And, I got a withheld grade in PE, even though I rowed on the varsity crew in my junior year. And, I never got it corrected, I just left it. I didn't fail it, but, I didn't get credit. I didn't get credit for the course. [laughter] You could look it up. [laughter]

KP: How did you like your classes, your academic classes, particularly when you were working the night shift? Working the night shift, and then, going to school, is not an easy thing to do.

FK: That's right. I enjoyed the Ag courses. I enjoyed biochemistry and zoology, and I had trouble with botany. ... I was interested in botany, but not to the degree that my bunkmate was, the guy who sat in the next desk, my very good friend named Jack Krieger. And, incidentally, I want to talk to you about him. He was a great botany student and I copied more stuff from him, to get through botany, than I got from the teachers, from the professors. But, I reciprocated by getting him through zoology the same way. ... I knew the zoology stuff and I passed that on to him. He ended up becoming a medical doctor and he was a Marine. He joined the Marine Corps and ended up being a medical doctor. And, I was out of contact with him for fifty years and, I guess, after our fiftieth reunion, I found out where he was and I wrote him a letter. We exchanged some very good correspondence, and then, he died. He had a heart attack and died on me about a year-and-a-half ago. So, I never got to see him. He was in Hawaii, and I spent two R&R periods in Hawaii with my wife, during the Vietnam War, didn't know he was there, never made any contact. But, anyway, I've got some of his history, that you ought to know about. ... I've got enough in his letters, that I kept in the "Black Fifty," file that you all might give him some recognition in this history study.

KP: What was his experience?

FK: Well, he left school in the beginning of the junior year and joined the Marine Corps. ... He ended up going to Marine OCS, and getting a commission in the Marine Corps, and staying in the Marines until sometime in '46 or early '47. ... Then, [he] tried to go back to Rutgers and, apparently, got in some kind of difficulties with the administrators, who weren't going to allow him back to do what he wanted to do, and he chucked it all, and went to the University of Pennsylvania, instead. ... Severed his connection with Rutgers and never went back, and never came to any of our reunions or anything.

KP: Where did he serve in the war?

FK: I can't tell you, now. ... I was going to bring the letters with me, and I forgot them. So, I'm going to mail them to you.

KP: Okay, that would be great.

FK: Unless you want to stop off and pick them up. I don't know where you're going from here.

KP: We will stay here as long as you will let us stay here and ask you questions. [laughter]

FK: Oh, well. ...

KP: You are the only thing on the schedule today.

FK: I've got all afternoon, so, I'm happy to talk. I have an opinion on every subject. [laughter] And, I don't mind sharing it. But, I live on your way home. You can go right past my house and I can go in and find those things.

KP: We might do that.

FK: Yeah.

LM: I know it was mandatory, when you entered Rutgers, to take ROTC. What did you think of the program? I know, in the spring of 1942, in the *Targum*s, Rutgers was changing, because, right after the Pearl Harbor bombing, they started new programs, new gym training.

FK: Well, that's dredging up a long time ago here. What did I think of it? I, personally, thought of it as an opportunity for me to get a commission in the Army. So, this was an opportunity that I was going to seize. I had no difficulties with the first two years. Mandatory ROTC training I still think was a very good thing for all male students. ... I don't think anybody suffered because you had to go through two years of ROTC training. So many of them thought it was a complete waste of time. ... "I'm not going to be a soldier. Why do I have to put on a uniform and go to drill?" which we did, once a week, on Tuesday afternoons. But, the program, it didn't make soldiers out of anybody, but, it made you aware of what you needed to know if you were going to be a soldier. The program was run, in those days, by not the highest quality of the United States Army. These were people who you recall reading about, lieutenants who spent seventeen years as lieutenants, including people like, I don't think Eisenhower was, but, people of that capacity got caught for ... fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years. General Lyman Lemnitzer was one of them. Lemnitzer, who became the first officer in the United States Army whose career can be compared with that of Winfield Scott. Winfield Scott was a general from 1812 until 1862. That's fifty years a general, and he remained a general until he died in 1866. Lemnitzer was a general for something like twenty-seven years, and spent almost fifty years in the Army, all together, or more than fifty years, fifty-seven years, or something like that. MacArthur had many years of service also, but, not as many as Lemnitzer. How did I get off on that tangent?

KP: You were talking about the quality of the ROTC.

FK: Oh, yeah, and, anyway, among the regular army officers, they did not send the best quality to be ROTC instructors. And so, there had to be an infusion of new blood, I guess, at the beginning, when World War II came along. And, I think we had a couple of those higher class

officers assigned to the Rutgers ROTC faculty, but, they weren't all the kind of people that you aspire to be yourself, or that you admired, necessarily. But, that was incidental to me, because I had known so many officers in the National Guard, and I recognized the varied quality of people in the profession, even at that point. I was not overly pleased with the kind of instruction that I got in the classroom. We used the ROTC manual. Our instructors expected us to memorize the manual, and the tests would be a question, and you were expected to know the five points made in the ROTC manual, in that order, and answer the question verbatim, and if you didn't, you didn't get credit. ... You either reported it the way the manual said, or it was wrong. So, ... there was a lot of effort made, I hate to say cheating effort, but, there were efforts made to make sure that you could answer exactly the way the text was written. And, I always thought that was a terrible way to teach military science. ... I have never gotten over that. We've got to do better. And, I don't think we teach that way anymore. So, I wasn't very happy with the curriculum in military science business. And, of course, two hours of drill was not conducive to making much of a soldier of you. And, I never got to go to summer camp. I don't know how they ran in those days. I went into the Army instead.

KP: You came in 1940, while there was a war in Europe. We read the *Targum*s of 1940 and 1941 and, if all that survived were the *Targum*s, you would hardly know that there was a war on. There was an occasional speaker, maybe an occasional editorial, but, I often joke to my students that the three F rule, fraternity, football, and fun. What were the thoughts of your fellow students about world events and the war. It sounds like you had a real sense that was war coming, but, do you think that most of your fellow classmates expected war?

FK: I think most of my contemporaries thought that the war was an inevitable thing, that it would happen. But, we weren't going to worry about it until it did. And, in so far as preparing for it, it was all sort of incidental, and nobody gave any real thought to that kind of thing, that I know of. Most everybody was concerned with his studies, and the grades he was getting, and his preparation for the profession that he was aiming for, whatever it might be. ... I said I was still looking for a way to get into the military, I suppose. So, my intent, in those days, was to pursue the ROTC program, and that's as far as I thought. But, I had classmates who were going to be farmers in New Jersey. They came from farm families and they were going back to run the farm. Others who were going to work for agricultural corporations, like Campbell's Soup, ... who already had ... that kind of thing in mind as their future in agriculture. That was my classmates in the Ag school. My fraternity brothers, ... there weren't many Ag students in the fraternity, in the DU house, anyway. ... So, I don't really know. ... I knew a couple who were going to be engineers. I knew a couple who were in journalism. But, I never thought of them as seriously pursuing something that just had to be. They were engineer students because that's what their parents told them to do. ... I had that feeling, I suppose, without thinking about it. And, I never talked to anybody about, "Why did you want to become an engineer? Why did you want to become a journalist?" I don't recall conversations of that kind.

KP: My students, when they read the *Targum*, collectively, often express certain things they would not want to revive. Chapel springs to mind.

FK: Well, kids aren't eager to do anything that is a requirement. So, when you say nobody's eager, I know the student body would not be eager. I wonder about why the administration

wouldn't be interested in things like that, because they did have a role in college life. ... They did make a contribution that I think has been lost, and so, while you're never going to get [it back]. If you put going to gym class to a vote, you don't get an affirmative either. [laughter]

KP: I did say they are very envious of your social calendar. You had an incredible social world and you had really wonderful dances, and we have read about the dances that you would have and the excitement over the Soph Hop, and the Junior Ball, and the Military Ball.

FK: Yep.

KP: It sounds like you had some nice dates for those events. Did you go to all those social events?

FK: I did not. I went only when I could get my girlfriend, ... and she went to Pennsylvania State University, and when she could come for a weekend, we would go to the social event that was the cause, or the reason, for her coming. Otherwise, I never dated ...

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

LM: Did your fellow fraternity brothers often talk about going up to the Coop, or Douglass, to get a date?

FK: A lot of my fraternity brothers dated people at the Coop. But, I don't know. I was not part of that, and so, ... I can't really comment on what they did, when they did it, how they got across town, I don't know. When I was there in my junior year, I had an automobile. I was one of the few guys who had an automobile on campus, and it was used mostly to go to Howard Johnson's and buy ice cream, I mean, by the quart. We'd go out there, and get quarts of ice cream, and take it back to the fraternity, and everybody had his own quart. And, nobody ever borrowed my car for a date. I would think they would have, but, they didn't, and I don't know now why not. [laughter] You know, that's curious to me, that I never thought about that before, because there were a lot of them who needed rides across town, and so forth.

KP: Is there anything about your Rutgers experience that we forgot to ask you about?

FK: You have to realize how long ago that was.

KP: Oh, yeah, we do.

FK: ... I had a lot of memories I suppose, but, I have to dredge them up.

KP: You mentioned that, after Pearl Harbor, you listened to what President Clothier and the deans had said, not to go out and enlist right away.

FK: No, no, ... well, I don't remember them ever ...

KP: Saying that.

FK: The people I'm talking about were friends of my father's, whom I had known in my home town of Trenton, who were the ones who talked, and an uncle of mine, who talked me out of rushing off, and enlisting in the Army, and hoping for the best. ... They convinced me that, as I said, the Army ... knows where you are and they'll find you when they need you. So, I took a more deliberate course, I suppose, to end up in the Army. I knew I was going to end up in the Army, but I didn't know how I was going to get there at the time, when the war was coming along. You see the National Guard unit ... that I was so closely associated with in my boyhood, was mobilized in September of 1940. That was the year that I went to Rutgers, ... my freshman year. And so, there was a great tug on my heart strings to go with them in September of '40, when I found out they were going to be mobilized. And, it was that summer that I had also been accepted to Rutgers, that my uncle, and some of my parent's male friends, had to exert some pressure on me to make sure I went to college, instead of rushing off with the 112TH Field Artillery to Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

KP: So, it sounds like you were ready to enlist in 1940. If you could have served with this unit, the field artillery unit, you would have.

FK: Well, it was certainly one of the things I thought about doing. But, as I said, I got talked out of it and ... I don't remember that it was any traumatic thing that I decided to go to Rutgers instead.

KP: But, it clearly sounds like you gave it some thought.

FK: Oh, sure, I did. And, most of us, in those days, did. You know, the high school class of 1940 graduated, and the draft had been initiated, and mobilization of some percentage of the National Guard, and the Organized Reserve Corps of the time, were called into service for one year duty. One of the reasons [I didn't do it], I suppose, it was only going to be for one year. So, why go for one year? ... If you're going to have to go back to college, you've lost a year of college. So, that's one of the reasons I didn't go with them. Of course, they never did get released after one year, but ...we didn't know that, at the time. But, ... the high school class of 1940, there was a lot of thought given by a lot of people to what they ought to do about the coming cataclysm.

KP: I'd be curious along this line, because your father was a Republican voter.

FK: How do you know that?

KP: You wrote it on your survey. [laughter] What did you think, particularly, now that we know that Roosevelt was leading the country to war? Leading it, preparing it, however you want to view it.

FK: Leading it unprepared.

KP: Leading it unprepared. There is a dispute over how prepared. What, at the time, did your father and you think of Roosevelt's foreign policy, and the actions he was taking, from what you knew at the time?

FK: I only know that my father was not a Roosevelt admirer, for any of the things he did. I can remember my father saying, "I don't know how that guy wins elections, I don't know one person who voted for him." [laughter] That's kind of like me saying, "I don't know anybody that likes Bill Clinton." But, ... somebody must, because those polls keep coming out in his favor. But, my father did not believe in government solutions to the problems of the country, and imposing solutions from the top down is never a good way of doing things, as the Communists and Socialists have so grandly proved over the last seventy years. Not one of them has a functioning economy that is satisfactory to them or their people. And, my father was one who saw, from the beginning, that imposing solutions from the federal government down was not the way he thought we should go. I don't ever remember discussions about the foreign policy of the time. He was of the impression that the war was coming, we were going to be involved. I don't ever recall hearing from him, or from any of his contemporaries, whether they thought the Roosevelt administration was doing the right thing, or the wrong thing, about us getting there. All my knowledge of what happened in those days is hindsight of the history I've learned of the period since. And, the un-readiness of our military forces for every conflict we've ever been in is just historical knowledge to me, and that's with the exception of the Persian Gulf War. ... The Persian Gulf War and the Panama Invasion, by our troops, is the demonstration of what our military can do if it is properly prepared and supported. And, it is the only time we have been able to do that. And, the Army is a first class outfit, ... when it gets the kind of support that it got from the Reagan administration. That's where we built the Army that went to the Persian Gulf. It was the most professional military operation that has ever been conducted in the history of the world. And, I don't care if you go to Alexander the Great, or Caesar, or the Germans when they attacked Russia. None can compare, in professionalism, to the Persian Gulf War, and it'll be the standard by which all military people are measured for the next 500 years, ... and it's all because the military forces got the kind of commitment of resources, during the 1980s, that allowed them to build that kind of an organization. And, it's the only war we ever were prepared for, and we won it in four days with no casualties to speak of. It's like putting the Chicago Bulls against the high school basketball team, and that's what that was. And, it's not because the Iraqi's didn't fight, and it's not because the Iraqi's didn't have a pretty good army. And, there were a lot of them who tried to put up some resistance. You never hear about it from our press or anybody, but, there were a lot of good soldiers who tried to fight. ... They had been quite successful against Iran for eight years, I guess, and, suddenly, were overwhelmed by an army that was so superior in its professional abilities, that they didn't stand a chance. Battalions ... of Iraqi tanks wiped out by our ground troops, and the Iraqis didn't even know they were coming under fire. And, there's one battalion commander who said, he survived through that thirty-day air campaign and he lost two tanks. ... In something like four hours, he lost thirty-five tanks to the army attacking him on the ground, and he didn't even know they were coming, because they could fire from such a distance, with such ocular superiority, that the Iraqi tanks didn't even know they were out there. And, suddenly, they were hit by a shell that put them out of business. (We got off on a tangent.)

KP: I definitely will want to hear more of your observations on the Persian Gulf War. I do want to bring up the question of preparedness, because you experienced that in World War II, particularly, because the war came and you did not go right off to war. But, did you have a sense that you would be able to finish college after Pearl Harbor? Did you hope to finish college? What were your thoughts at the time of Pearl Harbor?

FK: At the time of Pearl Harbor, I had no idea that I would finish college. I just didn't know when, and how, and how soon I would go into the service. To me, finishing college was two more years, and it's not possible that I'm going to be here that long. And, I don't know what I would have done if the ROTC, advanced ROTC class, hadn't been called into service, but, probably, something. Finishing college, at that point, was incidental to me.

KP: So, it sounds like, if you had not been called up, there was a good chance you would have enlisted. Is that accurate?

FK: Well, I was already enlisted in the Enlisted Reserve Corps. So, I don't know ... what the mechanics of that would have been. But, I would have desired to be a part of the military in that war. ... I couldn't ... even think about not doing my part.

KP: A number of people have said that they wanted to serve, but, they also wanted to finish college. Particularly, I think a lot of people in '44 and '45 realized that that was probably not going to happen, but, I think that was often expressed, particularly for '42 and '43. They wanted to go, but, they wanted to finish.

FK: Well, I guess, I would say I never thought I would, so, it never ... entered my thinking, one way or the other. I was just interested in when and how am I going to end up in the Army.

LM: Getting towards the subject of the military, the "Black Fifty" basic training at Fort McClellan, both your Carlisle interview and Crandon Clark's interview discuss how you felt that it was one of the best training experiences you received in the Army. You actually went through basic twice.

FK: ... We had a basic training that, I think, is superior to most that occurred in the Army, from that time up to the present. One of the reasons was that we went through six months of basic training in what was supposed to have been a thirteen-week course, when we started. It just happened, for some reason that was never explained to us, that we went through six or seven weeks of training in A Company of the Ninth Battalion, and they, suddenly, shut down that company and sent us to another one, B Company of the 14th Battalion, and we started over again. And, when we got to about six or seven weeks of training, the Army changed from thirteen weeks to seventeen weeks for basic, and then, we got to about our twelfth week and they transferred us all again to B Company of the 23rd Battalion. And, we lost a few more weeks of training. As a result, it took us six months to get through what had started out to be a thirteen-week course. Now, what has stuck with me ever since, through my entire army career, is the fact that, of the "Black Fifty," about forty of us became infantry platoon leaders in combat. That's the profession with the least life expectancy of anybody in the Army, or anywhere else. An infantry platoon leader just does not last. Not one of the "Black Fifty" was killed in World War II. And,

I give some of the credit for that to the training that we got as individual soldiers, for the time we were there, plus, then, you went through almost the same thing going through OCS. It was all, again, individual soldier training. And, when people talk about cutting basic training from thirteen weeks to twelve, or from, now, we have eight weeks of basic and eight weeks of advanced individual training, ... all the time I was in the Army, I was one who wanted to extend those periods, don't cut back. Well, of course, when money is a problem, the time gets cut off, we eliminate some of that training. Soldiers are not as well trained as I was when I got through my basic training course, and so, I have always just adhered to the demand for increasing the time spent in basic training. I think it pays off, in the long run, in better soldiers and, certainly, in more of them saving lives. We had a very excellent cadre of regular army people who put us through our basic training. And, one of my platoon sergeants, one that I remember to this day, was a New Jersey native from Morristown, I think, and ... he worked hard at making soldiers out of us. I've never forgotten the guy. Never saw him again, never heard from him again.

KP: Do you remember his name?

FK: Yeah, Bradshaw, Sergeant Bradshaw. And, I thought they did a very good job of preparing us as individual soldiers. I thought going to OCS was an experience. Again, our principal aim was to get through that thing without being washed out, and to become second lieutenants, so we could get on with going to war. I've been disappointed, ever since, when I look back at what I learned at OCS. To me, as a senior military officer, that was a disappointing period, because it, again, stressed individual qualification of me to become an officer knowing the basic requirements ... for a second lieutenant, but it didn't teach me leadership. It didn't teach me my responsibilities for the men who were going to serve under me. And, it wasn't until I realized, in later years, how much I didn't know when I took over the responsibility of running a platoon of men. ... I think my platoon and I, ... "We're all in this together and we're going to fight this war." But, nobody ever pointed out to me what I really was responsible for doing as a lieutenant platoon leader, and, suddenly, I became a company commander. All the other officers in my company were wounded and evacuated, or one of them got promoted. ... He went into the battalion headquarters, and so, I was ... the only officer left. I was the company commander. The responsibilities that I learned in later years, that I was accepting at that time, were never explained to me, I was never trained for [them]. I had to learn on the job.

KP: It sounds like you had the basic things you needed to know, but the leadership. What would you have done differently? What did you have to learn on the job, as a commander, that you have obviously looked back and said, "Why didn't anyone tell me about this?"?

FK: [laughter] I guess, instilling in me a sense of the responsibility that you have for the lives, the welfare, the well-being, of the men who are assigned under you. Your job is to assure their training, their preparation for going to war, the equipping of them, and the fact that they have sufficient resources to do the job that's been assigned to them. I never was given an understanding of the scope of that responsibility, either as a platoon leader and, certainly, not as a company commander. I feel as though I executed my job, in those days, as leading them, "Okay, we got to get to that town before dark tonight, and here's how we're going to do it," and off we would go. The details of things I should have thought about I learned about later, in the Army education system, as I went through the advanced courses, and the Command and General Staff

College, and those kinds of things. And, some of those things should have been taught to me, I thought, in OCS, and they weren't. I think the Army does a far better job today of preparing its leaders, its commanders, for those responsibilities, but, we really never got around to doing it right until after the Vietnam War, which we fought so atrociously with the personnel policies that we had imposed upon us at that time. ... It was in the 1970s that we really got serious about how to develop, and train, educate leaders in the Army. We started the non-commissioned officer education system in the 1970s. The Army was 200-years-old and it had never had an education system for its enlisted personnel, other than basic training. And, you could find people in the Army who had gone through basic training, never had another day's formal education of any kind, and were now master sergeants, first sergeants. They went to the highest ranks with no further schooling. Now, some went to motor maintenance courses, and some went to signal radio schools, and those kinds of things. And, some went to NCO academies, which local commanders, the division commander of the First Armored Division, or the corps commander of the 18th Airborne Corps, would have an NCO academy to teach non-commissioned officers how to be non-commissioned officers. But, that was a local thing, was not uniform across the Army, and, right there at Fort Bragg, if the 82nd Airborne Division was running an NCO academy, it didn't mean that any other troops sent people. It was only the division. Those kinds of things were inconsistencies in the education system until the 1970s, and in the past twenty, twenty-five years, we have really done so much better at educating the Army officer and NCO corps, it almost scares you to think back at what you didn't know when you had those responsibilities.

KP: I was very impressed at what America did during World War II, but, also, people have told me stories and I shudder to think how we ever won the war, because you alluded to, and historians have pointed this out, that, for example, second lieutenants did not have a long life expectancy, and some of that was sheer lack of preparedness. From what I have been told, you can only really get experience in combat, but, some of it really is, in fact, training.

FK: That's right.

KP: It is not strictly on the job, actual experience of combat.

FK: That's quite right. That's why I said, the basic training that we got, in our "Black Fifty" group, I think, had a lot to do with the fact that all of them came through alive. They were much better prepared as individual soldiers. ... What I think I lacked was leadership development. The identification of my responsibilities, and what I should know about taking care of troops, preparing them to go to war. My concern was preparing myself, and the plans for tomorrow's operations, or whatever, and not realizing what a responsibility I had to make sure that every man was ready to go do that tomorrow.

KP: When I interviewed some of the Marine officers from World War II and even some of the Marines who were enlisted, I get a real sense their officers were there to look out for them. It seemed to be imbued in them. I get the sense that you did not get that from your OCS training. In a sense, you are supposed to think of your men first.

FK: Right.

KP: Everything else was incidental.

FK: Well, I agree that the Marine Corps has created that kind of, almost an ambiance, ... throughout the force. That their officers are concerned with them being Marines, and them being prepared, how to do their job. I have always thought that the Marine Corps, at the higher levels, ... I don't know how to put this, doesn't take into consideration the requirements for being prepared to do a job, as well as the Army does. To give you the most graphic example of that is to look at the campaigns of General Douglas MacArthur, on one hand, and the casualties he did not suffer, compared to the Naval and Marine Corps efforts in Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, ... Tarawa, where they stormed the beaches, and had thousands of people killed, and MacArthur, conducting the same kind of war, island hopping and moving up on the west side of the Pacific, never had one of those occasions. ... He bypassed the enemy resistance and let it die on the vine behind him, where the Marines attacked head on, and they fought that way in Vietnam. Now, that's not something I'm going to let you put down on paper because, you know, I don't want to be cited as being critical of the Marine Corps, as compared to the Army. We get in enough trouble over those things. [laughter] But, ... the Marines have that feeling, that their officer corps takes care of their own, and they make a unit out of them, and once a Marine always a Marine, and they all believe it, and they really ... have a sense of loyalty that the Army has never been able to develop among its alumni personnel. ... They do a very good job of it and I admire them for it, but, when it comes to how to employ forces in wartime, I don't think they hold a candle to the Army leaders that we've had.

KP: After OCS training, you were first assigned to the 63rd Division, but, you said there was a real fear of washing out of OCS. How common was that?

FK: It was almost a daily concern. There were 200 men in our OCS Company when we started and, I think, we graduated 117, who got commissioned. The wash out rate was pretty high. ... You could be let go on the whim of a tac officer, almost, ... because, in those days, the demand for second lieutenants was not as great as it had been a year or so before, so that OCS faculties were becoming more selective in who they let get through. And so, you worried about it. In our "Black Fifty" group, only one guy didn't make it, and he went to Engineer OCS, and got his commission anyway. And, his was a personality problem with one tac officer. It's not because he wasn't qualified and capable as the rest of us, but, his tac officer took a disliking to him for reasons that, today, would ... result in an equal opportunity complaint. But, we didn't have such a thing in those days.

KP: You were first assigned to the 63rd Division. Can you talk about your first experiences as an officer and what you did in your daily routine?

FK: Well, I reported ten days after I graduated from OCS. My wife and I went on a rapid automobile trip and ... I ended up at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi, and she was back home in New Jersey. And then, I went looking for a place for her to live. My first priority was to find a place for her to live, not, what is your job in the 63rd Division. And, I didn't do very well. I found her a place to live that she spent one night in, and got herself a ride out of there, and found another place. [laughter] Which is the way I treated her when she came to Columbus, Georgia, also. She arrived in Columbus, and I had found a room for her, and she spent one night in that

one, and went looking for another one. But, it was my way of getting her there, I guess. ... I didn't have time to really look for a place. Anyway, the same thing at the place that I found for her to live ... in Woodville, Mississippi, and she left there after one night, and went to Natchez, and found a place there, fifty-two miles away. [Tape Paused] I reported into my unit and was assigned to Company E, 254th Infantry. I became a platoon leader, weapons platoon leader. My company commander was a first lieutenant, who was also an OCS graduate, but an early one. He graduated, got his commission about 1941, and had already been on a tour of duty in Alaska, and a tour of duty in the South Pacific, where he contracted malaria, and they shipped him back to the States, and so, he ended up as our company commander. And, we all thought a great deal of him, because of his combat experience, and ... he just looked and acted like a soldier that you wanted to go to war with. He was replaced by a new captain, who was assigned before we went overseas, who had been through OCS at about the same time, but he spent his whole time at Fort Benning, writing field manuals, instead of being out in the field and being in combat, the way the Lieutenant had. And, he sat at Fort Benning, got promoted to captain and came to us. And, there was a lot of resentment at the time, that our first lieutenant was not going to be our company commander. As it turned out, the other guy became a very good company commander, and we were all satisfied with the job he did, and he's the one who was promoted to be battalion executive officer, and I inherited the company from him over ... in France. We were engaged in routine kind of training, wasn't very interesting. You had a training program which said, "This morning, you will have field sanitation," and ... the company commander would assign one of the lieutenants to give a class in field sanitation. And, another company and another lieutenant's working on first aid, and another lieutenant's getting prepared to go to the range to fire your M-1 rifle. Not a lot of imagination went into those classes, not a lot of help from outside to get you prepared to do it right. And so, the training was kind of dismal, kind of mundane, routine, get through the training schedule kind of thing. Most of us, at the time, were more concerned with getting out of there at Saturday noon, after the Saturday morning inspection, so we could go home and spend the weekend with our wives, then we were getting ready for war. To me, again, it was principally training individuals to be soldiers. Now, I don't know what went on at the higher levels. Battalion and brigade level commanders might have had better training programs to get ready to go fight with, but, at the company level, it was not very imaginative, not very demanding, except, physically. We did a lot of marching, we did a lot of hiking, we did a lot of PT things, running the obstacle courses, and that kind of stuff, but, you didn't do a lot of thinking about how to employ fire, and maneuver with your platoon to capture a hill, or whatever.

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

[Tape two, side two, is blank for the first few moments.]

KP: ... Could you talk a little bit about your relationship with the first sergeant that served under you?

FK: ... In my first combat unit in the 63rd Division, my first sergeant, the first sergeant when I went in, was a regular Army soldier who had been in the Army all through the 1930s, was a most competent and capable non-commissioned officer. ... He had generated a respect among the rest of the enlisted ... compliment that was most admirable. I mean, ... in his presence, you realized how much the rest of the ... soldiers admired and respected him. ... He was a born leader, but, he

was ... one of those products of the 1930s who hadn't had much education, didn't qualify to be an officer. He was going to spend his Army career ... in the enlisted ranks, but, he had an inherent leadership capacity ... that was very impressive to me. He was the kind of man who, when we got into combat, you never knew when the first sergeant was going to appear and check on the men, and he felt a responsibility for assuring that this platoon leader was doing his job, but, he did it without saying so, without making it apparent that he was checking on the lieutenants. He was wounded and evacuated, and I missed him for about two months, and, was most grateful when he came back, because his replacements, during that period, didn't begin to measure up to what he was. And so, this is all part of my education of what a good non-commissioned officer was, and I was getting that on the job training also, 'cause nobody ever talked about the responsibilities of NCOs when I went through OCS.

KP: Really, no one discussed their role.

FK: No, it was not something that was part of the curriculum. Sergeants were those people who ... got you up in the morning and who made you do your jobs during the day. ... But, they are an essential part of a great army. ... We have the best non-commissioned officer corps in the world. No army has a non-commissioned officer corps comparable to ours. The British have something like it, but ... they're not nearly as good across the board. British sergeant majors are famous professionals, but, ... on the whole, their NCO corps doesn't measure up to ours, 'cause it doesn't have the kind of education system that we have. ... After the Berlin Wall came down, and after the Soviet Union collapsed, and we began to have contact with the Russians, and the Russian Army, and so forth, ... the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs invited his counter-part from the Russian military forces to come over here and visit. ... He took him to places like Fort Knox, Fort Hood, Texas, and, at the end of three days of traveling around and visiting our army, this guy's first observation was, ... he was not impressed with our tanks, and our armored personnel carriers, and our field artillery pieces, and all those things, which he could compare easily to his own army. He was impressed with the non-commissioned officers of the United States Army, and did not believe that these were not really officers who, for the day, had put on enlisted clothing to give classes, ... to make presentations, to do all the things that we let our NCOs do. He did not believe that, but, he said, if it's true, that that's the most impressive thing he saw in his visits to the United States armed forces. Now, that's because we recognized, we in the Army, ... twenty-five years ago, the need for this education system that we started, NCOES it's called, and we now train and educate the NCOs the same way we do the officer corps, and you have a quality of professionalism that's the best we've had in 225 years, and better than any other in the world. ... Again, I go to the Persian Gulf War. The performance of the officers and the NCOs in that war is what pulled off the kind of success that we had. So, ... I'm a great admirer of the non-commissioned officers of the Army.

LM: I read in your file at Carlisle that, in speaking about your relationship with the enlisted troops, you learned, first hand, what they appreciated, what they identified with, what they respected, and what they needed.

FK: Sure

LM: How do you feel you were able to perceive this so well?

FK: Well, [laughter] if you listened to this presentation here, just a couple of minutes ago, the complaints you get from people who were enlisted men, okay, I was an enlisted man for almost two years. I saw the officer corps functioning, or disfunctioning, as the case may be. ... Of course, I did the same thing when I was a kid, watching the National Guard organization. I came to know what a good officer was and what a poor officer was, and, having two years of experience as an enlisted man, you gain a great appreciation of what an officer ought to be, how he ought to function, and how he ought to conduct himself, and that's a part of my on the job education that I thought was very important. ... I don't think I ever lost an appreciation for ... the enlisted man's viewpoint of what we're doing and how we're doing it. ... I think it's a good thing for anybody to have experienced. We don't run the Army that way. We give commissions to kids, ... ROTC graduates, who have very little experience in the enlisted ranks. It's going through summer camp, but that's, really, a training period, not serving in the enlisted ranks in the Army. We graduate kids from West Point and they're second lieutenants immediately, and then, we send them to basic officer's course, where we try to teach them to be officers in the Army, but, they've never experienced the viewpoint of the ... enlisted men. I don't know how you would ever do that. You can't afford two years of enlisted service for everybody who's going to be a lieutenant, or, at least, we don't think we can. So, not everybody benefits from the kind of introduction that I had into the Army, and I've always thought it was a good one. ... I wouldn't trade those two years service in my Army education for any other two years, in so far as preparing me for ... being a professional officer.

KP: One of the most vivid memories for the people I interview, even though they expected the officers to have some privileges, a lot of men resented the privileges officers got that did not seem commiserate to their rank and responsibility. Some felt that the officers took care of their own needs before the needs of their men. They still carry this anger with them after fifty years. It seems that you have reflected a lot upon the fact that these privileges come at the cost of greater responsibility toward your men.

FK: That's right. That's the way it should be. But, I would suspect that you'll find, in civilian life, people who are dissatisfied with the hierarchy at Rutgers University [laughter] because of the same kinds of thing. The professors who have certain perks are not just envied, but they are disliked, because of that. Now, a lot of them deserve being disliked, the same way a lot of Army officers deserved being disliked. In World War II, with ... the expansion of the Army, and the number of people who had to be pulled into the officer corps, you can understand that a hell of a lot of mistakes were made, and we had people who shouldn't have been, and they created these kinds of feelings among a lot of the enlisted personnel, because they ... exploited their prerogatives and their perks and did not accept the responsibilities that came with it. ... The problem of ... the perks of the CEO of a corporation, compared to the underlings, is always a problem in our ... system of doing things. ... I have thought that the perks that the senators and congressmen get are sometimes beyond the pale, when I used to have to help provide them. [laughter] These guys would come on their junkets around the world, when I was stationed in Bangkok for two years. ... That's the favorite spot of congressmen who have to go out and investigate, and the demands they made on ... those who were responsible for helping them in-country, you know, down to ... specifying the kind of bottle of scotch that they wanted in their room. ... You know, Bangkok's not necessarily the place that you find every brand of scotch that

the congressman might drink. Those kinds of things are perks that go with the position, and, if you don't have people who do that responsibly, you're going to get complaints, ... and, understandably. ... I know, because there are, ... [in] World War II in particular, a lot of people who served in the enlisted ranks ... who refused to become officers, because they didn't want to be classed with that kind of ... people.

KP: I have had several people tell me that. Some of them were very bitter about their officers, although many of them have enormous respect for the officers they felt did a good job in command.

FK: ... It's true today, to some extent, but, not nearly the extent that it used to be, and I think that the officer corps, as a whole, is much better in that regard, today, than they used to be. The perks are not nearly what they were at one time. ... When I was the commander in Europe, I was visited by a former commander who had been there fifteen, eighteen years before I was. He couldn't believe that I couldn't take my helicopter and go off on a hunting trip for the weekend. That's what he always did. The Air Force commander in Stuttgart ... used to spend half of his weekends, in the summertime, in Scotland, and he'd just take an airplane, fly over to Scotland, and spend the weekend at a golf resort, and return, free flight. A training flight for him in his aircraft. You don't see that. It doesn't happen anymore. ... I did not have that kind of a perk associated with my duties. A lot of people used to think it wasn't justified to do that. I mean, we didn't get paid enough. ... For the responsibilities we had, we ought to have those perks. [laughter] And, I could write a paper about that, too.

KP: Oh, I can imagine. One of the things Lynn was able to find in your file at Carlisle was a diary you kept during World War II. It was very precise, you did not waste a lot of words, and it is very understandable. You talked about the number of officers you lost. I just want to read some of it for the record, "In a company of 187 men, there are forty-four original men left, sixteen of whom were wounded and returned. The forty-four include fifteen administration men, who did no fighting. Twenty-nine fighting men remained. Fifteen officers had been in the company, six are left, two of whom never saw combat as officers."

FK: I don't even remember writing that. [laughter] ...

KP: You entered in the later part of the war and, for that time period, those are staggering figures.

FK: ... We went over with about 200 men. I don't know where I got that 187 figure. 220 men, I think, total, twenty of whom were supernumeraries, that is, they were a built in replacement team that you had on hand when you went into combat. Now, those twenty guys were taken away from us when we landed and they were reassigned to other units, because they needed infantry replacements. So, we're down to 200, right there. We had over 660 ... men, and officers, assigned to that company during the next ... five months, I guess, of combat. That's a three time turnover of the entire company. Now, some of them were there for the whole time. I was the one, out of fifteen officers, who was there from start to finish. The other fourteen included the one who was promoted and reassigned to the battalion headquarters. One of those officers was wounded, and returned to the unit in about three or four weeks, and was wounded again and

gone. When the war ended, there were only two of us on duty ... in the company. ... We got a couple assigned, shortly thereafter, but, only two of us, out of the fourteen, I think, were there. So, I was ... there with five others when we started. Those five all went and eight more, nine more, came and went, only one of whom was still there when the war ended. So, that's the kind of turnover of lieutenants, and turnover of infantry riflemen, that you have when you're engaged in that kind of a war. ... Lots of those are non-combat kind of casualties. They get sick, and they go home, and don't come back, get wounded and evacuated, and don't come back, and the 600 included a lot of people who went and came back, and so, they're counted twice, sort of. It's not 660 different individuals, it's 660 men who were assigned on what's called the morning report, during that time, some of whom were returnees. But, ... that's a big turnover of people, and the officers, some of them lasted one or two days, some of them lasted longer, but, nobody lasted the whole damned war, except one lieutenant, me. I mean, he came, he was the first replacement we got as an officer, and he and I were the ones who went, then, for the rest of the war, as the company commander and the executive officer. He was my number two guy. ... One of my sergeants, I nominated him for a battlefield commission, and he was sent to the rear, and became a second lieutenant, about a five-day training period, or something they did with them back there, and he got his second lieutenant's bars, and came back to join me the day we were attacking the Siegfried Line. ... He joined the company, and I was leading him up to his platoon, and we came under artillery fire, and he got hit in the knee [laughter] and was evacuated. Never had another day's duty as a second lieutenant in combat. He was out of there and I never saw him again. He's one guy I still have contact with. He lives up in Massachusetts, and I write to him, and we exchange Christmas cards, and things like that. But, he was not there one day. I had another lieutenant who came, and I got three of them in at one time, and I wanted the best one to be my old platoon leader. He was going to take my place with my weapons platoon, and I picked this guy out, assigned him to the weapons platoon. He went down there and, ... on the second night, we came under artillery fire, and he just went to pieces. ... He was a mental casualty at that moment. Had to evacuate him through medical channels. He ended up ... assigned to the cadre at a prisoner of war camp back there, spent his war guarding prisoners. He just did not have the mental fortitude to be a lieutenant in combat.

KP: You had picked him.

FK: ... I knew he was going to be the guy. ... He just looked and acted like he's going to be a great combat lieutenant. So, I assigned him to that company, and then, the first artillery fire he heard was ... all it took. ... He took off running. I think, somebody had to catch him, back in the rear area. [laughter] But, ... they never tried to assign him again. ...

KP: The second lieutenant you stayed in touch with, did he stay in the Army?

FK: No, he did not.

KP: Do you know his name?

FK: Sure. His name's John C. Whitney. He worked for Triple M his entire career, I think.

KP: Did you stay in touch continually?

FK: No, off and on. ... You don't stay in touch, but, I belong to the 63rd Infantry Division Association, alumni of World War II, a wonderful bunch of people. ... They still associate themselves with this division. They still have annual reunions, and ... [it was] in San Diego, last year. It'll be in Rochester, New York, next year. They had one, two or three years ago, in the Adirondack Mountains, and I went. I don't go to all of them. I go only when they're on the East Coast, and I belong to so many, from so many different wars, that ... I pick one a year, maybe. Anyway, when ... you're thinking about going to one of these reunions, you read the list of guys who are signed up, or people who send in notes, or send in changes of address, and you run across somebody you knew, and, maybe, you write him a letter. Well, ... I did that with this guy Whitney. I lost track of him for years, and then, found him again through the Association's newsletter, and wrote him a letter, and, ... now, we correspond at Christmas, anyway. But, that's the way you ... re-institute a contact with people you've known. I expect, when they come back to Rochester, New York, for their reunion next year, I guess in 1999, I'm going to get the roster of all ... my company who I knew, from the early days at Camp Van Dorn, who live in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and write to them, and say, "We're going to have one last reunion. I expect you to be there." [laughter]

KP: When I started this project, I asked several military historians what questions I should ask. Omar Bartov, an Israeli veteran of the Yom Kippur War, said, "Simply ask them what their most vivid memory is." What is your most vivid combat memory of World War II?

FK: I haven't thought about things like that, ... 'cause there are so many vivid memories, but, most of them are the personal kind. I told you about the lieutenant who was wounded and I had to take over his platoon. The company commander said to me, "Okay, you've got two platoons now. Go up and take care of Danny's platoon and you're still the weapon's platoon leader, also." That guy returned to us, two or three weeks later, and company commander called me back to the CP, and said, "Take him up to his platoon." We were in the town of Jebsheim, in the Colmar area of France, and so, I led him back to where his platoon was, but, in going there, we came to a fork in the road. ... I said, "Come on upstairs in this house and ... I'll show you where your platoon extension is, where to find all your men." And, you'll have a better idea from up here on the second floor, and we were in a window, with the blinds turned so you could just see through the cracks, and we're standing there elbow-to-elbow when a machine gun fired through that damned window and hit him again. [laughter] ... He never got back to his platoon even. ... It almost took his right arm off, and I was standing shoulder-to-shoulder with him, and nothing, never a scratch, and he was gone again. Never came back that time, he was wounded that badly. So, I remember things like that.

KP: That is pretty close.

FK: I remember, in the Siegfried Line, my company was the initial attacking unit of the Seventh Army, going into the Siegfried Line, and we fought all day, and we were out of ammunition. ... We were hit by a counter-attack by the Germans, who were trying to retake ... we had captured about six pillboxes and driven the Germans out of them, and they counter-attacked us, and we had driven them off. ... People kept sending me messages, you know, a runner would come from second platoon, say, "We're all out of ammunition. We can't hang on to this position." ... The

first platoon leader sent somebody back to tell me the same thing. Third platoon leader came himself. All of them were, "We're just hanging out here." ... So, I finally had to decide. Okay, there's a company that was following me into this attack, and he was right behind me, and I got a hold of that company commander and said, "I'm gonna have to pull my men out of here, and we'll fall back into your position, and we'll just have to retake them tomorrow, I guess, 'cause the Germans will come back in there." Well, I pulled my company out, the Germans never attacked again. Six pillboxes, and three hundred meters of the Siegfried Line, left empty for the night, nobody in it. ... It's one of those things. I could have been relieved from command for ... stupidity with which I pulled my company out of a position that the Germans didn't even attack. But, I thought it was the only thing to do, at the time. I remember that kind of thing, and I can tell you almost the same kinds of stories about three of the other lieutenants who I was standing next to, or walking with, at the time that they were hit, and evacuated, and I never saw them again, and I didn't get hit.

KP: So, there is an element of luck.

FK: That's right. Absolutely. If I had been on the other side. ... The first four of the five officers in my company who were wounded, I was as close to any of them as I am to you, all of them, and closer to three of them, I guess. I was ... on the second floor of a house one night, and we were watching for the Germans out in the ... distance, ... the second platoon leader was up there, and I called up to him, and I said, "I'm coming up to relieve you." So, he turned and headed back for the stairway, and I was going up the stairs, and we met at the top of the stairs, and machine gun fire came through, ... and we're standing right there, crossing at the top of the steps. He got hit and I didn't. ... I never saw him again. I've talked to him on the telephone. He lives in Texas. ... That's just the way things happen in combat, and I didn't get a scratch there. I was wounded once ... in every war, but, never seriously.

LM: As an officer, how did you handle death in combat, particularly in relationship to the men?

FK: I guess I would say, what you do is ... create a shell of, not indifference, at all, but, one in which you ... sort of portray that this is something we have to accept. This is something that occurs in combat, and we do our best to evacuate this man, and take care of his things, and you create, among the living, the idea that, if it happens to them, we'll take care of ... what has to be done, and do it properly. You cannot ... allow yourself to be overcome, emotionally, when those things happen. There is an awful lot of emotional ... reaction from the guy who was his best buddy, or the one who was with him when he got killed, and you have to deal with that, make him feel better about it, I guess, if there's a way to do that. Consoling him, but, not letting it overwhelm the whole unit. Probably, my worst experience, in that regard, was when one of my sergeants in my old weapons platoon was captured by the Germans, and, ... I think he was captured in the Siegfried Line, or someplace like that, and was taken by this German unit to a town that we, then, captured from them the next day. I'm not sure of the timing of all this, but, anyway, as we ... came into the town, some of my men got to the main street of the town and they saw the Germans loading up in a truck to take off in the other direction. ... This sergeant was with them, at the time, and, when they got on the truck, they pushed him back with ... a rifle with a bayonet on it, pushed him back into the street, and shot him, and killed him, and my men saw that. ... It was a terribly ... emotional thing, for them, to see Tommy Gierloch lying in the street,

just having been shot in cold blood ... by the Germans who had captured him. I had trouble, a week or so later, when we captured a German who was carrying Gierloch's carbine, a young kid, couldn't have seventeen years old. ... He'd obviously just been issued this thing, but I had men who were determined to kill that kid, and I had to get him out of there, and save his life, somehow, ... because I couldn't let them do that. But, some of them were determined, gonna get revenge, regardless of how ... proper it was, or honest. ... They knew, also, that this kid probably hadn't had a damn thing to do with [his death], but they didn't know that. ... We didn't know who fired the shot. ... That's a traumatic kind of experience that you aren't prepared for.

KP: It is probably one of the reasons why you were such a good officer, the fact that you could detach yourself in these circumstances, which must have been very difficult.

FK: Sure, very hard thing to do, on many occasions, ... 'cause you lose a lot of good people. ... There's always, "What might we have done differently?" Second-guessing the circumstances, and all that kind of thing. Always, it occurs to you, and you have to be able to deal with that.

KP: You fought through one of the worst European winters of the century. I have heard and read that it made life on the line just miserable. Staying warm was as great a challenge as fighting the enemy.

FK: That's why I've always said that infantry combat is an animal existence, and it really is. ... You are existing out there. ... Of course, we didn't know that the weather in Germany was the worst it's ever been, [laughter] for that winter, but, it was. We had snow cover from November to the middle of March, and we lived in the snow. That's a tough thing to do. We got in houses, once in a while. ... We'd capture a town and stay in houses over night, but, you lived ... out in the woods a lot, and lived in foxholes. ... Never had a tent. Nobody ever carried tents. You'd just build a shelter out of your shelter-half, or you tried to find something to exist in. Never had a shower, ... from December to March. We had showers set up when ... we went through our first period of combat, and the division bath and shower unit got set up in an area that we could get to and take a shower, and that was in December, just before we moved into the Colmar area. ... I had a shower in December and I never had another one until, ... I guess, in the month of March, the end of March. We captured the city of Mannhiem, ... and my battalion was taken out of the line, and we were put on duty. ...

----------END TAPE TWO SIDE TWO----------

FK: In Mannheim, these targets were ... the local banks and headquarters of some of their factories, industrial targets that our intelligence, and our industry people, were interested in. So, my company was assigned to a hotel for our quarters, for the time we were there. And, we just kind of pulled MP duty for one week. And, we lived in this hotel that was completely furnished with white sheets, and hot water showers, and a complete wine cellar, that we made use of. And, one of my soldiers put seven sheets on a bed. He said, "If I'm here for a week, I'm going to have clean sheets every night." [laughter]

KP: You, in fact, mentioned it in your diary, about a hotel.

FK: I don't remember that darn diary. Where did that come from?

KP: You deposited it in Carlisle. Let me show it to you. It might trigger some more memories.

FK: This is a copy of a notebook I had that I kept, by the day, and I lost the notebook and I don't ... know how you ever got this.

LM: I just happened to find it. It was loose in a file.

KP: It was very helpful for us.

FK: That's a find that I'm very pleased with. You've got to give me a copy.

KP: We would be glad to.

FK: Good. Okay. [laughter]

KP: This continues an interview with General Frederick J. Kroesen, on March 16, 1998, with Kurt Piehler and

LM: Lynn Marley

LAM: and Leigh Mahr

FK: And, we're in our third hour. [laughter]

KP: For the record, I managed to tape over a small portion of tape two, side one, which I have never done before, but, there is always a first time for everything. We left off talking about how happy you were to get in that hotel where the solider put seven sheets down on his bed. How about meals and hot food? How often would you and your men get a hot meal on the line?

FK: Well, I had a very good mess sergeant. His name was Anderson, from Portland, Maine. ... He was determined to feed our troops whenever it was possible. ... I could almost guarantee that when darkness fell, Andy was going to show up somewhere with marmite cans full of something to eat, hot chow. Now, he couldn't do it every night, but, he was very good about it, and so, we would almost be sure of one hot meal a day at night. Then, we existed, the rest of the time, on K-rations and C-rations, which get to be an old menu in short order, ... but, they keep you alive. Nobody gains weight in combat. ... Most days in combat are not anything happening, even when we traveled as far as we did, from mid-France all the way around through the ... Saarland and the Rhineland, and down through Baden-Wurttemberg, and into Bavaria, to the Danube River. It's a lot of territory that you cover. Most of it, I think, we did by walking. Obviously, we didn't, but, we certainly walked a lot of it. On those days when ... you weren't moving, my mess sergeant always had at least one, maybe two, hot meals. Always tried to serve breakfast, always tried to serve a meal at night, and the noontime meal was always a C-ration, or a K-ration, whatever you had, D-ration. D-ration was a chocolate bar only. Hard chocolate, but, it was pretty good. I

mean, ... it was a good chocolate. ... I think we ate pretty well, for the conditions we were living under.

KP: It sounds like you had a very good mess sergeant.

FK: Yeah, I did. I had ... other good mess personal. I mean, they came with him. When he brought the chow forward, they were ready to dish it out. There were enough of them who took care of the troops. ... They would take mess kits back with them, and wash them, and so forth. Kinds of things that they didn't have to do. ... See, that's one of the things I learned from experience, not because I was taught that this is the way a mess sergeant ought to operate, ought to support the troops, which, I think, lieutenants and captains should have expected, been taught to expect that, been taught to demand that their mess sergeants do that. But, not all of them did.

KP: It almost sounds like you knew your job, but, you were not aware of how everything fit together almost. For example, mess sergeants should be doing this, this, and this, and, how warm meals were very important, from what people told me, when you were on the line.

FK: That's right.

KP: It was one of the things that could be done for you, and if it was done for you, people remembered it fifty years afterwards.

FK: Yep, and I think we did it pretty well, in my company. ... Again, I don't have much to compare it to, because I never served in those other companies. ... I had the feeling that my mess sergeant was doing it better than the others were.

KP: One of the things historians focused on, in World War II in particular, was unit cohesion. Tied to that, often, was the replacement system. I would be curious about your comments and your thoughts, particularly on how your unit operated with the replacement system, not only in the enlisted ranks, but, also, you talked about a number of lieutenants who just did not make it for various reasons. Some were just standing in the wrong spot, but, some because they could not handle it.

FK: We went overseas with a company that had ... trained together at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. So, all the men knew each other, and we went as a unit. ... We had developed a cohesion among the men who knew each other, respected each other, and you hoped that everybody was with the people he wanted to go to war with. You know, I learned later, I used to tell everybody in training your unit, you want to be sure that you trained those people so that they are willing to go to war with each other. Well, we had that, I think, because we trained as a unit back in the United States, and we went over as a unit. I have, ever since, been an advocate of unit replacement, instead of individual replacement. However, the unit replacement system requires some kind of fill, when you are fighting the kind of war we did in World War II, because the causality rate is so high. So, we had to have individual replacements come in. ... I've already recounted, we had over six hundred people assigned to that one company in six months. ... Now, a much better way of doing it, for combat purposes, cohesion purposes, whatever, would be that when a platoon loses one-third of its strength, or something, needs ten replacements, needs

twelve replacements, pull that platoon out of the line, send it back to the rear, let them get twelve guys in, let them train together, let them become acquainted, let them unify again, and then, bring them back. Our army has never afforded itself the manpower totals that would allow you to do that. And so, we always sustain ourselves in combat by bringing in new men as individuals, to fill in the place of ... the ones who've been evacuated, or whatever. ... One of the things I've always said to my non-commissioned officers, "The worst job you have, the most demanding job you have, is to be able to get three replacements into your squad tonight and fight with them tomorrow morning." Somehow, you have to incorporate them in your squad, your platoon, so that they are satisfied that, "Here is who I'm going to go to war with." That is a very difficult job, and, when casualties are high, it's even more difficult, and becomes almost impossible when the sergeant is the guy who's gone. ... You have to replace him, and have that new man bring in three new guys, and organize a squad that has some unity, and some self-esteem, I suppose, self-appreciation, that they can do the job in the morning. That's a very difficult thing to do. Now, other armies, the Soviet Army in particular, does not have a unit replacement system. They put a unit in combat and it goes until it is expended, and then, they replace it with another unit coming forward. ... They do this at division level, and so, the division goes in and, as it has casualties, it coalesces, becomes smaller, continues with its mission until it is decimated to a degree that it just doesn't function, and they bring in another division behind it. That's why the Soviet Army had two hundred and twenty divisions. The American Army's never had more than ninety, even in World War II. ... So, it's a different system. Now, their system provides for the unit cohesion among those who have not yet been committed, and are always committed, as units. We don't do that, but ... I have always been an advocate of the unit replacement system, in so far as it's possible in our army. ... We have gotten to the point of maintaining units as a whole. In Bosnia, for example, the First Armored Division went and, after one year, it came out and was replaced by another unit, another division. In the old days, that division flag would have stayed and a whole bunch of new people would have been brought in. We fought the Vietnam War that way. The division, in Vietnam, after the first year, there was no cohesion, because the whole bunch of replacements came in, and that division was built on replacement people being assigned, and then, one-twelfth of them disappeared every month, and ... ten percent of the division would be replaced, or more, every month. You had no unit cohesion, because these guys were leaving next month and these guys had just arrived. It's a terrible way to run a combat organization. And, those who were responsible for the one-year tour, and the rotation of individuals into units, while the units remained, did a terrible disservice to the Army. I mean, we destroyed the non-commissioned officer corps of the United States Army after three years of the Vietnam War, because of the way we rotated them as individuals. And, the NCOs got out, rather than face themselves with continual return to Vietnam. Some of those guys came home, and then, nine months later, they were on orders to go back again. If they were infantrymen, or engineers, or signal corps, or medical people, they were faced early with repetitive tours, and so, they got out, rather than stay in. We had to go into, what we called, instant NCO courses, and the honor graduates of the basic training courses were kept on for six more weeks and made instant non-commissioned officers. ... The honor graduates of those people became E-6s, staff sergeants, instead of buck sergeants, because they were the top of their classes. And, they went, then, directly to Vietnam, no experience as non-commissioned officers, no experience in the Army, and, by 1968, we were fighting that war with brand new second lieutenants out of OCS, like Lt. Calley, who became famous at My-Lai, with brand new helicopter pilots, fresh out of helicopter training at Fort Rucker, draftees right out of basic training, and some poor lieutenant colonel who

had to make due with that kind of clientele to fight a war. ... It was not a high-class organization by 1968, because we just destroyed it from within, almost.

KP: One of the things I was going to ask you about was rotation, because that has been very controversial. My understanding of it is that the rotation system was born out of the notion, in World War II particularly, for units that had been in so long that morale declined. There was the view that men could only take so much combat, and you get to the point where men will either crack, mentally, or, they will develop a very fatalistic attitude and hope for the million dollar wound. The rotation, particularly in the Korean War, was born out of that effort to institute a reform that would prevent that exhaustion, but, it sounds like it had, from what you are conveying, real negative consequences for the Army.

FK: Yes, the individual replacement system, I think, does have ...

KP: The one-year rotation.

FK: Yes. The one-year rotation was bad ... for a number of reasons, one of which is that, as soon as a guy got over the hump, after six months, you know, all he thought about was that date of when he could leave, instead of the job that had to be done. In World War II, we were in for the duration. We went overseas and we were there for the duration. Nobody thought of rotation. The Army actually had a rotation policy, but, nobody knew about it, and the rotation was, after two-and-half years, you got home. My father-in-law went to England in 1942, early '42, and they rotated him home in 1945 because of his length of service over there. He was an Air Force officer who was too old to fly. He'd flown in World War I, and so, they made him an administrative officer, and he served in England for two-and-half years, and then, they rotated him home, because of this rotation policy. But, ... none of us knew that and nobody really cared.

KP: You expected to be there for the duration.

FK: That's right, we were there for the duration. And, in the infantry, that really meant you were there until you get wounded and evacuated, or until you get killed, or until the war ends, one of those three choices. Some people tried to accelerate the wound situation. Trench foot was a major problem for us, and I had men ... who tried to contract trench foot. I mean, ... they did contract it through their own doings. I mean, they just never dried their feet, never changed their socks. They just waited for their feet to rot, and then, complained to the medics and got evacuated. I had a couple of them that I caught doing that. ... I couldn't stop it, but I tried, and a couple ... got away with it. So, that's the kind of hope that people live with in combat, for the right kind of wound to get evacuated that won't result in maiming you for life, or something.

KP: I'll let Leigh talk about Michael Doubler's book about the Army's ability to learn.

LAM: One of the things I read was that, for American troops fighting against the Germans, the terrain, forest, snow, and the cold left the Germans better prepared. Do you feel that the German soldiers were more prepared, or that you were not trained enough to be able fight in a forest-type situation, with the snow and the cold?

FK: Germans are very good soldiers, and Germans had very good training systems for the individual solider. The German people are a very dedicated and organized society. So, they play by the rules. It's true even today. Driving on the autobahn, you have to realize that every German driver understands what his rights are, and you don't cross them, because he's demanding of his rights. That's the way they do things. That's the way their army, that's the way their soldiers did things in World War II. They [were] very conscientious about being soldiers, and so, they gave a good account of themselves at all times, almost all times. Nevertheless, I have written articles about [the] comparison of American soldiers with those of the rest of the world, and I don't think we take a back seat to any of them, in both the capabilities and the soldiering qualities of those who serve in our armed forces. I cite examples of times at which American soldiers and German soldiers came face to face and, ninety percent of the time, it's the American soldiers who come out on top. I was very gratified, within the last couple of years, to read a book, the title of which is, When the Odds Were Even. It's a story about the American Army's fight through the Vosges Mountains, through Alsace-Lorraine, which I was a part of. ... This author has gone to great lengths to identify all the units that took part in the war, at that time. The Vosges Mountains are an area that ... had never in history been captured by an enemy army and, anyway, to make a long story short, his story short, he establishes in there that, when the odds were even, the Americans had no trouble coming out on top. ... This was a theater of war in which all of our advantages that people cite, about air power, and those kind of things, we didn't have in the Vosges Mountains. We were an army that was way down on the list of priorities, because the army up in Ardennes area, and the army up in the northern part, got ... much more in the way of replacements, and supplies, and artillery ammunition, and those things. So, ... this author felt that the odds were even there, both armies, and ... the American soldier really came out on top because of his own personal qualities, compared to those of the enemy. And, as I said, that was a very gratifying thing for me to read. I've been in correspondence with that author ever since, because I appreciated what he did. I wrote the same kind of an article that was published in Army magazine one time, about the comparison of the soldiers that I've seen in the world, and I'll take the American, and explained why I would.

KP: It is also a point that Steve Ambrose has made, particularly in D-Day, very explicitly, that democracy can produce some of the best soldiers in the world. And, Michael Doubler, in a recent book, made the point that the American soldier starts out with something positive, but, he claims what made the American Army distinctive was its ability to learn lessons in wartime. Although there is an element of rigidity in actual combat, in Europe, the American Army had a remarkable ability to adapt even to mountain fighting, including the Vosges Mountains.

FK: That's right. ... The versatility of the American solider comes through in stories like that. ... It's principally because we allow people to make decisions, and take action, on their own initiative. In fact, I teach that as a requirement of leadership, that you tell people what has to be done, don't tell them how to do it. They will figure out the best way, and you rely upon their initiative, and their willingness, and their abilities, to get a job done. And, I think our army functions, very much, that way, from top to bottom, despite what you hear about the battalion commanders who are afraid to let company commanders make a decision. There are those who want to make all the decisions, and who over control. ... The famous squad leader in the sky identification of some of the people who fought in Vietnam, the battalion commanders who got in a helicopter, and over flew a combat action, and tried to tell every squad leader on the ground

what to do. Well, you can't fight wars that way. I mean, it destroys the initiative of the troops on the ground who are, then, looking back over their shoulder, waiting for somebody to tell them not only what to do, but how to do it, and when to do it, and so, nothing gets done. The American Army, on the whole, operates on the principle that, "Okay, that man's a squad leader. He has proven in the past his capabilities. He got promoted to that job, and appointed to that job, because he has demonstrated an ability to be a squad leader. Now, let's let him make the decisions that are appropriate to squad level, even when we get in a crisis, even when we get in a combat situation." And, when we trained the NCO corps, and the officer corps, to function that way, we have this initiative being shown, and you have the versatility out there that is required of a combat operation. And, it's the reason that something like the Persian Gulf War could be fought the way it was, very good plans and very good preparation. When the combat action started, ... you had tank platoon commanders, and company commanders, and battalion commanders, who were able to take advantage of the situation they found themselves in and do the best thing. Maybe not always the best thing, but, something that was better than doing nothing and waiting to be told from on high what to do and how to do it. ... I think that's the kind of the thing the American Army has ... that makes it superior to all other armies in the world.

KP: What did you think of the enemy, the Germans? In a sense, it is a very obvious question, but it sounds like you had great concern that the young German prisoner of war was not executed, where you could have easily looked the other way.

FK: Well, I guess I appreciate all soldiers. Anybody who is engaged in that pursuit of winning combat operations has my sympathy. I was always admiring of the punishment the Germans could take and still hang together, and still function, and still fight. I lost my last man, as a combat casualty, in the town of Leipheim, Germany, which is on the Danube River. We arrived at the Danube River on April 29th, or April 30th, of 1945, crossed the river, and the Germans blew the bridge as we were approaching it, but they didn't have enough explosives to blow it properly. So, we could still walk across the bridge, couldn't drive anything over there. My company went over, occupied the town of Leipheim, driving the Germans out, and I'm dammed if they didn't counter attack, with a couple of tanks, and some infantrymen, eight days before the war was officially ended, and, for all practical purposes, it was already over. ... Yet, dammed if they didn't come at us with a counter-attack that caused one of my men to be wounded and evacuated, badly, on that day of the war, all because of a dumb soldier with him. They were in a building, and saw these tanks coming down the street, and this guy with a BAR, Browning Automatic Rifle, got in the window, and unloaded on that tank. He hadn't the slightest chance of doing any damage to it, but, he fired away at that tank. The tank commander put his gun around on top of the windowsill and fired in the window. You know, that's just stupidity, but, ... those are the kinds of things that make war what it is, and I lost the last couple of men there. But, that's the Germans, the discipline of the German Army. It is a phenomenon to behold and they had it. ... By this time, these are old men and young boys who are all that's left for the Germans to fight with. But, they had been indoctrinated and trained to a degree that allowed them to launch this counter-attack against us. Didn't go anywhere, they never made any progress with it, you know, they were dead in the water when they started, but, they were still willing to do it. So, I had respect for the German Army, and still do. I mean ... the more history I have read about the kinds of things they put up with in their attack into Russia, and the way they fought on the Western Front, right up to the Siegfried Line time, in particular, they were still very effective fighting

forces. Things started to go down hill for them after we got through the Siegfried and, certainly, after we crossed the Rhine. ... It was an army falling apart over there, but, it was still an army that was functioning.

KP: How often, when you were on the line, would you encounter a chaplain, and, how often could you hold religious observances?

FK: You mostly held religious services when there was a lull, and I said, you know, most of the time, you're not fighting. You might be moving, but, most of the time, you are not fighting. So, usually, you could count on a chaplain showing up on Sunday. Sometime, he would be having a service somewhere, somehow. Attendance, I would say, spotty at best. Most of the men, when they had the opportunity, would rather rest than go to a chapel service. ... A lot of them took advantage of it, a lot of them would go. It was a personal choice kind of thing, and I never made an issue of it, one way or the other. We ... had a couple of very good chaplains in my battalion and we had one that I did not think much of. We had one who you could count on to be there in a combat situation, the Jewish chaplain, and we had one that you knew you would never see when anybody was fighting. When there was any shooting going on, he was not going to be there. You learn these things over time. [laughter] So, I just left it to the men. ... I would hope that they knew when the services were going to be held, but, ... I left that kind of thing to the first sergeant, and my executive officer, and they notified the men when and where, and people went, if they wanted to. I mostly did not go to anything like that, because, the one chaplain that I had was of my faith, and so, I had no faith in him, whatsoever. [laughter] So, I would rather not attend his services.

KP: Marshall, who I am sure you have read, argued that a staggering number of men never fired their weapons in combat. How accurate was he, in terms of your unit? Is, in fact, the firing ratio as low as he claims in World War II? I think he claimed it was one out of five.

FK: Yeah, I know. ... I do not agree with his statistics. Even though, I know a lot of people went through that whole war, never fired their weapon, in my company. But, as a percentage, I don't think it was very high. If we were in a combat situation, I never worried about enough of my rifles firing, or my machine guns firing, to accommodate the enemy. Now, I have no way of counting, or have any knowledge of, how many did or didn't fire. I can only tell you that, when we needed rifle fire, we had it. We got enough of it. ... I know what Marshall found out, but, I think his statistics are very suspect, and have been proven so by other inquirers.

KP: There has been a lot of controversy about it. How accurate is it, from what you observed?

FK: I can only talk for my rifle company in World War II, or the battalion ... I commanded in the Korean War. I didn't see much combat in the Korean War, but, what I did see, I had no concerns about men who didn't fire their weapons. I was in an airborne battalion, at that time, and I knew those troops were ready fight whenever the opportunity presented itself. My personal experience is that I didn't worry about the people not firing their weapons when they needed to. We shot them.

KP: Something that keeps military historians busy is the whole question of why men fight. It sounds like I am anticipating the answer that leadership does have an important role, but, what is your observation about what kept people fighting?

FK: Leadership has a tremendous role. In fact, successful combat operations are one hundred percent the result of good leadership. Now, not necessarily by the guy who was appointed to be the leader, but, the guy who took over the leadership position, and functioned as the leader when the time required. Men fight for each other. The principal thing that keeps men fighting together in combat is their need for the respect of their own buddies. I am not going to let that guy next to me see how scared I am, or how inept and inadequate I am. You fight in combat because you want to retain the respect of your immediate friends, and you want to respect them. ... This is the business of, "These are the guys I want to go to war with." I have trained with them and they are the ones who I hope will be there when the time comes. Well, then, you can't let them down, if you feel that way about them. ... That's the principal thing that people fight for, in the immediate unit that they are part of. I mean small unit, and the leaders who provide for them properly, who accommodate their needs, and the resource requirements, and who see that they get all the support that is available to them, and then, who make decent plans. I mean, the platoon leader who sends his platoon on a frontal attack against a heavily fortified position, and gets them all wiped out, does not have the respect a leader should have when the next time comes. You've got to make good decisions. You have to do it with the understanding that, okay, you might have some casualties, but they are going to be minimum. You are doing what you can to minimize the causalities in your own organization, your own unit. That kind of leadership is absolutely mandatory. I just think we have a lot of that kind of leadership in the American Army.

KP: You would be in a rare position, to be part of the effort to defeat Germany in 1945, and then, to come back to Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. In many ways, it was a very different Germany. In May of 1945, what did you think was the future of Germany? You made some observations about the Army, but, what about the civilians and the future of Germany? So much has happened since that it is probably hard to recall your thoughts from May 1945, because Germany turned out very differently, I think, than a lot of people anticipated.

FK: I guess, when the war ended, my overwhelming kind of feeling, for the Germans, was one of sympathy. They were having a tough time getting enough to eat. They were having a tough time clothing themselves, and so forth. Now, it was summertime when the war ended, so, things weren't too bad, but, the need for food was apparent among the children, who did a lot of begging from the American troops. We didn't call it begging, but that's what it was. The American troops are very sympathetic to those kinds of appeals and, I guess, we gave away as much food as we ate ourselves, in those days. [laughter] And so, we were very sympathetic to the plight of the German populace, without being ... too soft-hearted about it. I mean, we blamed the German people for the war that had been fought, and ... you had that recognition, while you were being sympathetic to them. So, ... I guess, there was no thought of coddling them, or trying to comfort them, but, there was a recognition that they did need sympathy, of one kind or another. ... The big hearted Americans never had any problems giving stuff away to the kids and that [kind of] thing. ... I think that we had a non-fraternization policy. We were not allowed to become friends with any Germans and, when the war ended, no rifle company could stay in one place more than one week, and they moved us to another town to occupy. I don't know how many towns my rifle

company had to go through between the 1st of June and the time I left it, in about mid-July, but, we were moving every week. And, I found, after a couple of weeks, that we had a quite a trail of *frauliens* who showed up at the new town, [laughter] because they made friends ...

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

FK: ... I don't know that I thought about the future of Germany, even for the next couple of years, because ... I got involved in an intelligence organization whose job was to administer a program for American industry. American industry was sending people to Germany to investigate German industry. ... They would go to the Messerchmitt factory and find out how they built airplanes, and if they wanted blueprints, or anything, ... they were allowed to take it out, or take out samples. ... I don't think I ever even considered that German industry would somehow resurrect itself. It seemed to me that it was all dead in the water, and I didn't ever expect Messerchmitt to build airplanes again, or Opel to build Volkswagens. ... You know, it's one of those things that didn't occur to me, as to what is the future of Germany. It was announced, pretty much, by our government, that we were going to reduce them to an agricultural nation status, and we would allow them to grow food and feed themselves, but, that's all they are going to be allowed to do. That was the initial thoughts of what the future of Germany would be, until we found out that the Russian threat was something we better start coping with.

KP: When did you get a sense that the Soviets were our next adversaries? From you father, you knew about the Siberian intervention, and your father viewed them as a threat. When did you sense, as an army officer, that the enemy we had to worry about is the Soviet Union? Was it as early as 1945, or was it later than that?

FK: Well, I think as early as 1945. I think the experience that we were having in Berlin, our troops and their troops both occupying the Berlin area. ... The stories that were coming out of there, and things like the statements made by General Patton, who was quite vociferous in his concern about the threat of the Russians, and his willingness to go to war with them, you know, right then. That was something I was conscious of. I don't know when I came to an understanding of what the threat was, until, perhaps, the Berlin Airlift. ... During that period, I had enough knowledge of what was going on in Greece and Turkey, and the original Truman Doctrine, which said, "We're going to help defend Greece and Turkey against the Soviet [and] Communist incursions there." So, I was not unaware ... of the threat that we recognized as growing from the east.

KP: When you were part of the Army of Occupation in Germany, did you ever have any contact with the Soviet Army at all?

FK: I never did.

KP: Never at all?

FK: No, and I never got detailed on any of the jobs that would take ... into [Berlin]. Some of our officers, for example, were detailed to the trains that were taking Polish refugees back to Poland. ... They had to ride those trains, and keep the Poles aboard, to deliver them back to the Russians.

An absolutely criminal act of our government that I do not understand, and probably think should never be forgiven, that we sent all those refugees from the Polish Army, from the Polish civilians who had been taken into Germany as slave labor, and that kind of thing, and we forced them all back to Poland, and back to Czechoslovakia, back into behind the Iron Curtain. We should never be forgiven. ... Anyway, these are lieutenants and captains, ... of which I was the part, who got detailed to this kind of job, that took them into the Russian zone. I never ... did anything like that. So, I had no contact with them.

KP: Did you ever have any contact with displaced persons?

FK: Only when we came upon displaced persons in concentration camps areas, and all I did was observe them. I was appalled walking by them. We came to our first one when we first went into Bavaria, a town like Goeppingen or Goemersheim, one of those towns had a concentration camp. I remember ... the gaunt figures behind that barbed wire. People starving to death and only partially clothed. ... I couldn't believe what I saw when I first saw them, couldn't imagine who they were. It was as though you had come upon an insane asylum, where the inmates were in charge. ... I never was closely associated with anything about them, because we were passing on through. We saw them, and it was the guys in the rear area with other jobs who, then, moved in to take care of them. We just bypassed them, and saw them only. My only other contact with them, after the war, we organized a lot of the displaced persons into support units for the American Army. We had Polish guards on our quarters, where the families lived, in different towns and cities. I knew we made use of them that way. The remnants of that system were still in existence when I was the commander in Europe. We had units formed of Polish military, displaced people who were still functioning as part of the U.S. Army. They had companies that took care of the landing craft, the boats which we would use on the Rhine River, if war came, and ... chemical smoke generator units run by the same people. ... They were the best trained part of the American Army in Europe. We had a battalion of them in Berlin. We had two or three battalions up and down the Rhine River. First class troops, and they ... still had some World War II guys in them.

KP: I never heard of them.

FK: ... Civilian Labor Units, we called them. I think that's what they were called, but, they were mostly Polish.

KP: It seems as if they were really part of the Army, although they were not given that title.

FK: Well, they weren't part of the U.S. Army, but they ... were an attachment to us. They were paid for by the Germans, but they were a functioning part of the U.S. Army, and a very impressive collection of people, who were artisans in their own right. I mean, the best maintained equipment, in all of the United States Army in Europe, was by these people. They had the best supply system accountability of anybody. They knew exactly where every part was for every vehicle and every repair part that was necessary for them to maintain. They had it cataloged, and none of our units were ever as good at doing things like that.

KP: As a young officer, at the end of World War II, you decided to stay in. What types of military leaders, particularly generals, did you admire from a distance. People have given me a range of opinions of general officers they detested. Mark Clark is often criticized, legitimately or illegitimately, but, other people have been very free. For example, they never met him, personally, but, General Eisenhower was very well liked by enlisted men in the war. Were there any officers, and generals, or even lower officers, that you encountered, and said, "They have the traits that I want to emulate."

FK: Well, I have never had a hero of that kind. I am just not ... built that way, but, I respected, very much, General Alexander Patch, who was the Seventh Army commander. Three star general, only saw him once during the war, but, he arrived in a mud spattered jeep, three stars on the front, all covered with mud. He, and his aid, and his driver, driving into the combat area, ... with no pretensions, ... no folderol associated with his presence. He just wanted to know what was going on, and he wanted to talk man to man to people, so, he could find that out. He impressed me with his demeanor, his interest, and his, what, obviously was, ... knowledge of what was going on, and why it was happening. Now, on the other side of the coin is my division commander, whom I never saw without the most beautifully shined boots, and leather leggings, and uniforms, spotless, immaculate, and, when he traveled, it was an entourage. He had an air defense vehicle in front, and he traveled in a spit-shined three-quarter-ton command and reconnaissance vehicle, we called it, and another air defender behind him, and, probably, some MPs for security. He arrived that way wherever he went, and it was an event if he was going to show up anywhere. So, I did not appreciate that man, until I really found out that he was a great combat solider. He trained that division, and he had it functioning better than any other that I saw over there. ... I got to appreciate him only sort of after the fact. I never wanted to emulate him in the way he presented himself. I always was more of the General Patch kind of guy when I went visiting troops. ... I got to respect General (Hibbs?), who was the division commander, because of the job he did, and the way it got done. So, that's two sides of a coin, which tells you that I can find admirable qualities in a lot of different kind of people. ... I also recognized that there are no two great leaders who are of the same pattern, the same cloth. The differences between and Eisenhower, and Bradley, and Patton, and MacArthur, are so obvious, when you study any one of the four of them, that it's hard to believe that are all so successful senior commanders in the Army. They all did it differently. ...

KP: No, they all had very different styles from what I have read.

FK: That's right, but, they are all great successes. ... If you study Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar, and Winston Churchill, you find the same kind of disparity in character and characteristics. So, I learned to appreciate good leadership as an art, not a science. ... There are a lot of scientific principles associated with being a commander and a leader, but, the art of putting that all together is an individual thing that everybody has to do his own way. ... If you are going to be most successful at it, you have to be convincing, in your own way, to those who are your followers.

KP: What movie, or novel, or even history, most accurately reflects the experiences of World War II? I know you cannot fully capture it, but, is there any work that somehow reflects some of the things you experienced?

FK: One movie was *GI Joe*, made during World War II. That's the only one I ever saw that I had any respect for in its presentation.

KP: It was one that got some things right.

FK: That's right, it got a lot of things right. One book, written by Charles McDonald, the title of which was Company Commander. He wrote it shortly after World War II, and I always reflected that, if I could write a book, that's the one ... I would have written. Same kinds of experiences of a guy who was a rifle company commander in the war. ... That is a book that impressed me, and I have not forgotten. Beyond that, ... I can't tell you. I've read so much World War II history and nothing sticks out in my mind as more memorable than something else.

KP: You were unique for staying in the service. A lot of people who I have interviewed stayed in the reserves, and then, were called back for Korea, but, you stayed in and made it a career. How easy of a decision was it, or difficult of a decision was it?

FK: Not difficult at all. I mean, I gave lip service to, "Maybe I should get out and do something else." I expressed that to my wife, and to my father-in-law, maybe. But, I never really was serious about that. In my own mind, my first choice was, "I like the Army and I want to see if I can stay in it." ... It wasn't hard at all. When the opportunity came to apply for a commission in the regular army, in 1946, I guess it was, I applied right off and was lucky enough to be accepted. ...

KP: It sounds like you did not have any other career that you wanted.

FK: Particularly since, see, when I went to college, I did not have any other real profession in mind, and so, I did not have anything to go back to. I had realized that I was not going to be a farmer, go back and take agriculture. There was no way I was going to have enough capital to start a farm, or to buy one, or anything like that. So, agriculture ... was not something I wanted to go back to.

KP: What about becoming a veterinarian?

FK: Well, I'd lost all that, really. ... If I was going to do that, I would almost have to start from scratch. I hadn't learned enough in Ag School, that I remembered. ... I knew I wouldn't have to take Bio-Chemistry again, [laughter] but I don't know how much other stuff I had that contributed to [a] veterinarian career, and I was more interested in being an Army officer than I was a veterinarian. So, there was no ... conflict here of what I wanted to do.

KP: From what I read, the peace-time army, after 1945, demobilized very quickly. There were a lot of responsibilities given to the Army, both in the Pacific and in Europe, and, in many ways, the term was used in the 1970s, but it can be applied to the post-war period, it had become almost a hollow army, in the sense that structures were very thin. Could you reflect on what it was like being in the first peace-time army?

FK: Well, I had a job to do, and I did that job in the intelligence organization. First of all, I was in a division that was going to be retrained to go to Japan. So, first of all, being reassigned to that division, the problem of training a company to get ready to go back to combat, but, at the same time, there wasn't a lot of real interest in doing that. ... We all wanted to rest on our laurels of having won the war in Germany. And so, it was a perfunctory kind of training program that we started to be engaged in, while we were occupying, in this case, Stuttgart. ... My company had a lot of places to guard. We were guarding the winery here, and some other kind of factory and a bank. ... I don't know, I guess I had ten posts that my company was responsible for guarding. That was not conducive to training them to go to [Japan]. So, this was sort of an interim period. We'll get excited about this when we get orders and go. But, then, the war in Japan ended also, in August, so, that all sort of passed. Then, we were waiting for re-deployment to the United Sates. Most people were waiting for that. I was reassigned to an intelligence headquarters, and I had a job to do, and I did that for the next two years, and never thought very much about what was happening to the Army. I knew that we had formed the constabulary units in Europe. We were down only to one division, the First Division, and we had the constabulary formed, to be kind of a police force for the military government of the country. ... The constabulary was made up of those guys who wanted to stay in the Army. ... The officer corps and the NCOs were soldiers who were Army career people. ... The draftees that we were getting in, in those days, were kind of an eager bunch. They were not averse to serving, and so, they came trainable, and willing, and they made some pretty good units in the constabulary. So, my association with what the Army was, was pretty favorable in Germany, up until 1947, when I came home. I didn't realize how bad things were in the Army, as a whole. I had no idea what was happening to the major units in the structure. ... When I came home, I went immediately into reserve component duty. So, again, I didn't get assigned to the Army. ... When I finished my reserve component duty, I went to school. Finally, got back to a unit in the 82nd Airborne Division in 1950, or '51, after I went to the Armor School officer's advance course. In the 82nd Airborne Division, you don't know what's going on in the rest of the Army, because it always has had a high priority for people. ... We were always filled up with people, with officers. We had lieutenant colonels in lieutenant colonel's jobs, and we had captains in captain's jobs, that kind of thing. So, there was no hollowness in the part of the Army that I knew anything about. Then, the Korean War started and the 82nd stayed high in the priority, and stayed prepared, because it was the number one unit to go somewhere else if anything happened.

KP: We may have to pick this up another day. I wanted to ask you about your whole military career. But, one thing to tease out for future interviews, you mentioned the point of preparedness, which I think you made clear about the Persian Gulf War. It seems, by implication, in many ways, we were not prepared for both Korea and Vietnam. Could you elaborate a little bit about the lack of preparation?

FK: We weren't unprepared for Vietnam. We had a very good army in 1965. In fact, the Army was rebuilt pretty well during the Eisenhower years, but, when the Cuban Crisis occurred in '61, I think that's when it was. '62? Right after Kennedy, yeah, '61, the Army got resources from the Kennedy administration that it had been wanting for a long time. ... We had a build up in the early '60s of the same kind that we had in the early '80s with the Reagan administration. ... With those kind of resources available, the Army was built into a pretty professional organization from 1960 to '65. When it went to Vietnam, it went in very good condition. The trouble was, it was

committed to Vietnam piecemeal, and it was committed to Vietnam with policies that assured a sort of self-destruction. I talked about the one year rotation policy, and then, we had the decision made that everybody in Vietnam was in a combat theater, so, everybody gets combat pay. Well, that was great for the morale of the total army over there, but, it was bad for the morale of the combat troops. I could be sitting Saigon, watching the PX, and getting the same kind of combat pay that I am getting out here in the infantry. It was just not a good policy. It was one of those things that creates discontent. Then, we had the fervent attempt to furnish everybody with everything. We're selling radios and TV sets in the PXs over there. What the hell for? We wanted to serve ice cream on the fire bases. You know, you really don't need that kind of [service]. Well, we poured all this stuff in there, and then, you got to have people to take care of all that kind of thing. You've got an overblown support establishment for the ... amount of combat troops you have and combat taking place. And, we would send units over that disappeared, and never did function. For example, there was a great demand for well digging detachments over there, so that these outlying places, you could dig a well and have fresh water. We ... needed them, not only for our own troops, but, also, ... for these civilian areas that we were establishing, the hamlets, and so forth, that we're doing all these good things for. I don't know how many hundred well digging detachments we sent over there. ... In 1968, when I was a brigade commander, we reestablished the district headquarters that had been driven out years before and I got the people back, resettled this little town called Hiep Duc, reestablished the district headquarters there, and the district chief, and all those things. We needed some fresh water supplies. I said, "I will just get one of these well digging detachments out here." Nobody knew where one was, they had evaporated. All that equipment was sent over there, went into some depot, and the units that were supposed to employ them, small units, two and three men detachments, they just took them out of there and reassigned them as replacements somewhere. And, I never did get a well dug for the new town, Hiep Duc. Well, that kind management of this tonnage of supplies and equipment we sent over there was distressful and disgraceful. We destroyed the non-commissioned officer corps because of this immediate rotation problem. If you are going to stay in the Army as sergeant, and you are in the infantry, or the engineers, or the signal [corps], you got sent home, and nine months later, on orders to come back. So, they disappeared instead. We had an army that was prepared properly in 1965 to go to war. We did not employ it properly, or, sustain it properly. We had no mobilization of the reserve components, and the active army was supposed to sustain all this themselves, and that's how we got down to doing it only with draftees, and brand new second lieutenants, and brand new helicopter pilots. And, by 1968, the Army was a shadow of what it had been in 1965. But, the war came as a surprise to us, and so, we weren't really ready for that war, anymore than we had been for any others. It's just that we were in better condition to start it. We destroyed ourselves as it was going along.

KP: In terms of comparing Vietnam to World War II, you mentioned a lot of things that made it very different, but, it sounds like it was a very different war for you?

FK: Yeah.

KP: In that, a lot of things did not work well.

FK: The Vietnam War was a police action. ... I used to describe the mission of my brigade, I was given a territory, which was forty kilometers on the side, and I felt that my mission was to deny the enemy the use of that territory, for any purpose whatsoever. And so, ... my job was to be sure that he did not get settled somewhere in that area. ... We stayed on patrol to be sure that we looked at every grid square in that forty kilometer square area, and drove the enemy out of it, and allowed the population to farm, grow rice, graze their farm animals, do the peace-time kinds of things, restore the order of their civic government, and so forth. So, it's a police action in which you are not faced with an enemy that you have to fight conventionally, all the time. You're looking for little pockets of people. Now, all during that period, there is a potential for an enemy unit, a North Vietnamese unit, which is located off there in the jungle somewhere, to launch a major attack against you. When he did, it was all going to be an infantry fight. He didn't have any tanks, he didn't have any artillery. We had artillery and we had infantrymen. We could not employ our tanks, and our armored carriers, very well in that jungle terrain. So, you're engaged in a police action that is much like the city of Washington trying to cope with the bank robbers of the area. They can strike almost anywhere they want when they're ready, and you hope you can track them down, and prevent them from doing it again, punish them in some way, so they won't ever threaten to do that ever again. World War II was entirely different. The only action there was major military units against military units. So, it's just an entirely different kind of war. I say the United States Army can do any of them and better than anyone else. We need to be properly prepared for the kind we are going to go to.

KP: Could I ask just one or two more questions?

FK: Okay.

KP: You have been extremely patient and have given us a lot of time. One thing related to Vietnam, both Lynn and Leigh were saying that this is the 30th anniversary of the My-Lai massacre. You would be the last commanding general, divisional commander, of the Americal Division. What are your thoughts of that whole incident itself? You weren't in the division then ...

FK: Yeah, I was. I ... joined it right after it happened.

KP: What were you thoughts? Not so much why it happened, but the aftermath of it. Specifically, I am thinking of the General Peers report, which I read a long time ago.

FK: Well, General Peers did a hatchet job on some of the command structure of the Americal Division and, unfairly, I believe, to some degree, ... that the division commander, a guy named Sam Koster, was badly treated. The incident occurred in March. It was reported to Koster and Koster had an investigation started immediately into what happened. ... He got a superficial response, and said, "That's not satisfactory," and he assigned to a colonel, the brigade commander, the responsibility for conducting a thorough investigation into what happened in My-Lai, and relied upon him to do it. Now, that was a mistake, 'cause this had happened in the colonel's command. One of his subordinates was the principal commander in the area. He should've assigned the job to his inspector general, at the division level, and not down there at the brigade. Nevertheless, he gave that responsibility to that man. At the end of May, Koster was

ordered back to West Point, ordered out of the division. ... He departed before this thorough report was submitted to him. He never got it. The new division commander didn't come in for two or three more weeks. In that two or three week interim, the colonel's report was supposedly finished and submitted to division headquarters. It evaporated. Nobody ever saw it. The division chief of staff said he never received such a thing. The colonel said that he had sent it through channels. Nobody knew what happened to it. Nobody could find copies of it. The new division commander was never informed, and so, it all just died. Now, the guy who let it die was the assistant division commander who had been in charge for that interim period, and who, apparently, never did anything to ensure the completion of this report. Well, the Peers Report put a lot of blame on General Koster, because they said he didn't take the proper action. The only thing he didn't do properly was give it to his IG instead of one of his senior commanders. Now, he can be criticized for that, but I don't think he should have been terminated from the service because of that lapse. Anyway, I joined the division in May and never heard about the My-Lai massacre. I never knew such a thing occurred. ... I do know that atrocities were being dealt with. One of the first jobs I had was to be the president of a general court martial which was trying soldiers who had engaged in rape, pillage, and a few other bad things, when they had captured some North Vietnamese nurses. ... It was a ... major problem, and all six of the colonels of the division, I being one of them, ... were presidents of a general courts-martial trying the people who were responsible for that kind of offense. ... That was going, and so, I know that Koster would've taken the same kind of action over My-Lai, if he had gotten ... the facts and the report of what happened, and the proper people would have been punished long before. But, because he departed, somehow or other, the whole thing just died, and the report evaporated, and ... the colonel, whose name was Henderson, he was later tried, but found not guilty of anything. I've never understood all the exonerations that took place when they did try all of the people involved. I've never understood why Lt. Calley isn't still in jail over what he did. I think the Army, as a rule, does a lot better in the punishment of people who are involved in those kinds of things, and that this was an exception. There is no way to excuse it, ... and it's a terrible thing to have happened, but, I have to say that it had no impact on the division, at the time, because we did not know it had happened. ... In the brigade in which it did happen, even there, it was an isolated kind of instance that the rest of the brigade was pretty much unaware of. There were rumors. There were statements made at one of my briefings. The first time I ever heard about anything that might have happened like this, in that brigade, there was a report of a combat action, ... and one of my officers sitting there said to the guy giving the briefing, "How many women and children did they kill this time?" That's the first indication I had, and I asked later, “What was all that about?”

KP: I am surprised that he would say that in a briefing.

FK: Well, there's a lot of small talk that goes on at those kind of those things. ... I asked about it later and somebody told me that, “Well, there was a rumor that ... down in the Eleventh Brigade, that there had been a massacre of some kind [involving] women and children.” But, nobody followed up on it. ... It was not something that was a matter of discussion or anything. It was just something that this one guy had heard, somewhere. ... [Whether] he’d been down there on a visit, or whatnot, I don't know. So, I guess, I would say there was probably some thread of knowledge in the division, but it never got to the division commander's attention, to the degree

that he had done anything more than [that]. He appointed the people who were supposed to carry out the proper kind of investigation, and that never got done.

KP: One other question, it deals with World War II, but it stretches throughout all your wars. You fought in World War II, when the Army was a segregated, but, the Army would, in many ways, become one of the most integrated parts of American society. How did that transition go?

FK: Well, I think the transition went very well.

KP: It was not an easy one, at times, from what I have read. You even encountered some problems in Germany.

FK: Oh, well, the problems in Germany are not with the integration in the Army. The problems in Germany were between American soldiers and the German populace. The laws of Germany are different. When a *Bierstube* owner does not want to serve people, he doesn't have to, and the fact that they are black soldiers is incidental, in so far as German rules and regulations are concerned.

----------END TAPE THREE SIDE TWO----------

KP: You were saying that it was partly the nature of German law.

FK: German custom, and German rules and regulations, that allowed the owner of an establishment to serve, or not serve, those people that came to his door. So, it was no problem for him to evict soldiers, black soldiers, from his institution. The American Army couldn't stand that. Our problem was, if you are going to serve soldiers, you are going to serve all of them, and we just won't put up with that kind of thing. Well, that was the problem in Germany. It was not a problem of our own forces not getting along with each other. When the Army was integrated, I was in the 82nd Airborne Division. We had, at that time, a black infantry battalion, a black anti-aircraft battalion, one black field artillery battalion, I think, and the whole organization was to be integrated. All those black units were to be broken up, not broken up, but, the black soldiers were coming out and white soldiers were going into those units. The division commander had every company commander prepare a list of his noncommissioned officers. He was told to identify those that you had to keep, your first sergeant, whomever you thought was essential for you to have, and then, to offer up the other guys that you thought ought to go to [another battalion]. Well, then, of course, what he did was take the ones you said you had to keep, and he left you with the ones you put on the other list, and that was done with the officers and the NCOs, so that a pretty good cadre of people went to, ... what had formerly been the black units. ... Even then, they had had white officers in those units. But, the integration of the division went very smoothly. I mean, yes, there were individuals who reacted, resented this, didn't like it, but, on the whole, they were soldiers. They came in to be soldiers in your unit, and you handled them like you did any other replacements, and the United States Army was sort of integrated overnight, without any major problems. There were, as I said, only individual reactions to it. The hierarchy, as a whole, had no response, except, "Well, okay those are the orders. We'll salute and carry them out."

KP: To me, it is striking, because, in many ways, the hierarchy in the '40s really did not want integration. They were not a social laboratory. But, to me, what is most striking is how successful the Army has been.

FK: Sure.

KP: Academia has not even come close to what the Army has done.

FK: That's right, and, in the Army, today, a sergeant is a sergeant. The heaviest concentration of black soldiers is in the non-commissioned officer corps. That's a reflection of the poor education they've been given before they joined the Army, and a reflection of their penchant to re-enlist, compared to the white soldiers. More black soldiers re-enlist to stay in and become career soldiers. Not to a degree that is troubling in any way, but, it's just a fact that it's happened. So, you find a high concentration of black soldiers in the noncommissioned officer positions, and they have grown to take over the sergeant major of the Army's job, the first one, and, unfortunately, we made a mistake with that selection, but, they've now gotten to all senior positions in the noncommissioned officer corps. ... The same thing with the officer corps. We've had black four star generals now, and Colin Powell has been, of course, the epitome of the process.

KP: The more I study the Army, and the military in general, it is just, to me, seems remarkable.

FK: He is an Americal veteran, too.

KP: In fact, a student of mine, once, had heard that both Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell were Americal veterans.

FK: Yes, both.

KP: I have often thought, I mean this is just my gut, but, they wanted to do it right when they were in charge. They saw many mistakes in Vietnam.

FK: Yeah, well, see, ... Schwarzkopf, for example, became a battalion commander in Vietnam after my time, and it was at the lowest level ... of our capabilities over there. The kinds of soldiers we were getting, the problems with mutinies in the barracks, and the fragging of officers with hand grenades, that kind of thing. ... That's the Army that he was a battalion commander of. And, you learn a lot of lessons about not letting that happen again. So, ... he and Powell were of that same experience almost, although Powell was ahead of him in time.

KP: He was there when you were?

FK: He was there when I was there, in my first tour.

KP: When you are a junior officer, civil-military relations is a very distant relationship. The president, as commander-in-chief, is a very distant figure, but, you would, in fact, eventually,

become Vice Chief of Staff and have a very senior position. What are your thoughts about civil-military relations?

FK: One of the blessings that the American people have enjoyed for two hundred years is the fact that the Army has never been a threat to the civilian control of this nation. It has been ingrained in the soldiers of this nation that civilian control is the right way to do things. There's never been a threat of mutiny. There's never been a threat of revolution that would be militarily led. ... Having been in Europe, and having been associated with the other nations of the world, ... like Thailand, where the Army has taken over, I am very conscious of what that blessing has meant in this country. So, I think you find an officer corps most subservient, in many cases, too subservient, to the civilian control that they are subjected to. ... Then, if you look at the history of the United States Army, particularly from 1865 to 1940, the most combat days spent by the United States Army have been in civic action kind of things, not in big wars. The big wars were the Spanish-American War and World War I, but, there were more combat days associated with the Indian Wars, with the Philippine Insurrection, with the Cuban Insurrection after the Spanish-American War, ... and Nicaragua. ... The Army's experience of civil-military relations in the sense of imposing ourselves on the Panamanians, or on the Nicaraguans, or on the Indians, is an experience that the American people don't have any ... knowledge of. I mean, you don't think of the Army as being associated with the settlement of the West, except a cavalry charge to save a town from an Indian attack. ... The government out there was the United States Army, and a few marshals spread around. There is a great wealth of information available, in the historical records of the United States Army, during that period, and even before the Civil War. If you look at what the Army accomplished against the Seminoles, in moving the Cherokee nation from North Carolina to Oklahoma, it was the United States Army that was forced to that. ...

KP: Very much forced.

FK: Yeah, much opposed by the Army itself. We did not want to be the instrument, but, it was the Army that had to do that. So, there's a wealth of basic knowledge about civil-military relationships that most people don't have any appreciation for. I am aware of ... that, and I know ... what a responsibility the Army carries for those kinds of actions. ... When I read today, after the Wall came down, and the Soviet Union dissolved, and we're talking about missions for the Army of the future, and civic action becomes a concern, and it's being written about by people who have no idea that this is old hat to the Army, that we've been doing it all our lives, 200 years of it.

KP: I should let my two very quiet students get in one or two last questions. I know they wanted to ask one question about when you were attacked in the 1980s.

FK: Oh, okay.

LAM: It was in September of '81 and your wife was in the car with you. How did she react to this? Being a military wife, was she shaken up, did she want to go home?

FK: My wife reacted probably better than any of the rest of us in the car. We were fired upon by an RPG from high up on the left behind us. [He demonstrates this] ... If this is the automobile,

the shell went in the trunk of the car and out ... right in front of the right rear fender. That's the angle at which he fired. The glass on the back window all broke, and fell forward, and cut me all over the back of my head. So, my head was, you know how you bleed quickly from the [head]. It threw me forward, and I went down this way, and my wife looked over at me, and she thought I was dead, because she thought that the whole back of my head had been blown out. It was all blood covered. Well, I heard her groan a little bit, I guess, because she thought I was gone, and I looked at her, and she was fine, and she knew I was alive then. The driver had turned off the ignition, which was a good thing, because it might prevent a fire from starting. But, there we sat, dead in the water, and I had a major with me, sitting in the front seat, and he said, "All right, let's just sit here and let the MPs behind us take care of this thing." About that time, a second shell went off. ... That's where he really missed. The first time, he missed because, when the driver stopped by the red light, took his foot off [the accelerator], and the car was creeping forward, as it does, and it just crept forward three feet, and that is why the shell went in the trunk and out, instead of into the passenger compartment. Then, when the second shot went off, he obviously hastened that, and he hit about three feet behind the car in the street, and missed the car altogether. At which point, my wife said, "Why are we sitting here?" [laughter] and I said to the driver, "Will the car start?" He tried the engine, and it ran, and I said, "Let's get out of here." This all was started by my wife saying, "Why are we sitting here?" So, we took off and drove to the hospital, get some treatment there, and then, went about the day. She was going to a meeting at the hospital that morning, for something. ... She went along with her day, and I went along with mine, went out and visited troops, and those kind of things, came home that night. How it ever happened, I have not figured out, but the ABC television people got into our compound, and so, we agreed to an interview. ... They interviewed us for a half-hour about the whole thing. ... My daughter and a couple of her kids were visiting us, I think. Maybe they came later, but, anyway, we finally went to bed about normal time, eleven-thirty or twelve o'clock. And, I went to sleep, and at about two o'clock the morning, she said, "I can't sleep." When she finally got in bed and realized what had happened that day, her eyes went wide open and she could not settle down. ... That's the first time she had any bad reaction to it. ... Years afterwards, she is affected by an explosion of a car on television. You know, the kind that blows up into a fireball. That still bothers her, from that time to now. But, she never had any trauma associated with it, and I never did. I used to say, "It's not the first time the Germans shot at me and missed." [laughter] ... My German friends used to be aghast at that kind of statement.

KP: I visited Germany in the late '70s and I remember all the terrorist activity. How startled were you by the attack? Where you startled at all?

FK: Oh, sure!

KP: This was not something you had expected.

FK: Well, I was riding in a German police armored car, because of the threat indications. ... They had come to me, or sent my security people, ... who asked me if I would do it. ... I said, as I always do, "If anything happens to me, it's not going to be my fault. You're in charge. If you tell me to ride in an armored car, I will do so." I used to tell all my pilots, and my jeep driver, my doctors, "If anything happens to me, it's not going to be my fault. [laughter] You are responsible." ... That's why I was in this armored car. They had had these indications that I was

being watched, that they had seen people who were writing down my license plate numbers, or whatever, and so, they thought this was prudent thing to do. ... It turned out that it was a pretty good idea, because if I had not been in that armored car, the back of the seat was armored, and that prevented the fragments of the explosion from coming through the back seat. It didn't prevent the glass, and it would never have stopped the armored piercing projectile that went out the right fender. ... If he had had a better angle, it would have come into the car, and if it hadn't been for the car creeping forward, it would've come through the side door of the car, instead of into the trunk. ... Those are the kinds of good fortunes that keep people alive. All right, you've had a long afternoon. [laughter]

KP: Well, thank you very much. We appreciated that.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 7/5/99
Edited by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/14/99
Edited by Fredrick Kroesen 7/30/99