

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID LEVY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

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and

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PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. David Levy on July 12, 2001, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with Shaun Illingworth ...

Greg Kupsky: Greg Kupsky ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: ... and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Mr. Levy, we would like to thank you for consenting to this interview. To begin, could you tell us a little bit about your mother and father and their families?

David Levy: All right, my father was the last child born to my grandmother, and ... the stories in the family stated [that] my grandmother was in her fifties at that time, and this was in Bialystok, Russia. All his brothers and sisters had either left for the United States or England. He was apprenticed, then, to a tailor, and, when he finished his apprenticeship, his mother brought him here, to the United States, and she found she had a ... daughter here, in Philadelphia, and she left my father with her. ... He didn't know this woman, even though it was his sister, and, when he heard that they were hiring tailors in Albany, New York, ... this teenager just took off and went up to Albany, New York, and, somewhere up there, he hired a tutor to teach him English and math, and God bless that tutor. He made a Shakespeare buff out of my father, and, in those years, there was a traveling troupe of Shakespeare players called (Soddard and Marlowe?), and they used to come to Newark, [city] by city, about once every two years, and my father always bought tickets for the family, down front, and the first play I saw was *Twelfth Night*, and I always remember the opening lines, because that was the first play I got in high school, you know, "If music be the food of love, play on," and, ... as I say, I grew up in this. ... My father was a confirmed patriot. He called this land, this country, "a golden land," in Yiddish, a *golda medina*, and that's what he believed, ... not because you could get wealthy here, but, because, in this wonderful country, Jewish children could go to public school, and, if you didn't send them to public school, you could go to jail. To my father, this was wonderful, and, ... as I say, I grew up in Newark, and, in those days, there were four high schools in Newark. There were two academic high schools, Southside and Barringer, and then, there was Eastside, and I forget, now, [the other school]. I went to Southside High School. ... Now, I know what a wonderful education I got there; I've subsequently learned. For instance, I had two Latin teachers; Dean Parsons was Harvard, Hartman was Yale. They had one mathematics teacher, Dr. White, was Princeton and, as I remember, one of the teachers who taught me Shakespeare was Smith [College], a woman. ... I've subsequently learned that, at that time, Newark had the highest pay scale in the East, therefore, [they] attracted some of the best teachers. ... I was admitted to the bar in New Jersey, oh, I don't even know how long ago, and it was [in] the depths of the Depression, of course. We were struggling, and my wife worked in the Newark Museum, and she had originally come, ... from high school, to the Newark Library, and, in those days, the library and the Newark Museum were both under the same woman, Beatrice Windsor. You [Sandra Holyoak] know this, you're shaking your head, and Miss Windsor discovered my wife had quite interesting artistic talents, and she sent her, they paid for it, too, to the New School for Social Research. When she finished, ... they had made a printer out of her, but, ... doing handset printing. When she got back, she was sent to the Newark Museum, and, there, she designed and printed all their posters, ... but, with her consent, I joined the Army. She already had three brothers in service, a very brave lady, and I went off to the war. ... First, I went

through infantry basic and infantry advanced training. Then, I went before the board of officers and was approved [for OCS]. Well, let me go back a little bit. When you signed up for this program, they asked you to list three arm services, but, they told you, quietly, that the first arm [service] had better be infantry. I learned, later, when I became an infantry officer, the reason for that was, the highest casualty rate in the US Army is for captains and lieutenants, infantry, the reason being, US military doctrine calls for captains [and] lieutenants to lead, not to go [behind your men], ... so that you're always in front. I was exceedingly lucky, having fought in France, Germany and Austria and come out without a scratch, sheer good luck. ... [Anyway], I was approved by the board, was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, the Infantry School, and emerged a spanking new second lieutenant, and my first post was Fort McClellan, Alabama. ... The minute I was an officer, my wife resigned the job at the Newark Museum and became a "camp follower," and, let me tell you, that took a lot of guts, for a woman who grew up in Newark, and the furthest she ever went was ... from Newark to New York, you went by the tubes, the Hudson tubes, or, summers, she would go [to] Upstate New York for a vacation, you know, ... but, she followed the Bible, "Whither thou goest, I shall go. Whither thou stayest, I shall stay. Thy people shall be ... my people." ... At Fort McClellan, Alabama, that was a post where they trained infantry replacements. Then, my orders came through to go, as cadre, to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, where they were reconstituting the famous 42nd Infantry Division, that is, of World War I fame, and I was able to get a sleeper from ... where we were and traveled as far as Kansas City, but, ... nothing beyond that. We took off, and, on the way up, my wife informed me [that] she was pregnant, and this is what she wanted, she'd really, desperately like one ... [child], and we stood from Kansas City to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. There was no way to sit down in those days, and, when I arrived at Gruber, I was immediately assigned to Company D of the 232nd Infantry, and Company D, I don't know if you know, it was a heavy weapons company. You're shaking your head, so, you know?

SI: Yes.

DL: Well, okay. I was a specialist, in those days, by then, in water-cooled machine guns, .30 caliber, and .81 mm mortars, ... but, I was wondering how I got to that, but, because there were no troops yet, ... when I got assigned, I was temporarily assigned to the personnel office there. So, I was able to see the papers, and then, I discovered that the rules had come down ... from Washington that those who scored highest on the AGCT, the Army General Classification Test, should be assigned to heavy weapons. ... It would have been pretty bad if a college graduate and a law school graduate couldn't score high [laughter] on the General Classification Test, which was made for eighteen-year-olds coming in, you know. ... Well, anyway, from there, eventually, I was promoted to first lieutenant and put as company commander, well, not yet, but, what happened was, I was put in charge of problems all over ... Camp Gruber, ... all over the camp, and I was riding around in a jeep. When they promoted me and made me company commander, Company D, ... D Company was selected for corps tests, and Colonel (McNamee?) called me in, he said, "Look, ... I know you've been riding around in a jeep for a couple of months and you're not in the best condition. ... I'll get you a doctor's excuse." I says, "Thank you, but, no thank you. What will those men think of me if I duck out?" you know. ... Right after I got this promotion, we were told that we were gonna get the corps tests and it came the great day. Let me tell you what day it was, for me; it was Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and, let me tell you, I had a great day. First thing you did in that corps test was, ... you ran around the

post with a man your own weight on your back, 150 yards, and then, you did push-ups, sit-ups, these things, and then, when that was all finished, you had crawled through enough pipes, you took off, you did five miles in two hours. ... Now, when you do a forced street march, the company commander's in the rear, and the reason for that is, you've got to keep them closed up. If they ever stretch out, you lose them ... and, also, all the lieutenants and sergeants had instructions, "You see somebody wavering, grab his weapon and carry it for him." I came in with losing only one man in the whole thing, you know, ... but, when we got into the regimental area, of course, I called them all to attention, "Tighten slings," you know, the slings you carry on your shoulder, "Tighten slings," and we marched into [the] company area with, "Hut, two, three, four," [laughter] at attention, proud, the infantry, and, when I got in there, my first sergeant says, "Can I get anything for you, Lieutenant?" and I just passed out flat. [laughter] So, I said, "Get me sugar." I licked sugar for awhile, until I sat up. ... I was home on a Saturday night, I was neither officer of the day or officer of the guard, and my wife went into labor, and it was a Saturday night. You try to get a cab in an Army town on a Saturday night. So, we had to walk to the hospital, about a mile. ... I thought that baby was gonna be dropped on every street corner, and we got to the hospital, and the hospital was staffed by GI wives and nurses, so, when I brought my wife in, they said, "Oh, you can't go yet, Lieutenant. We need your help. We're short of help." So, [I said], "What can I do?" I ended up having to work on my wife's stomach, until they took her to the delivery room, and then, they let me go. So, I walked out in the corridor and there was a wicker chair there. Since they was taking reveille, you know, every morning at five, all I did was pull my cap over my eyes, sat in the wicker chair, and went out cold, fast asleep, and, suddenly, somebody was shaking me. It was the doctor. The doctor was also a rancher. So, he came in, he had boots laced up to his knees, corduroy pants, lumber jack shirt, and he kept saying, "Congratulations, Lieutenant, you have a son," and all I kept saying is, "How is my wife? How is my wife?" [laughter] That was what interested me. I didn't know this boy yet, [laughter] but, anyway, my wife was all right, and we were forbidden to leave the post all week. We could go [out] on weekends, if we didn't have anything. One of my buddies, Lemuel George Benjamin, who was Insurance Commissioner of the State of South Carolina, had gone home on leave, married his high school sweetheart, and come back. His father-in-law had given them a car. Now, in World War II, they weren't making any cars and you couldn't get any. So, a car was like a jewel. We were forbidden to leave the post, but, he had a new bride in town, and I had a new baby and my wife at the hospital. We knew that camp, every road in that camp. So, every night, ... after retreat, we used to pull off ... our uniforms, our ODs, and sneak out of camp. He'd dropped me off at the hospital, and I'd go to see my wife, and they'd always bring the baby in, ... and he'd pick me up at four in the morning, from the hospital. We'd drive back into camp, get right out and put on fatigues, ... and go out and take reveille, [laughter] very trying period. Then, the orders came for us to go overseas. ... We left, I got somebody to pack my wife up and the baby. ... We didn't have a crib, what we had was a laundry basket; that's what he slept in. Anyway, [I] went overseas and landed in Marseilles and they marched us up to the hills in back of ... Marseilles. ... Since, I had been a practicing lawyer, the Army never let me forget it, because I was forever on ... general courts, I mean, as defense counsel or trial judge advocate, which is the prosecutor, and the Army always had a very [funny way of doing it]. In combat, they used to wait 'til we ... came out of combat, and then, the cut order would say, "In addition to your primary duty as company commander, Company D, you will serve as," it was either trial judge advocate or defense counsel, and I told them they had it all wrong. They should have me on the courts when we were fighting and company commander [when we were pulled

out], [laughter] but, they didn't see it my way. ... I commanded that company through most of the combat and the Army used me in many ways. Since I had some languages, I was translating for them, and commanding the company, and I was ammunition officer for awhile, and, eventually, the war ended first, we were at Salzburg, Austria. ... This being Austria, they opened up the Mozarteum and put on the *Der ZigeunerBaron* for us, that's *The Gypsy Baron*, and they put Company D, there was a three-story house, into the middle apartment, with two small bedrooms. You can imagine putting a whole infantry company in there and I was as mad as hell. I figured, "That's a hell of a way to treat a combat outfit," and I let my unhappiness be known. Fortunately, because I had always been on courts, everybody up at division knew me. So, I let my anger ... out there, and then, one day, I received a call saying that Brigadier General Henning Linden our assistant division commander, would come down to inspect my quarters. I told the men not to make it look any better than it was. He came down, inspected it, and, a couple of days later, I received a call saying I was to go to Badgastein, which was a spa, and ... I was going to release ... units of the 101st Airborne. Now, what they were doing was, the Army had taken legations ... to Germany and Austria and interned them, ... the Italian legation, the German legation, all the other ones, and interned them in Badgastein, and the duty that the 101st Airborne had was, every morning, get up, and walk these people for a walk, and take them shopping. ... So, I drove down to Badgastein. I looked around; there was a spa, with all magnificent hotels [around it], and one thing I knew, "Don't take the best looking hotel." The Army will rank you out of it just as sure as hell. So, I found a very nice hotel, the (Gasteiner Hof?), and that was for my men. Then, right across a narrow street, there was another building ... and it was a hotel, too. I took the third floor for my officers. Just let me explain something; remember, in World War II, most of the ... enlisted men were about eighteen years old. They had been through combat and here they were, in a town where the women all had lost ... their boyfriends or husbands fighting ... against the Russians. ... As I say, my young kids, and they were kids, you know, in World War II, they were seventeen, eighteen, head for the first opportunity for sex, and, remember, they had just come through someplace where they were lucky to be alive, and they thought they were gonna miss that joy of being human, but, they did well, and my officers were no older. Well, I'll tell you, ... not too long before we went overseas, the Army stripped us of all our second, and some first, lieutenants, because the casualty rate, as I told you, was greatest amongst them, and we got all new replacements. Two of my officers ... had college, sophomores, and they were ... in the Reserve, so, when they reported to me, they were sophomores, that meant they were twenty years old, and, *mirable dictu*, I got one West Pointer. He was just as green as the rest of them, and, about that time, ... heavy weapons, we were firing over our own troops' heads, this was part of the training, and ... we had no trained lieutenants, but, my sergeants were trained. So, I gave orders to the new lieutenants, "Stand around, look important, don't get in the way of the sergeants. They know what they're doing," and they learned. [laughter] Everything went off well. ... Eventually, we were ordered overseas. We came in at Marseilles and ...

SH: Do you remember the date when you landed at Marseilles?

DL: [December 8-9, 1944] ... Anyway, ... there was like a mountain in back of Marseilles, they marched us up that mountain, put us in back, up there, and that's when ... I began to get plenty of duties. Divisions went overseas stripped of all their equipment. You drew your

equipment in your area that you (had gone to?). Because I was older than most lieutenants at that time and because I was a practicing attorney, I was getting all the jobs and I got the job to draw the equipment for my ... whole regiment. They threw me an Army field manual, so, I very carefully figured everything out and withdrew the equipment. I kept getting all these jobs; first, I was older than most of them and I was a practicing attorney, and so, I kept getting all kinds of jobs that they needed, and fighting our way up the peninsula, from Marseilles, on the way, I received my promotion to captain, and we eventually ended up in Alsace-Lorraine, and, at that time, it was the time of the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans were trying to put a column down, to cut us off on the plain, and orders came through to get off the plain, and we were there, and on our left flank was the 14th Armored Division, and my youngest brother-in-law was with ... the 14th Armored, but, there was no socializing at that time. [laughter] He was wounded there, by the way. ... At Alsace, we had quite a fight, and, one night, we were thin on the ground, really were, so, what was happening is, ... your company'd fight in this place ... all day; at night, ... they'd put them in trucks, and we rode them to the next place. Where they slept was on the truck, and I got called in one day and said, "It's my turn to take the convoy out and there'll be a lieutenant to lead us in the jeep." Now, we assembled, and ... that damned fool lieutenant took off and lost us, but, we knew Alsace by then, so, we knew where we were going, and we pulled up to a town, ... and I see that town even in my dreams. There were two houses at the entrance, with their sides there, and one of them had a big advertisement printed on it, painted on it, for (Lieb Resald Liquors?), and the guy was waving us down, and I had to think, "Do I talk to the bastard or [do] I shoot him?" but, you know, you didn't know where the loyalties were up in Alsace at that time. ... Anyway, I figured I'd talk to him. ... I got out and he warned me, in French, that the Germans had mined the bridge on the other side of town and set up mortars and machine guns. So, I grabbed the Sergeant and hiked, and we walked down to the bridge, and I listened, and, oh, the German they were speaking wasn't the dialect of there [Alsace]. It was very good *hoch Deutsch*. ... We got the hell out of there, and that was the night I blessed the fact that I knew French and German, [laughter] and, as I say, we went through ... all the battles, all the way across, and, eventually, the war ended, for us, at Salzburg. ... I told you, they put on a show for us and all that. ... I got this call one day to go down to [Badgastein], ... when I complained about how bad it was, ... over 140 men sleeping on the floor ... in a tiny house. He told me to go down to Badgastein. Now, you know, right away, *Bad*, in German, you know, is bath. I got down there and what a glorious town. An aside, some of my men still keep in touch with me, and two of them, recently, had gone back to Badgastein, to see it, and they tell me there's no longer a spa. It's a casino now. [laughter] ... We were doing fine [in our hotel], and they were beginning to send so many troops up to Paris, for a trip, and, when they came back, if they had a dose of clap, ... it was against the company commander's record. That wasn't very nice. Just about that time, penicillin came in, and the regimental surgeon was a friend of mine, so, I induced him to give me some penicillin, and I worked out a deal with ... an Austrian physician. I'll give him the penicillin, but, he's got to keep some, always, for my men. He could use it for his own patients. That worked out well. ... From then on, I had the best record in the Army. [laughter] ... Then, one day, I got word [that] the Army was going to send me 1250 survivors of the Holocaust ... from the Russian Zone. ... The Army could just tell me 1250, but, they didn't give me any other information, so, I prepared three hotels, just to have them ready for them, and, one great day, the trucks began to arrive, dumping 1250 people off, and I was the only man in Company D who had any foreign languages. So, I had to sort them out. To the old people, I could speak Yiddish. To the young people, I spoke German, and then, for a few

haughty people, I guess, who called Yiddish "jargon," to them, it was jargon, they wouldn't speak it, they wouldn't speak German, because that was the language of the conqueror, ... but, they learned that I ... spoke French. ... I'll always remember, the leader of that little group was a doctor, a Polish doctor, from ... Warsaw, and, every day, I made the rounds. Of course, [with] my own company, I spoke English, I used to end up every day ready to fall on my puss. I'm not a great linguist. You know, I knew a couple of languages, but, my God. Anyway, it all worked [out]. In those days, you came home on the number of points you had accumulated. There, I'd been company commander, ammunition officer, and I'd fought in France, Germany, Austria, I had enough ... points to take the whole damn company home, but, they wouldn't let me go, because ... this displaced persons camp was a great success, as you see, and I had left a wife and child at home, and I wanted to go home, and I'd been in the Army quite a few years by then, but, no soap. Then, eventually, orders came down from General Eisenhower's [headquarters] that only officers in the following categories could be held, and I wasn't in any of those categories, and I was going to go home. ... They always made a big party if you ever went home. So, they threw a big party, and it was ... a big building that we had it in, ... and Colonel (Bolduck?), who had replaced Colonel McNamee, came up to me; of course, ... what did you do up in the Austrian Alps, without your wife and everything else? ... You got drunk. ... He came up to me, thinking I must have been liquored up pretty good, and he says, "What do you want to go home for, Levy? Pay a nickel on a jitney bus?" I'll always remember that speech, and he said, "Tell you what we'll do. We'll transfer you to regiment," which was one town up, [Bad] Hofgastein, "promote you to major, AUS, Army of the United States, as a temporary rank, and we'll give you a USA captaincy, ... and then, we will transfer you to regiment, with a delay *en route* by way of Newark, New Jersey," ... and, by that time, I had [had] all the Army I was going to take. I had almost five years and I had this wife and child. I wanted to go home. So, I told him, "Thank you, but, no thank you. I'm going home." ... When I landed in the States, I rushed to the phone to call my wife. I had all the things to say to her and all I could say was, "Hello, Dear, I'm home." [laughter] I couldn't think of nothing more to say, ... all blanked out. ... Of course, I came through Fort Dix on the way home. One of my good friends, who had been in the Army and stationed at Dix, had picked up my wife and child and drove down here to see me, before they released me, and then, while I was there, they told me I would get out quicker if I joined the Reserve. So, I joined the Reserve, to hell with them, and then, they told me that, since my family was in Newark, I could have an overnight pass. So, I got home and my wife was living in an attic apartment, which she had paid up. ... I went to bed that night. The next morning, she brought my son in to see me. He took one look at me and said, "Get out of Mommy's bed." [laughter] I was a stranger. All day long, "Get out of Mommy's chair. Don't touch Mommy's books." ... Well, anyway, I eventually got out of the Army. Do you want anything after the Army?

SH: Yes, please.

DL: I had been asked, before I came home, by Rabbi Bohnen, who was the Jewish chaplain of the regiment, to stop at the seminary, a conservative Jewish seminary, and talk to the rabbi up there. He said, "I've been writing him [about] what's happening and he's accusing me of anti-Semitism, because [I am] telling him what the refugees were like." ... The most help I got was from the Joint Distribution Committee, an arm of the Jewish business, and they asked me to stop, because they knew I lived in Newark and all this was in New York City. So, when I got over, I

went to the Joint Distribution Committee. Somehow, they looked up my camp and immediately offered me a job to go back. I says, "Thank you, but, no thank you. [laughter] I've had all the Europe I want for awhile," ... but, then, I got this job with the Hatfield Wire and Cable, a branch of a bigger outfit, and the way they sold ... their cable, their wire, electric wire and telephone wire, was through independent sales agents in each state, and my first job ... was distributing ... the wire to all these men, and, when there was a shortage of copper, I had to figure out formulas, you know, who gets what, who gets less, but, they were expanding, and, eventually, I was appointed general manager of the plant. Since I had some chemistry and physics, it was no great problem reading a formula, and, since I had been a leading man for quite awhile, it wasn't too bad, especially having a knock-down, drag-out fight with the union every now and then, ... but, it was a good paying job, and ... I eventually ran the plant, and I retired. That was the job I retired from. No one was going to wait for a lawyer five years; ... I couldn't go back. ... By that time, I had bought a house in Mountainside, New Jersey, with my GI Bill, a beautiful place. I had an acre of ground and half of it woods, and the woods had wildflowers every summer, and I also developed a raspberry patch. ... I grew other vegetables and I also had twelve rose bushes. ... Anyway, it was a beautiful place ... and my sons went to school there. It was a good place to go to school. My older son, ... we were taking him around, looking at colleges, and ... he was going to see Brown. So, when we got up to Brown, I remembered that Rabbi Bohnen, the division chaplain, had a conservative Jewish synagogue in that town, so, I said to my wife, "Let's call him." So, I called him. He immediately invited me to come to services, it was Friday night, so, we went to services, and he was sitting up there, ... on the stage, and, as guests, my wife and I were brought to the front row. When the services were over, they lined up, you know, at the door ... and he kept looking at me. He says, "Where do I know you from?" He didn't recognize me. I says, "From two places, Rabbi." He says, "Where?" I said, "Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, and Badgastein, Austria," and he says, "Captain Levy," you know, and insisted I come visit the next day. My son really benefited from that, because he was admitted to Brown and graduated from Brown, *cum laude*, and, every holiday, Rabbi Bohnen had him up to his place. He said it was marvelous, ... but, later on, when my son was practicing law, ... here, in town, a young lawyer from New England came down, his name was Bohnen. It was Rabbi Bohnen's son. The last I heard, Bohnen had Alzheimer's. Now, my wife developed Alzheimer's. There's no more devastating thing in this world than that. Here was a gentle, sweet woman who suddenly was biting me and kicking me, hitting me, and incontinent, totally incontinent, and I kept taking care of her, but, both my sons were now here. After graduating Brown, *cum laude*, my oldest son came to the University of Pennsylvania Law School. My son, Paul, graduated Lafayette College with highest honors, and then, got his Ph.D. from Columbia University. His Ph.D. was in European intellectual history. He put his old man to work, because he wrote his doctor's thesis on Nietzsche. I did a lot of German translating. My other son, when he was with ... the U.S. Attorney's office here, ... working on these drug cases and connections with France and Germany, he knew both languages, but, he knew his old man knew them better, so, every time they had letters, I was doing translating. ... As I say, the way I learned languages is very strange. I had Latin, three years of Latin, three years of Spanish, in high school, so, when I decided I wanted to know French, I taught myself French. It wasn't very hard, with Spanish and Latin in my background. Later on, I wanted German. Now, Yiddish is a dialect of German, *mittel hoch Deutsch*, and German grammar is very much akin to Latin grammar. ...

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DL: ... It's nothing compared to the *Alliance Française*, here, in Philadelphia. Here, it's run by French women, from Paris, and, ... every month, the meeting is in one of the restaurants here, in town. So, you get a good meal and you get good French. [laughter] Well, anyway, as I say, my wife ended up with Alzheimer's, and ... my sons said they didn't want us two hours away, twenty minutes was far enough, so, ... I sold my house, and my sons found this apartment for us here. ... They knew that I still do twenty laps in the pool, every other day, and I've been doing it all my life, almost, so, they found this place, which has its own swimming pool. ... It's a lovely place, because it has its own swimming pool, it has its own grocery, its own restaurant, and all kinds of shops, so that you can live here ... without leaving the place. ... My older son, eventually, ended up First Assistant US Attorney and, recently, the US Attorney resigned to become a member of ... the baseball club here, that is, you know, in administration. So, temporarily, my son, who was First Assistant US Attorney, is filling in, doing both jobs. ... Of course, he won't get the job permanently, because it has to be a Republican, ... but, right now, he's doing two jobs and working every weekend to do it. My younger son ended up here, in town, Center City Association [District]. I don't know, why, you know, in Jersey, we say, "Downtown," and here, they say, "Center City." Anyway, my son ended up, ... after working for the University of Pennsylvania in real estate, ... as director of the Center City Association [District]. ... What he's got is machinery, people sweeping all the streets downtown, all kinds of services for downtown. This is not part of the city. This is all independent. ... It's not part of taxpayer's [money]. They donate and they've ... cleaned up Center City. ... See, the reason behind it [is], what they're doing, the business people are competing with the suburbs, with all their special places to buy things, so, they cleaned up downtown. Well, my son ended up as a director, chief director, of this, and, also, all over America, they have these associations, and, for awhile, he was president of the federal [body], and he keeps being invited to speak in Australia, he's been there twice, and Belgium and France, and ... he gets to speak, and his wife is a moving picture critic on the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. They're very well-educated people, but, ... whenever he gets invitations to speak, he takes his wife with him, and, also, this is my son's third marriage, he has one daughter by the previous marriage, a wonderful girl, she's fifteen now, and they just adopted a baby, a little baby girl, five years old, and all she's got to say is, "Grandpa," and she can have the world, [laughter] beautiful little thing, ... but, my sons have done remarkably well. ... Five years ago, my wife, the doctors said that I could no longer take care of her. She needed more help than I could give her, so, I had to put her in the geriatric home run by Temple University, but, it was, originally, the Jewish home, so, they keep it Jewish, even though it's Temple University, and she died there. We'd been married fifty-nine years, (with) time out for my service in the Army, and so, I'm now living on my own here. It's a little lonely. [laughter] Anything else I can tell you? ...

SI: I wanted to ask you a few questions about your childhood. Could you tell us a little bit about the area of Newark where you grew up?

DL: Yes. ... My first memory is, my father bought a house on Belmont Avenue in Newark, ... right shortly before the intersection of Avon Avenue. Do you know Newark?

SI: Not really.

DL: Anyway, the next house, which was looked down at, from the third floor, where we were, on the corner of Avon, ... was owned by the Fishers, the baking company, and we were friendly with them. It was quite a nice place. Then, the next place, we were getting a little uppity, we moved up to South Penn Street, ... which was, then, a very expensive area, and he bought a house there, ... and I went to school from there. Right down the block from us was a huge Catholic cemetery and, like all Jewish boys in my era, I had to go to (faytah?). ... So, I had to walk, of course, past that damned cemetery, and it was about two blocks long, and, I tell you, I couldn't get past it fast enough, [laughter] but, I was going to the Tenth Street Synagogue. Now, the Tenth Street Synagogue was quite a bit over, and there was one guy there, Mr. (Crim?), and he knew all kinds of languages. He's the one that trained me and I bless the day that I had a man of that caliber. ... That's where I went [through] ... the usual business of the bar mitzvah, you know, "Call to the Torah," is a bar mitzvah, and, amazing, I still have memories of the Hebrew I learned. I can ... still start the opening lines of the Torah, you know, [Mr. Levy recites the first few lines of the Torah in Hebrew], [laughter] "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." [laughter] Strange how your mind works, you know, some things hang on, some don't. ... Then, of course, I went off [to college]. My father's ... business went broke, so, I had to work my way through school. ... I was working in a gas station in Irvington, which is right above Newark, and, for the first time in my life, I lost a job, and, of course, if I didn't have a job, I ... wouldn't have any tuition money. ... My sister, God bless her, had driven up from the shore to get my mother, to take her down. When she saw I wasn't working, she said, "Come on down the shore with us, take a couple of days off." I say, "I can't. I can't afford it." She says, "Come on down." So, I wasn't hard to persuade. We got down to the shore; "Now, look for a job," she said. So, I started looking. I was standing at the corner of (Cookman?) Avenue and Main Street, you know that, ... down at the shore? That's Asbury Park, and a high school buddy of mine walked up to me and we had a bit of a history. He and I once fought a five-round battle over a girl, with gloves. Of course, neither one of us ever saw the girl later on, but, anyway, Eddie said, "What are you doing here, Dave?" I said, "I'm job hunting." He said, "My boss is looking for help," and I said, "Who is your boss?" He said, "Railway Express Agency, right in back of the ... railroad station." So, I went there and was immediately hired and he said, "You'll write waybills." ... I had been writing waybills [for] about a week when he walked in, he says, "Take your shirt off." I took my shirt off. He says, "With muscles like that, you're not pushing a pencil. ... You're on a truck." That's what I really wanted, because that's where the money was. So, for the next four summers, I worked for the Railway Express Agency and always ended up with enough money to pay tuition down and buy the books, because there were tips, a lot of tips. "Lady, what floor do you want this trunk on?" [laughter] and, winters, I drove taxicabs, and, that way, ... I worked my way through school. ... It wasn't exactly the academic paradise, but, it was the best I could do, you know, but, one thing, I don't know if you know it, but, amongst Jewish people, the highest good is not money, the highest good is learning, and my father imbued me with that attitude, and, of course, he also made me a patriot. [laughter] ... So, I went on and got all these languages behind me, learned languages, did a lot of things, and here I am, ninety-three years old, and, unfortunately, as I say, my wife of all those years is gone, and it's a rather lonely life, but, I have grandchildren.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about your mother?

DL: My mother came from a very large family and the courage ... of those old immigrants, it amazed me. My grandfather, I didn't know [him]. He was dead before I was born. ... I knew my grandmother, but, that was the only one I knew. They came to America with six children, four daughters and two sons. Now, remember, these were religious people, so, they wouldn't eat the food that the boat supplied. That was what they would call (*trafe?*). ... They packed food and God help them if they took hard storms. [If] they were delayed, they went hungry. Of course, the children wouldn't go hungry, but, they would, but, they landed in Newark, and so, ... I saw my grandmother for the first time, ... I mean, I never knew any other grandparent except this woman, and, every time she came to visit us and stayed overnight, I had to say my prayers for her before I went to sleep. ... In that era, Jewish women were not educated. The men, always, ... were learning, but, women never got any. It wasn't part of the tradition. Of course, it's all changed now. ... My oldest son's wife is a professor here, at Temple University. She teaches ... health subjects and ... they have three children, my oldest son. ... Last year, their son ... went to Lafayette College. ... The summer before the senior year, he had worked for an insurance company here in town, and they told him, ... when he graduates, come back, there'd be a job for him, so, he went back, and ... they're training him to be an actuary, and that's a very high paying job, and, what gets me, while he's getting the training, they're paying him \$40,000 a year. That was executive pay when I was [working], you know. "*D'autres fois, d'autres coutumes,*" "Other times, other customs." [laughter] Their oldest daughter is down at Ducane University, studying the same thing her mother had. She's on a program that you go right through to a Masters and she's working, now, off her last part of the Masters Degree. Their youngest son is just about to enter high school. ... As I told you, my other son had one daughter by a previous marriage, a wonderful child, fifteen years old, and they just adopted this baby girl, a beautiful little thing, a five-year-old. As I said, she can have the world from me. [laughter] Is there anything else I can tell you?

GK: Did your parents ever tell you anything about their lives in Russia?

DL: Very little. You see, my father left quite young, ... and my mother's family came from Minsk, and, ... as I say, of course, girls weren't educated. I had two uncles. ... My mother's whole family settled in Newark, ... and I never knew any aunts, I only knew *tantas*, you know, and my uncles, one of them became a builder, carpenter, and then, eventually, a builder, and the other one had a saloon on Prince Street in Newark. ... When my mother took us shopping, down Prince Street, which was a great Jewish shopping area, we always stopped into see Uncle Jake, because Uncle Jake had a tap with ginger ale, and so, any time his nephews came in, you got a glass of ginger ale. [laughter] ... It was a nice way to grow up. I mean, you had good schooling, and Newark did have good schooling, and college, law school, and that's about it.

SI: Since Prohibition was still in effect when you were in college, do you have any memories of Prohibition?

DL: ... Every Friday night, we used to go to, "strike a blow for Liberty." [laughter] ... We'd go to some gin mill and have a beer or two, and one of my wonderful memories is, riding home from taking ... the bar exam was the day that Prohibition ended, and I was in a car with a friend, we had about four guys, and we stopped at the first saloon and ordered a beer. [laughter] I'll always remember that, but, my father liked wine, ... and I grew up [on that], and I still like a

glass of wine with dinner at night, even though, now, I do it alone, I still want a glass of white or red wine, depending on what I'm having for dinner. I don't drink hard liquor, let me tell you. In World War II, when you came out of combat, you knew damn well you were gonna have nightmares, and so, what you did was, you got all the hard liquor you could and drank yourself into a stupor, so [that] you wouldn't have any. When I came home, I swore I'd never drink hard liquor again, and I didn't, I don't, but, I drink a little wine at night. That's my only thing, but, ... [if] you meet anybody who tells you that he was in combat and he wasn't afraid, just know that you're dealing with a liar or a psychopath. ... How could you not be afraid, when you're standing there and all hell's breaking loose around you? So, as I say, that's one thing I knew. Don't believe him. You're all scared, but, courage is doing what you had to do in spite of your fear. The other thing we learned in the infantry, God preserve us from heroes. Heroes draw fire and gets you killed. So, I used to tell them, "Do what you're supposed to do, but, please, don't be a hero. We can do without heroes." [laughter]

SI: Why did you choose to go to Rutgers-Newark? Can you tell us a little about your days as a student there?

DL: ... It wasn't Rutgers. It was University of Newark then, which was taken over by Rutgers, but, ... they really staffed it well. ... When I was driving cabs, now, in those days, the cabs were open in front. The driver's side had no windows or anything, it just had two doors, and all my law books were piled up, and, every time I didn't have a fare, I was studying the law, [laughter] in an open cab. ... Now, I always associate laws with cabs, [laughter] but, then, when I started practicing in Newark, it was the depths of the Depression, so, building a practice was very difficult. [When] I was just really getting on my feet, why, I left for the Army, but, I was just beginning to build a practice, ... but, the Army never let me forget that I was a lawyer. I tried [cases] and the things you learn; in the Army, only a division has general courts martial jurisdiction. When the war ended, my division was surrounded by independent battalions, so, we got all their court martial cases, because they had to send them to us. I got one ... to prosecute. I was, then, the trial judge advocate. It was a few miles away. It was on the *Autobahn*. So, I drove down to see these [men]. The charge was that these colored boys had ... raped a mother and a daughter. ... Before I got to see them, ... I got waved down, and a sergeant pulled up, you know, and he walked up to me, and he says, "Captain, you're under arrest." I says, "What the hell are you talking about?" He said, "You're under arrest, out of uniform," ... and there, the *Autobahn* was built just like the Jersey [Turnpike], with gas stations in the middle. So, I get hauled up to the station there and there's a brigadier general ... holding special court. Can you imagine? The war is over now. Here I was, a decorated infantry officer, and I didn't wear the decorations, of course, at that time, but, the only thing I kept, really, was the Combat Infantryman's Badge, so, he goddamn knew I was a combat soldier, and what I was being hauled off for? I was out of uniform. ... The reason I was out of uniform is, I was wearing the cap instead of the helmet liner, with the netting on it. Can you imagine? I mean, this is the crap it came down to at the end and that was what's-his-name's territory, ... Patton, typical, you know. It made you disgusted, you know, ... that this was important that you wear a helmet liner with netting on it, ... but, the cap was proper in my division. I mean, I wasn't out of uniform for my division, but, there were a lot of people in the Army who shouldn't have been there. [laughter] I mean, Patton was also a damned fool. You wanted to know [about] my mother; my mother ... was the youngest in the family and ... how my father met her, I don't know, when he came down

to Newark for some reason. Newark, by the way, for quite awhile, was a center of clothing manufacture. What happened is, men's clothing, ... the outfits that made it were in New York. What they did was, they had the customers, they got the cloth, and they cut these suits, but, they sent them to Newark to be joined. Newark was a big business. By the way, I also represented the association of those people who did it and, ... as I say, ... they joined the clothes. So, my father's shop, we did only coats, that's all they did, and a couple of summers, I worked in my dad's shop. When you make overcoats, the edges are swelled, like this, so, one of the things you do is put them in the (hafen?) machine and bring the weight down, so [that] you got them down to size, so [that] they can sew buttons on them; that was my job. [laughter] Of course, he couldn't give me anything more difficult than that. All I can say is, it's been a good life.

SI: When you were practicing law in Newark, which type of law did you practice?

DL: Anything that came over the door. Remember, it was the depths of the Depression and, you see, the courthouse was right up the block. I had my office on Branford Place, and it was just a couple of blocks from the big courthouse, which had a magnificent library, so, anything came through, I would go up and become an expert by chasing down all the cases. My son tells me they don't use Shepard's Citators anymore, the way I had. Now, it's all on ... computer.

SH: How did you meet your wife?

DL: I was on the swimming team ... of the YMHA in Newark. I was coming down one day, oh, and I also learned one other thing; the YMHA in Newark was right on the corner of High Street and Kenny, and that was just the edge of the Third Ward, which was almost completely Jewish at that time, and there were a lot of ... Jewish boxers who used to come to the Y to workout. ... Since I was a brash kid, I used to get to box with them. They'd let me box with them. They also taught me the difference between amateurs and professionals. [laughter] One day, I was boxing with a fellow, and he left me an opening, and I hooked the left, sat him down there. We had big gloves on. He said, "I thought we were sparring, Kid." I said, "Sorry, mistake." A few minutes later, I crossed a right on his jaw. After that, I didn't lay a glove on him, but did they give me a body beating. I couldn't breathe right for a week. He taught me the difference between an amateur and a professional. [laughter] ... I was, generally, on the swimming team there. One day, I came to the Y and, as I walked past the bowling alley, I saw this very pretty girl talking to a couple of people. Naturally, I went down and was introduced to her, and she was a beautiful thing, and we started going together. It was the depths of the Depression. At the museum, my wife was making the munificent sum of fifteen dollars a week. I was making whatever came through the door, which was not very much. So, it was a long time before we got married. Eventually, things began to pick up a little, and we got married, and our apartment house was on High Street and Kenny, right across from the YMHA, and so, it was from there that I went off to the Army. ...

SI: Which year did you enter the Army?

DL: ... I think it was '42.

SI: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

DL: ... Yeah, Pearl Harbor, ... it was 1941, oh, I was on High Street, ... I was married then, and I was sitting on High Street, Newark, and Newark wasn't the city it is now. It was entirely different. You could grow up in Newark, then. It wasn't all black, as it is now, and, as I said, it had one of the best school systems in the East. ... Now, my sons went to school, we were living in Mountainside then, and they had this arrangement of four high schools that were joined together, so, they went, first, to the high school in Summit, New Jersey, and then, to one in Springfield, [which] they graduated from. ... They were good high schools, because my sons went off to good colleges, you know. My oldest son, [as] I say, graduated [from] Brown, *cum laude*. He was all Ivy League, a little expensive though. [laughter]

SH: You had begun to tell us before about a case you were assigned to as a prosecutor in Germany.

DL: Yeah, that's when ... I was arrested.

SH: What was the outcome of the case? What happened to the charges you were facing?

DL: Well, he fined me and told me that he was putting a [mark] on my record. When I got back to my division, they threw it all out. They wouldn't fine me and ... I wouldn't have any black mark against me on my record. So, I have a very clean record (over the years?), and I still hear from some of the men who served with me, and it's a wonderful feeling. One day, ... my oldest son got a letter from one of the men who served with me, and what they said was, "Take good care of David, Michael. He was a good officer," which made me feel wonderful, you know. ... They didn't have to do that, you know what I mean, and I heard from them recently, and they told me that Badgastein, ... two of them have gone back there, and it's now a casino. It's no longer just a spa, it's a gambling joint, and they told me all about the hotels we lived in, and then, they'd gone back to Camp Gruber, where we trained, and ... I get reports from them, not that I'd like to know about Camp Gruber, but, no, it was a nice feeling, that they still remember me, ... and remember me kindly. One of them I had to bust because of something he did and he wrote me, one day, saying, "And I richly deserved it, Sir. Don't worry."

SH: Were your men from all over the country or were they from a specific state or region?

DL: ... The 42nd, that's why it was called the Rainbow [Division]. We had men from almost every state in the Union and, you know, wars are fought by kids. It's hard for me to [comprehend], you know. These were ... eighteen, seventeen-year-olds, nineteen was an old guy, you know, and it's shameful. My theory is, ... wars should have to be fought only by men in their forties. There wouldn't be anymore war. ... It was my country and, ... with the father I had, to whom this was so wonderful, he imbued me with the same feeling, you know. I had a younger brother who never made it, never even got through high school, which was such a disappointment to my father. I had two older sisters and, God bless them, can you imagine [the] two girls when my mother brought home this baby boy from the hospital? They were older than I was. They spoiled me rotten and, for all my life and all their lives, they took care of me. If any problem or anything [arose], they were there, and ... they're all dead now, ... but, it was awful nice to grow with two wonderful sisters. ...

SH: Have you ever read a book or seen a movie that accurately depicted events similar to what you went through in World War II?

DL: I try not to go. ... I don't want, it's hard to describe here, but, the horrible feeling you get when it comes back, your fears, waking up with nightmares, as I say, "No thank you." ... I stay away from anything about the war. ...

SH: Did you experience any anti-Semitism in the military?

DL: In the Army? No, I heard so many men talk about it, so far as I'm concerned, I never saw it. ... Well, I was very highly regarded where I was, I mean, so that I never had any anti-Semitism, ... and I never saw that. ... I was lucky. I mean, one thing I remember, when my time came to go home, officers all through the regiment they came in to see me, ... and one of them, [who] was from some Southern town, said, "You know, I'm delighted I met you, David." I says, "Why?" He said, "When I was growing up, all Jews had horns, we were taught that, you know. ... I'm glad I met you." I said, "You know, I had my horns cut off before I got in the Army." [laughter] ... [During] my stay in the Army, I was well-regarded. In fact, they wanted me to stay in. ... What they offered me ... was a USA captaincy. I was then about five years overage in grade. ... Who the hell wanted to be an old man in the Army? Another thing, I wouldn't want my sons to grow up as Army brats, that I knew, because I can remember, every once in awhile, when I'd be officer of the day, ... and I'd be sitting at the desk at night, after the war was over, and I'd have a surrounding of young officers popping all kinds of questions at me, ... legal questions. They had been moved; you know, every time their father ... [had] to move, they moved, ... which means they never got continuous schooling or anything. That wasn't the way I wanted my sons to grow up. You seem to know something about the Army, the way you talk.

SI: I have picked up a lot of the jargon from conducting these interviews.

DL: Oh.

GK: To go back to your college days, since you studied political science, correct?

DL: Yeah.

GK: What were your impressions of the situation in Europe before the United States entered the war?

DL: Horror, a feeling of horror. ... You're too young. You don't remember what the Nazi regime really was like, you know, ... and then, the refugees were coming in, and a lot of them came to Newark, because what had happened was, you see, a lot of the young doctors had ... studied at clinics in Austria, Vienna, things like that, so, when there was trouble, they helped these people come out that they had met. ... So, there were a lot of refugee doctors in Newark. I don't know if you know that. Yes, there were refugee doctors. ... I got to know quite a few of them, ... and then, of course, ... every once in a while, some refugees would come in, you know, and [their] stories were horrendous. Now, I saw Dachau, after we ... got it, and down the road

from Dachau, about one mile, was a village, and the people of that village swore they never knew anything about the horror going on. The trucks were coming by them regularly, loaded with people. The smoke was coming from the crematorium, but, "they didn't know anything about it," and I lost almost all my respect for the German people. ... It was such a horror. ... When I saw Dachau was after it was long over, but, I got to know the place pretty well. ... You see, my father was what the Jews call an Epikoros. Now, that's the Hebrew [word] for "Epicurean." He was a non-believer, and ... he was interested in Jewish culture, but, not in the religion. The religion meant nothing to him, and that's how I grew up, except [that] I got the training, but, I could never believe, you know, and then, when I got to combat, all religions become silly to me. The one sight I won't forget, it had nothing to do with [that], there was a dead German soldier lying in the road and the trucks were riding over him. Nobody stopped to pick him up. ... That picture ... always remains in my mind, that human beings could so treat another human being ... [like that]. ... Religions don't mean anything to me.

SI: How did your family feel about Zionism?

DL: My father, no, we were Americans, and, as I said, my father was totally irreligious. It didn't mean anything to him. Both of my sisters married. My oldest sister never had any children. My younger sister had quite a few children, one of them I see every now and then, here, because he's an adjunct professor at the dental school here, and, you know, he graduated here. His father was a dentist, and Noah, my nephew, is an orthodontist, you know, root canal work, and he teaches it at Rutgers, and so, every [time] ... he comes down here, we have dinner together, keep in touch. [laughter]

SH: Do you guys have any other questions?

DL: Is anything I told you useful to you in any way?

SH: Yes, absolutely.

SI: Yes.

GK: Yes.

DL: Oh, let me tell you something about ... these refugees; you must remember that they came out of the poorest parts of Europe and they were not educated people. ... When I was preparing the hotels for them, I remembered from my youth that ... the synagogue had to face east. ... On short notice, the best thing I could find was one small room ... facing east. I designated that as the synagogue. So, I was taking around the leaders of the group. When I got to this room, I apologized for the smallness and ... I told them that, the minute I had a little more time, I'd find a bigger room. Their reply was, anybody here understand Yiddish?

SI: No.

DL: They said ...

DL: ... Believers didn't come out of concentration camps. I can always remember the Jewish words, "*(Sorgen Sie sich nicht. Dieses ist bereits zu grossem?)*," "Don't worry. This is already too big," and how could they believe, after what they had been through? no, and, of course, I never was a believer, ... see, first, because of my background, my upbringing, but, my father used to read to us every night, after supper, and he used to read to us English or Yiddish novels. So, I can't tell you, at this time, in what language ... I heard Willkie Collins' *Moonstone*. I don't know whether it was a Yiddish translation, it's so long ago, ... and my sons have done me proud though. They were brilliantly educated. Michael graduated Brown, Ivy League, the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Ivy League; Paul, Lafayette, but, then, a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit more about your duties in D Company?

DL: ... I was company commander. Now, in those days, the heavy weapons companies had two platoons of machine guns, water-cooled, ... 1917 M1A1 [M1917A1], I always remember, and one platoon of mortars. Now, the importance of those companies, first, in defense, they were the basis of all your defense. You set up your machine guns, two platoons, so that they cross-fired. Then, ... after reconnaissance, any hollows that people could get into, you assigned to the mortars, and where there are too many, you got division artillery, ... but, you were the one in charge of setting up the defense. When you were on the attack, of course, you had to learn how to fire over the heads of your own troops. Also, if you are firing on a hill, the law of gravity maintains, so [that] I could ... set my machine guns up halfway up the hill, firing up to the hill, and it would drop, because gravity [would] make them drop, and you could kill people on the other side. ... All this useless knowledge I brought home from the Army; I mean, I was an expert machine gunner, I was an expert mortar man. I could drop a mortar on your lap at a mile, [laughter] but, ... things you remember, we caught a bunch of Germans in the woods and set up the mortars to (fire down?). ... When the mortars came down, they hit the branches. ... That would explode them. ... It was a killing thing. When I think back on it now, I must have killed an awful lot of people, and I'm not proud of it, but, it was the thing that had to be done. ...

SI: Was your division attached to the Seventh Army?

DL: Yeah. ... It was the Seventh, I believe, yes.

SI: General [Alexander] Patch's army.

DL: Yeah.

SI: Did you see combat in the Vosges Mountains?

DL: ... The Vosges Mountains? Yeah, I was all through that area, and one thing [that was] very nice, we came out of the combat in Alsace, and it was vicious. The Colonel called me in and he says, "Levy, you're the best educated man in the regiment. You will write all of the commendations." Then, he spoiled it all. He told me, "This is our quota," and all of it was on

quota. You got so many Bronze Stars, so many Silver Stars; after that, it's all fruit salad to me. I have no use for it. ... You know, you used to think, you know, "This is great." ... You know, sometimes, there's poetic justice. On the court was one officer; the president of the court was a Texas judge who was a Reserve officer, but, ... the lower member of the court was a young officer, West Pointer, who the Army had sent to law school, and he was no good. ... I was defending a kid one day who was accused of robbing one of the moving pictures on the post. At one point, when I was doing a little hard cross-examining, he got up and said, "Levy, ... no more of your shyster lawyer tricks," and, boy, I was ready to bust, and I got up and said, "When I took an oath at the bar, I promised that ... if I defended a man, he would get every defense the law allows him, and I intend to do the same thing in the Army," and I invited him outside. The judge says, "Clear the court, clear the court." That was the end. About a year later, they were passing out decorations, and I was getting a Bronze Star, and who pinned it on me? this bastard, [laughter] and I grinned in his puss, because I felt so good about it. ... So, he says, "What are you grinning about?" I says, "I'm looking at who's pinning it on me." [laughter]

GK: Did you ever interact with German prisoners of war?

DL: ... Yeah, I had some of them, you know, and I could speak German, so, you know, ... I'd always get called in if there was problems like that. They would get me. ... One thing that was very nice, after the war was over, ... they gave me a pass to Vienna, ... I was on occupation duty, and ... they owed me all this leave time, but, I got a pass to go up to Vienna. They let me take my jeep, my driver. My driver was a German boy who was in the US Army, he and his brother. They let him change his name. When I was introduced to him, I forget what name they had given him, but, the accent was [a dead giveaway], but, the Army let them change their name, in case they were captured, they wouldn't be ... Germans who had escaped. So, we went up to Vienna. They put me in a hotel on the (*Gertalshasse?*). "*(Gertal?)*," means, "The outer." See, there's an inner ring and an outer ring. This was on the outer ring, and assigned me ... a place to eat, in a restaurant downtown, but, ... what I thought when I came there, I thought I saw a theater right nearby, so, I walked down, and, by God, it was, and the Vienna Opera House was (*in constant finichta?*), ... entirely destroyed, by bombing, and they were doing all their shows at this opera house right there. ... I figured, "Boy, ... they were doing the [German] operettas." So, I went down to buy tickets. So, my driver, a good kid, says, "Captain, can I come to the opera with you?" I said, "Of course." I says, "I'll get you a ticket, but, remember, you're gonna have to miss supper." He says, "Oh, no, ... the mess sergeant at the enlisted man's mess is a real nice guy. I'll bring you there for supper," and he brought me up a loaf of bread this big, ... meat and everything. ... At the intermission, you don't stand in the corridor. They had a separate room, and there were the Russian officers, with their shoulder boards, all dressed [up], and me, I was still wearing a filthy, right out of combat, field jacket and everything else, and ... this Russian officer came up to me, he says, "*Sprechen Sie Deutsches?*" I says, "*Ja.*" I say, "*(Esque?) vous parlez français?*" He says, "*Oui.*" ... So, we began to talk, you know. ... It was very interesting, ... the point of view of a Russian officer. ...

SH: What did he tell you?

DL: A lot of things that I already knew, but, [he] confirmed other things. He wanted to know how I liked the operetta, of course. I bless the fact that I had learned French and German, ... I

taught myself French and German before I went to Europe, and to have the languages was so important, to me and to my company. Now, they're getting a little rusty. I do belong to the *Alliance* here, ... and it's very good, but, I have no German. ... I have to find some [group], there is a group here, I think, ... otherwise, I'll lose it. If you don't use it, you lose it, ... is the English expression, "If you don't use it, you lose it." That's true. ...

SH: Did you ever interact with any other Allied troops, British soldiers, for instance?

DL: No. ... The only thing I ever saw, well, we were up in Alsace, ... one day, I (ground?) my phone, you know, to talk to battalion, and somebody was saying, "*La ligne est occupée, la ligne est occupée?*)." Suddenly, it dawned on me, he's saying, "The line is busy," in French. So, I went out and traced the lines, you know, I walked down and came to the headquarters, and I think I told you, at that time, when we were ordered off the plain, De Gaulle said ... it would be a horrible blow to French morale to give up Alsace once more to the Germans. ... They put in an Algerian contingent, led by a French officer. So, I pointed out to that French officer how dangerous [it was], because, ... on the other side of the Rhine, ... the houses were white. The Germans had painted their tanks white and put them up against the houses, where you couldn't see them, and I told them what had happened, but, he said, "No," he's going to attack. Now, ... they were Algerians, they were good troops, because they started across, toward the thing. Now, they began ... to get artillery, but, they were good troops; they didn't stop moving forward. Now, artillery cannot shorten its range as fast as you can walk fast. They can't do it that fast. So, they got all the way across without being mowed down. ... They were good troops. ... I had been told [that] I had to go back and make reconnaissance of the area we were going to defend. I was a heavy weapons man, so, I had to set it up. On the way back, the 14th Armored was pulling off the plain, and it was all ice on the ground, and (I kept?) riding huge tanks, and they're sliding back and forth, like this. My heart was in my mouth, [laughter] but, thank God, ... anyway, when I got back there, it was a city with lots of canals and bridges, and we had set it up so that there was FFI, the *Françaises de l'Intérieur*, and American soldiers on all the bridges. When I got back that night, there was nobody on the bridges and all they were doing was firing all over town. I figured, "Let's get the hell out of here, as fast as we can," and, of course, we expected to give up the city. Fortunately, we didn't. All I can say is, this is the most I've talked about the war since, I think, I came back, and the memories are not pleasant, so, you don't try to ... evoke them once again, and ... happenstance. The idea that ... I ended up in Badgastein is sheer happenstance, and, yet, at the end, I get all the Jewish refugees, and I was able to speak to them in [several] languages, and it made some ... difference that somebody could ... talk to them. Not one man in my whole company had any language. Americans don't. ... What the difference is, many years later, when ... we traveled in Europe, you know, as tourists, ... I usually used to rent a car, I hadn't gone blind then, and I was still driving, and you drive along the road in France and you'd get a German radio station. Everything is that close, you get it, ... but, if you ever go to France, ... go down to Southern France. ... At one end, the Cap D'Antibes is where Picasso spent the war and left all his paintings. Halfway up, there's another former station, then, a little further up, is one place with a remarkable building, which is an art gallery. The building itself is an art gallery, and then, at the other end is a museum with all Chagall windows, and I was lucky to get there on a day that the sun was coming through the right window, and ... it's a great part of France, Provence, and Provence is very close to Italy, and the Provinces don't speak French the

way that Northern French do. They speak it more like Italian. I got a pretty good education, [laughter] the five years I spent in the US Army.

SH: While in combat, how often did you receive your mail, have an opportunity to take a shower, get fresh supplies, etc.?

DL: ... They always got you the mail, except when one of the ships got sunk, ... but, mail was good. The other thing we always laugh at, the Red Cross, they'd come around, always when you came out of combat, and, if you supplied the coffee, they'd make coffee for you, and [I] had no use for them. It doesn't mean a thing, the Red Cross. ... All they did was try to hog a little of the glory, but, did nothing useful, nothing. When I learned that my brother-in-law, who was with the 14th Armored, had been wounded, when we came out of combat and everything, I tried to get word [to him], through the Red Cross, couldn't locate him. Later on, after it was all over, one of my other brothers, who was in the Army and was at Eisenhower's headquarters, came down to see me, and we both went looking for ... this other brother-in-law, ... who was the youngest in the family, and, eventually, thank God I spoke French, ... I got to a hospital, and they told me that they had just sent him off to Paris and England. ... Of course, I couldn't get to see him then, but, most of us who come out of combat have no use for the Red Cross, ... glory gobblers, that's all, you know. I didn't need them to make coffee for me. [laughter] ... My cooks were good enough to make coffee, under any circumstances.

SH: How often did you get a shower or a hot meal?

DL: ... Not too often. I lived on K rations [for] so long, I hated it. [laughter] Look, how could they cook a meal, with what? but, we didn't starve. We got K rations, ... hardly what I would call a gourmet feast, but, ... every once in awhile, you got a decent meal somewhere, you know. ... Of course, after the war, ... after I put my men up at the (Gasteiner Hof?), I went to the (loan bill?), where you hire people, and I hired cooks, and then, ... I had to leave my own cooks in the kitchen, so [that] we wouldn't be robbed blind, because they were hungry then. They really were; food was short, ... but, we ate well, because I had good cooks by that time. I had professional cooks in the kitchen. ... What else would I do with the money? ... Almost all my money went home, and, one day, I got invited up to a poker game at regimental headquarters, where the Colonel was playing and a couple of others, and I sat down. It turned out, I was a pretty good poker player. I ended up with more money than I'd seen in a long time. ... We had a gentleman's agreement. If one of the men gave you a check, if they had lost, you never cashed it. That was the gentleman's agreement, you didn't do that. You used up your cash, too bad, you know what I mean, but, the next payday, you'd have cash again, ... but, yeah, it was quite a poker game, but, then, I discovered I was a real good poker player, and a very lucky one, but, going home, it took forever.

SH: Really?

DL: Well, we were parked someplace, and, every once in awhile, we were told, "The ship ... has got a leak," or something, and we'd wait, wait, wait, 'til, one day, I was told that the ship was in, but, we'd have to wait, because something was wrong with it. So, I, ... somehow, stole a jeep and we went down to the boat. I got on board and talked to the Captain. He said, "There's

nothing wrong with the boat. We'll leave whenever we're supposed to." Boy, that was such good work. [laughter] This was a relief to me. ... You know, I wanted to go home. As I said, I had left a wife and child at home. ...

SH: Do you remember the name of either the ship that brought you to Europe or the one that took you home?

DL: ... [No]. The ships that took us overseas, we always went in convoy, and so, we were surrounded by destroyers and things, and I held French classes on the way over. [laughter] They wanted me to teach some French. I thought, "Well, okay, we'll hold French classes."

SH: Were you ever worried about being sent to the Pacific after the war ended in Europe?

DL: Oh, yes. We were slated to go to the South Pacific, the 42nd Infantry, and then, the day came when we were told the Japanese had surrendered and we wouldn't have to go. Let me tell you, I got drunker than all hell. It was celebrating, you know, we weren't gonna fight. ... By that time, I had combat up to here. [laughter]

GK: How did you hear about the atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan?

DL: The news came through for us, always. We weren't short of news at any time, actual news. The American Army did very well and I have a great deal of respect for that Army, since I was once part of it. [laughter] Oh, I was on Reserve after the war was over. [Along] came Korea and I got called up to [be] interviewed. The man interviewed me. When I told him how old I was, that ended it, right there. I was over forty then. I was only a captain. At forty, you were a general. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

DL: Well, if [there is] anything you would like to hear, if [there is] anything more you want to know from me, just let me know. ...

SH: You mentioned earlier that you were slated to defend two African-Americans.

DL: Oh, yes, because the Army didn't integrate them then. They were all ... [in a] separate battalion, and, since they didn't have court martial jurisdiction, they were too small, battalions don't, and they were accused of rape, ... and they were bivouacked right with us, with the division, so, we got their cases. ... This was a mother and a daughter who were supposed to have been raped by these black men. ... When I interviewed the mother, ... the mother tells me, it got cold, so, she got up and got blankets for her daughter, and herself, and the men they were sleeping with. So, I figured, if that was rape, then, ... I don't know what rape was. Now, ... remember, the Europeans didn't have any prejudice against blacks, I mean, because they didn't know them. ... As far as they were concerned, they were Americans.

SH: Was it difficult to keep your men from fraternizing with the Germans?

DL: Oh, you've got a bunch of kids, and here they are, with all the women loose around, what do you expect them to do? ... The goddamn Army hasn't got any sense. I mean, here, these kids had been through combat and come out alive. They were all so young that they had never had sex in their lives, they were too young, and, now, it was all available. ... You couldn't blame the kids. I mean, it was a chance to have a little life, you know, joy, and the Army would send them, ... in groups, up to Paris. I got to Paris. We'd come out of the combat in Alsace and, after that bitter fight and all that, I got ... a telephone call, "Captain, it's your turn to go to Paris." ... Off we went. I went up with another officer and about ten enlisted men, in a truck. We got partially down the road, and then, we got hauled down by the MPs and told we couldn't go on, because ... we hadn't yet captured the ports, so, all the supplies were coming in through Le Havre and coming over this road. We had a freeze and a thaw, so, the road was, you know, [left] with lots of holes. So, I was a short way down the road when we got stopped by the MPs and told we couldn't go down the road, but, ... for some reason, I don't know why, I was wearing my Combat Infantryman's Badge. The Sergeant, he says, "Come with me, Captain. I'll show you something," and he took me to his headquarters. He says, "This is where all the stops [are] where you will be stopped. Figure a way around the places." I sat down, of course, every officer teaches map reading, and I did a lot of good map reading then; I could get around every one of those points where we would be stopped, except [for] the one right outside Paris. So, I figured, "Well, when we get that far, we'll (fool the guards?)." So, [we] got around, got around, got to Paris, stopped right outside of Paris, and ... we dropped the tops, so [that] you couldn't see the ... ten men sitting in back, and they come up to me, "What have you got on board, Captain?" "Empty." He knew damn well I was lying. He said, "Go ahead." I got to Paris and the captains and lieutenants were put up at the Hotel Louvre, which is on Avenue (De La Paga?). At one end is the Opera House and a couple of blocks up is the Louvre Museum, the great museum. Now, I had a ball, first, at the Museum Louvre, and then, I went down to the Opera House, and then, I took a trip out to Marie Antoinette's house, ... what do you call it?

SH: Versailles?

DL: ... Way out there, and it was a wonderful trip for me. I mean, later on, after I got back and was reestablished, ... my wife and I began to travel to Europe. I went to Paris, of course, and we stayed at the Hotel Louvre. [laughter] After that, we traveled in Europe every summer, and it was wonderful, but, I would never go to Germany or Austria. I couldn't bring myself to go there, too many bad memories, you know. ... I couldn't go there and I couldn't get over my feeling about Germans, [it is] difficult for me. ... I went to England, and, by God, the most civil people in the world are the English, and I went up to [the] north of England, which is beautiful country up that way, and saw England, I went to France, and those were the two countries we traveled always. I used to get three weeks vacation, so, it was very nice, you know. ... When I was still on occupation duty, the Army gave me leave to go to Vienna. ... Up in Vienna, I traveled around, beautiful city, oh, a gorgeous city, and, at the *Alliance Française* in Montclair, ... I became quite good friends with a couple of people; ... I met these Viennese women who grew up with a ... person teaching them French, as they were ... learning German, so that they were actually bilingual right from the beginning. Auerbach is the name, (real German?) and real Austrian, but, they got out in time. She was the wife of a physician, an Austrian physician. They got to America, and somebody told them that in Irvington, New Jersey, was a big German population, so, they bought a house there. They forgot to tell them that it was also the biggest

Nazi group in America, up in Irvington, one of the biggest. One thing I'll never forget, ... the Germans, the Nazis, used to get things going; the Third Ward in Newark, the Jewish section, all the tough guys used to (want to go up?). One day, ... there was a big meeting, and the tough guys in Newark went up there, and the police surrounded the group, the Nazis, to keep these people away, and one of the cops up there was Jewish, and, ... when this Jewish boy from the Third Ward came in, he wouldn't let him in, but, he used to say, "*(Nicht jetzt, nicht jetzt?)*," "Not now, not now." Then, he'd drop his arm and he'd say, "Yes," and they'd go in and slug the Germans. [laughter] "*(Nicht jetzt?)*," I'll always remember that. ...

[Tape Paused]

SH: Did your brother ever serve in the military?

DL: No. My father was very angry with him. He got married and had a baby right away, to avoid going, and I don't think my father ever forgave him. This is not how you're supposed to act. ... In fact, my brother never even finished high school. He was a terrible disappointment to my father, you know.

SH: Where did he live?

DL: He lived in California at the end. ... You know, it's strange, so many kids move to California, and one of ... my good friends, the widow of one of my good friends, had two children, ... and we were close friends, and the two kids got married and went to ... California, so, when her husband died, ... she moved to California, to be near her children and grandchildren. ... So far as I was concerned, California never held any particular ... things for me. The only thing was, on my fiftieth wedding anniversary, my sons gave us a trip to California, and, of course, I was doing business with a wine merchant in Summit, so, when he heard I was going there, he made arrangements for me to have a tour of one the big things. Of course, they have tours for everybody, except, ... when I got to this winery, they came looking for me, and then, he took me around, and, at every stop that we made, they opened a bottle of reserve wine. ... This man who was leading us brought in his friends, ... you know, who worked at the winery, too, to join us. ... I don't know how many bottles of wine we killed, [laughter] a very nice trip. Can I get you anything? ... There's a nice little restaurant downstairs. [Do] you want to come down and have a little something there, a bite, ... before you go home?

SH: That is up to the boys. Thank you very much for letting us interview you.

DL: Don't worry about the two boys. I mean, why don't you come down with me? They make fairly good ethnic food. You know what blintzes are?

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/5/02

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/18/02

Reviewed by Paul Levy & Michael Levy 4/8/2012